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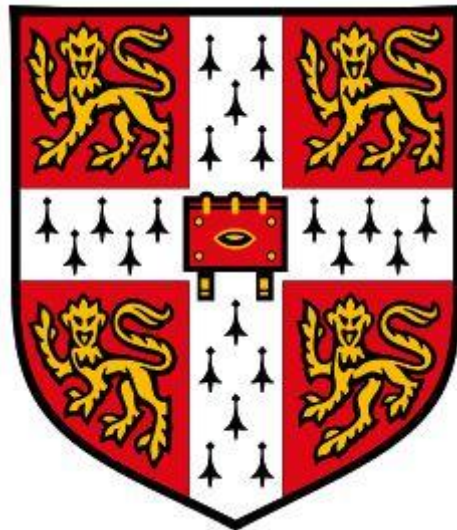
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**Gender as a Resource of Power at the  
Early Modern Court of Württemberg,  
c. 1580-1630**

**Regine Maritz  
Christ's College**



**November 2017**

**This dissertation is submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Gender as a resource of power at the early modern court of Württemberg, c.  
1580-1630**

*Regine Maritz*

This dissertation argues that gender was not simply a relational category affecting who could participate in early modern politics, and in what ways, but that it constituted a crucial and active resource of the dynastic practice of power. This subject of study is opened up through a case study of the court of Württemberg in the subsequent reigns of Dukes Friedrich I and his son Johann Friedrich, which span the period of time from 1593 to 1628. The reign of Duke Friedrich I was a time of political reform, which saw the influence of the local estates curtailed and an extroverted foreign policy pursued, whilst the duke concurrently entertained several extramarital affairs in contention with Lutheranism's prescriptions. His son Johann Friedrich clearly took exception to his father's lifestyle, since, at Friedrich's premature death in 1608, he imprisoned a number of his father's mistresses and procuresses. He was forced to let the majority of these women go again quite quickly, keeping only one suspected procuress in custody, whose case was to drag on until 1618. Johann Friedrich's mother, Duchess Sibylla, who had borne fifteen children to Friedrich and thus became the *Stammesmutter* of a new Württemberg dynastic line, was involved in these dealings. The contrast of these two different approaches to rulership allows for the investigation of the power dynamics of monogamy and polygamy in one coherent case study. Württemberg is an interesting location for this research since it was a large and important territory of southern Germany, which came to be deeply involved in Protestant resistance in the worsening religious strife leading up to the Thirty Years' War.

Documents ranging from court ordinances, festival descriptions and servants registers, to courtly correspondences, juridical supplications and declarations have been consulted. This broad range of primary sources facilitates the investigation of the salience of gender difference both in the context of a courtly system standing at the head of a polity, as well as on the level of individual actors whose personhood was intricately entwined with their gendered identities. It is argued here that it is imperative to avoid further fragmentation of court studies into gender and women's history on the one side and political approaches on the other, in order to maximise our understanding of the practice of power located at early modern courts. Gender difference complicated and further differentiated courtly status hierarchies and lent flexibility to increasingly rigid sets of dynastic rules about reproduction, succession, and etiquette, which had a beneficial impact on the longevity of the dynastic system.

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text

This dissertation does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

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Writing this thesis has brought home to me the deeply collaborative nature of the research process, and a great number of people have generously helped me along the way. The support of the Cambridge Trusts and the German Historical Institute in Paris has allowed me to undertake this study, and I am deeply grateful for that.

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## **Note on transcriptions and translations**

The majority of the source material consulted for this thesis consists of unedited archival documents. Some of these were assigned identification numbers by the chancellery officials who wrote and administered them, and, where this is the case, these numbers are referenced in the footnotes.

Many documents, however, carry neither an identification number, nor, at times, even a date. In these cases it was attempted to identify the document cited as clearly as possible by indicating the full bundle signature, the document's author, wherever possible, and providing any titles that were assigned to the document in the footnotes.

Where sources are cited the translation in the text is my own, and the original source transcriptions are provided in the footnotes. The transcription is semi-diplomatic. Lineation and indentation have not been preserved, but spelling and punctuation is reproduced as in the original. Frequent abbreviations and terminal syllables such as (-en) have been silently expanded where the handwriting indicated them with a dash or similar. Other supplied letters or words have been placed in square brackets. Folio numbers were indicated only where the document in question spans more than two pages.

All translations were kept as close as possible to the original German, but nuances of departure from the original meanings must be expected. Some frequently used German words are explained once in the text and left in their original form thereafter. Where that is the case, the word has been italicised in both the main text and the quotations and variations in spelling have been maintained.

## **Abbreviations**

Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart hereafter referred to as HStAS.

Württembergische Landesbibliothek hereafter referred to as WLB.

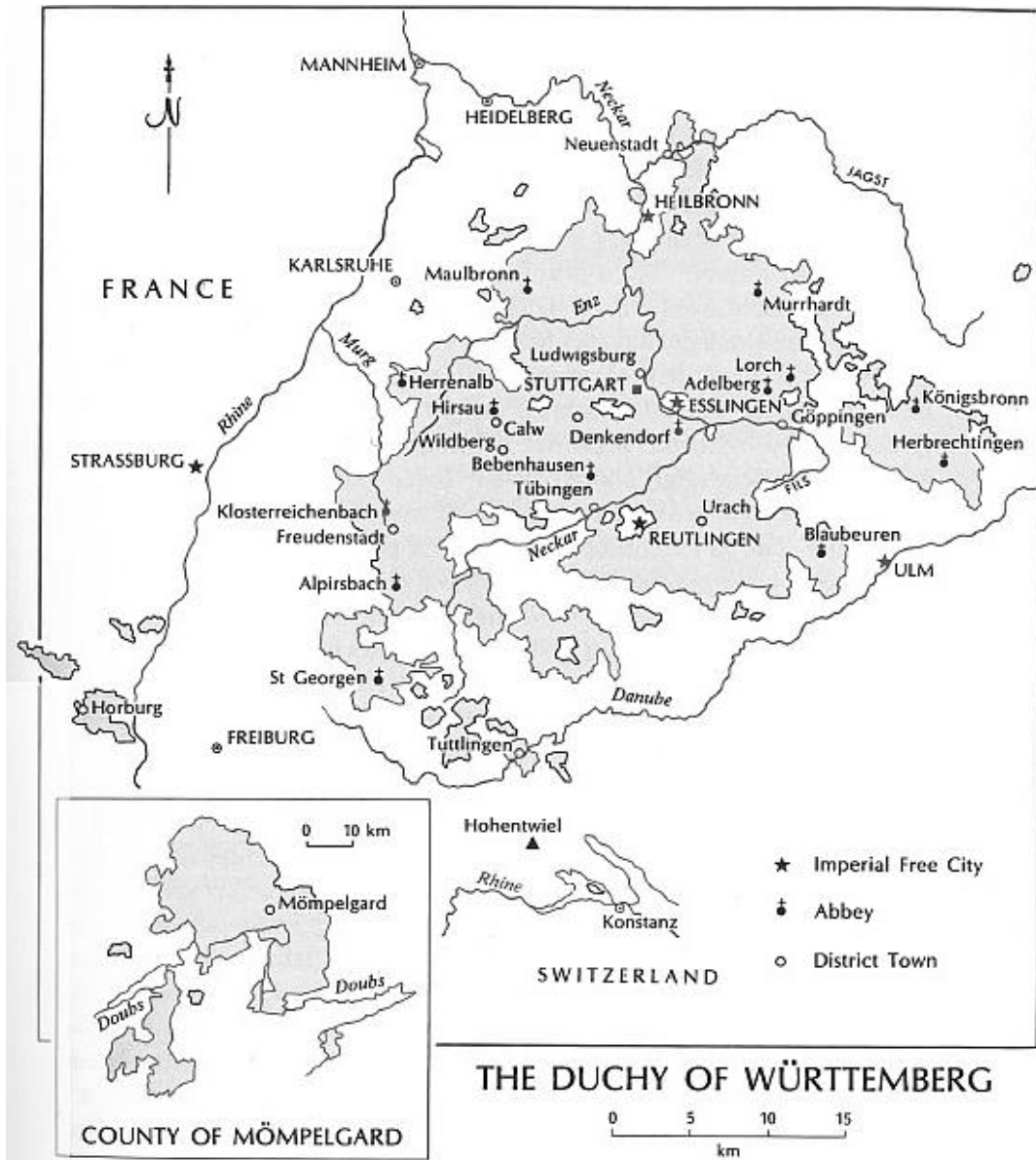


Figure 1: Map of Württemberg, printed in James Allen Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793* (Ithaca, 1984), p. 49.

## Introduction

Sovereignty, simply, does not exist apart from gender; sovereignty serves and pursues ends through the matrix of cultural constructions of gender, and it becomes a means of perpetuating and transforming those constructions. [...] Sovereignty is a site of gender-transgression and crossover, although it does not necessarily follow that sovereignty has revolutionary designs on gender constructs; most often the ultimate effect of the plasticity of gender in the field of sovereignty is the celebratory confirmation of “difference”.<sup>1</sup>

This decisive and stimulating statement was made by Louise Olga Fradenburg a staggering twenty-five years ago, and yet since then numerous influential studies on the subjects of state-building and dynastic power have been published which do not make any reference to gender at all.<sup>2</sup> Does this omission of gender pose a problem to scholarship? And, if so, what can be done address it? These are the questions that drive this introduction, though no pretence of providing exhaustive answers will be made.

The present dissertation investigates how the category of gender difference was mobilised as a practice of power at the early modern court. I argue that gender

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<sup>1</sup> Louise Olga Fradenburg, ‘Introduction: Rethinking Queenship’, in Louise Olga Fradenburg, ed., *Women and sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992) p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The absence of female actors and reflections on gender from Andreas Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre: der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711 - 1740)* (Darmstadt, 2003); and Mark Hengerer, *Kaiserhof und Adel in der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts: eine Kommunikationsgeschichte der Macht in der Vormoderne* (Konstanz, 2004) is particularly striking because these studies aim to provide an interpretation of the entirety of the courtly system. See also Katrin Keller's review of Pečar's work which comments on this perplexing fact: Katrin Keller, review of Andreas Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre. Höfischer Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711-1740)*, in: *sehepunkte* 4 (2004), Nr. 4 (15 April 2004), <<http://www.sehepunkte.de/2004/04/4733.html>>, last accessed on 18/09/17; The problem overall appears to be more deeply rooted in German scholarship than in the Anglophone tradition. See Hannah Smith, ‘Court studies and the courts of early modern Europe’, *The Historical Journal* 49:4 (2006), pp. 1229-38, here p. 1231, found that gender and dynastic women were one of the three major subjects pursued by the 'new court history', besides the role of religion at court, and the interest in the differences between different courts; Daniel Schönplflug, *Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern: Verwandtschaft, Politik und Ritual in Europa 1640-1918* (Göttingen, 2013), in a meticulously researched study on dynastic marriage leaves the category of gender to one side.

was not simply a relational category affecting who could participate in early modern politics and in what ways, but that it constituted a crucial and active resource of dynastic power. For about two decades studies in the history of early modern courts have experienced a great revival. A subject which elicited unsavoury after-tastes of *ancien régime* decadence only a few decades ago has been rediscovered with vigour and rightly so.<sup>3</sup> For, whether we approve of it or not, many practices of power that have their roots in courtly politics, such as the in- and exclusionary dynamics of access and patronage, as well as the central importance of the maintenance and expansion of networks among those seeking political influence, remain crucial in modern polities to this day. The geopolitical history of Europe and beyond cannot be understood without close attention to the dynastic principles that were paramount to governance for centuries before liberal democracies came to hold the hegemonic position that is ascribed to them in our contemporary society.<sup>4</sup> Research into the world of dynasties and courtly societies is thus not only relevant in its own right, but it also serves the purpose of sharpening our vision of the roots of contemporary political institutions and practices. Yet I argue with Fradenburg that there can be no rounded understanding of the constitution of dynastic power without an explicit analysis of how the dynamics of gender worked within this system. For as long as we fail to identify and study the contributions of constructions of gender difference to the stability and longevity of past polities, we continue to justify the collective failure to name and critique these same dynamics in our contemporary polities. The price of this failure is ultimately paid by women whose presence in the public space remains contested to this day. Only a few months ago the largest democracy in the world elected as its leader a man who openly bragged about violating women's bodily integrity and who appealed to the public with promises of an increase in military

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<sup>3</sup> On the rediscovery of the subject compare John Adamson, 'Introduction: The making of the *ancien-régime* court 1500-1700', in John Adamson, ed., *The princely courts of Europe: ritual, politics and culture under the ancien régime, 1500-1750* (London, 1999) pp. 7-42, preconceived historical narratives of how notions of divinely inspired kingship gave way to rational bureaucracy still have to be critiqued. See Ronald G. Asch, *Sacral kingship between disenchantment and re-enchantment: The French and English Monarchies, 1587-1688* (New York, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> See also Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties. A global history of power, 1300-1800* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 3 'The dynastic set-up of power, however, proved to be remarkably persistent.'

proWess and the harsh treatment of illegal immigrants.<sup>5</sup> His female opponent was critiqued for appearing cold and calculating, and for not shaking the image of being propped up by financial handlers acting in the shadows.<sup>6</sup> One of the conspiracy theories about her speculated that she might be a robot, whilst she was simultaneously criticised for her alleged lack of physical stamina and ‘presidential look’.<sup>7</sup> This disparate, gender-specific perception of political actors, which practically writes its own news stories, has a history; without telling it, we cannot hope to break the hold it has on us. It is for this reason that it remains an urgent task of historians to critically investigate perceived certainties of power politics, some of which can at times appear to be transhistorical constants. One of these perceived constants is the dominance of men in political history.

Historians of early modern courts and dynasties have begun to shift this perception, but crucial areas for further development remain. While today a consensus exists that a significant number of dynastic females made important contributions to the political life of their times, the notion remains that in order to do so women had to actively resist the norms and prescriptions of their world. Important recent studies on female consorts and regents have held against this perception, and were successful in showing that most European dynastic systems comprised specific

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<sup>5</sup> Anthony Zurcher, ‘Republicans condemn Trump obscenities’, *BBC News*, (October 2016).

<sup>6</sup> David Brooks, ‘Why is Clinton disliked?’, op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (24 May 2016), <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/24/opinion/why-is-clinton-disliked.html>>, last accessed on 18/09/17, The author attributes Hilary Clinton’s unpopularity to her failure to show the public her ‘human qualities’. He states: ‘At least in her public persona, Clinton gives off an exclusively professional vibe: industrious, calculated, goal-oriented, distrustful. It’s hard from the outside to have a sense of her as a person; she is a role.’, At no point in the article does the author reflect on how Clinton’s gender might influence the public perception of her. In my view this omission stems from the still widespread failure to understand the public stage as a gendered space.

<sup>7</sup> In an interview with ABC’s David Muir, which was broadcast on 6 September 2016 Donald Trump made the following comment: ‘Well, I just don’t think she has a presidential look, and you need a presidential look’; Trump stated he did not believe she had the stamina for the position during the presidential debate of the 26 September 2016; on the robot rumours see for instance Jon Lockett, ‘Hillary the robot conspiracy theorists in hyperdrive [sic] over claims Hillary Clinton’s robotic ‘seal clap’ is proof she has died and been replaced by cyborg’, *The Sun* (30 September 2016), <<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1884429/conspiracy-theorists-in-hyperdrive-over-claims-hillary-clintons-robotic-seal-clap-is-proof-she-has-died-and-been-replaced-by-cyborg/>>, last accessed on 18/09/17.

ruling functions for women as a rule, rather than as an exception.<sup>8</sup> These functions were contingent on cultural contexts and dynastic accidents, but they were firmly part of what made the system tick. Whilst it is logical that a scholarly focus on dynastic women developed in a field from which the subject was once almost systematically eradicated, I argue that the isolation of dynastic females in the service of research creates some methodological problems that have to be viewed alongside the great successes of this literature. Firstly, as has already been hinted at, the emphasis on particularly productive dynastic women who came to wield ‘extraordinary’ political influence has the implicit effect of reaffirming that, as a norm, political power was held by the males of a dynasty. Everything else constitutes an exception confirming the rule. The questions left unanswered in this narrative include: How should we assess dynastic women who did not step outside the boundaries dictated by contemporary gender roles?<sup>9</sup> Did they fail in some way? Or did they also perform vital political functions for their polities that were recognised by contemporaries, but which we now fail to take seriously? Secondly, asking about the specific ruling functions of females, without asking the same questions for male dynasts, risks perpetuating the problematic tendency of marking women by their gender, whilst men retain the ‘neutral’ benchmark status that is not necessarily gendered. In this way we do not learn how dynastic men were constrained by their gender, and the challenges of representation they faced because of it.<sup>10</sup> It is also difficult to identify when and how specifically the gender difference

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<sup>8</sup> See for instance Pauline Puppel, *Die Regentin: vormundschaftliche Herrschaft in Hessen 1500-1700* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004); Watanabe-O’Kelly and Adam Morton, eds., *Queens consort, cultural transfer and European politics, c. 1500-1800* (London, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> The most recent research on queens consorts indicates that these behaviours were indeed two sides of the same coin, indicating that the field is developing in this direction. See Adam Morton, ‘Introduction: Politics, culture and queens consort’, in Watanabe-O’Kelly and Adam Morton, eds., *Queens consort, cultural transfer and European politics, c. 1500-1800* (London, 2017) pp. 1–14.

<sup>10</sup> That this would be an interesting subject shows for instance, Katherine Crawford, *The sexual culture of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge, 2010), ch. 5 ‘Politics, promiscuity, and potency: managing the king’s sexual reputation’, pp. 195-240, which explains how a key challenge French kings shared was the upkeep of an appropriate sexual reputation. The king’s sexual prowess had to be emphasised, but at the same time an excessive dependance on mistresses and sensual pastimes could destabilize the royal image. Finding the precarious balance between the extremes was a significant challenge for royal representation.

of a dynastic actor had meaningful consequences, and when it did not.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, studies focusing on women, at times, neglect to make explicit how the roles of their protagonists modify existing narratives of state-building. To my mind, these issues can be addressed by an approach that rigorously treats gender as a question of historical analysis.<sup>12</sup> The focus on specific men and women and on the impact of their gender on their spaces of action is important, but it needs to be extended by a perspective that focuses on the category of gender difference itself. In this dissertation I will attempt to show by way of a well-defined example how such an extended gender perspective might be achieved and what benefits such an analysis holds for the study of early modern court society and politics.

Gender and status difference behave in similar ways in that they both had implications for all early modern persons, but varied in salience between different historical contexts, or even when we consider different situations and moments in a single person's life. The category of gender thus acts as both a potent ordering principle and a social glue, which could help to bridge gaps of understanding between ruling elites and their subjects. Orders of gender and status hierarchy often overlapped and stood in continuous interaction. Yet there are instances in which they can be identified as distinct categories that did not always affect outcomes uniformly. For instance, the education of the male heirs of noblemen, dukes, and kings across Europe would involve some form of military training, whereas the martial element was entirely absent from the curriculum of dynastic girls, irrespective of their rank.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, in festival processions at German-speaking courts the attendants were

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<sup>11</sup> Not all women were consistently affected by their gender. Sophie Ruppel, *Verbündete Rivalen: Geschwisterbeziehungen im Hochadel des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Köln, 2006), pp. 140-154, shows that for the interaction and network-building among dynastic siblings gender is less of a determining factor than age. Older sisters did not automatically defer to their younger brothers in all decisions concerning their lives. Furthermore, younger brothers and sisters could play very similar roles for a dynastic family as informants and intercessors at foreign courts.

<sup>12</sup> See Jeanne Boydston, 'Gender as a question of historical analysis', *Gender & History*, 20 (November 2008), pp. 558–583.

<sup>13</sup> For the German princes see Klaus Malettke, 'L'éducation des Princes allemands: le cas de la Hesse', *Francia*, 26:2 (1999), p. 59; Aysha Pollnitz, *Princely education in early modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 77–82; Sylvène Édouard, *Les devoirs du prince: l'éducation princière à la Renaissance* (Paris, 2014), pp. 313–370.

grouped first according to gender and only secondly to rank.<sup>14</sup> Thus it appears logical to me that we should investigate gender with as much methodological sophistication as status difference. When and where did gender difference matter at the early modern court? What do the results to these questions tell us about the entirety of the courtly system? These questions will be investigated in the following chapters on the basis of a case study of the court of Württemberg in the period from approximately 1580 to 1630. Since practices of power on all levels of a dynastic centre are under investigation here, it seems useful to focus the enquiry in this manner.<sup>15</sup> This will allow for the consultation of a great variety of source material and the production of an empirically saturated case study that can – so it is hoped – serve as a model for analyses of courts in other cultural contexts under the investigative principles outlined here.

### ***Existing Literature on Gender, Courts, and Politics***

This study locates itself at the intersection of political history, court history, and gender history. For all these fields many important studies have gone before and it will not be possible here to sketch the entirety of the research landscape. In the following I will progress according to subjects and rough chronology. I will first consider a handful of studies that have put the fusion of political and gender history on the map of the discipline and to whom my reflections owe a great debt. The main part of this literature review will then focus on the field of court history and the introduction of women's and gender history to this area of interest. In retracing some of these developments, I will present my opinion on how the field could be advanced

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<sup>14</sup> See chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>15</sup> The term 'dynastic centre' was introduced by Jeroen Duindam, 'Dynastic centres in Europe and Asia. A layout for comparison', *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and comparative politics*, 48 (2009), pp. 1-30, here p. 3, in order to refer to the entirety of the household and government structures that made up the court in a way that did not allude to specifically European notions of 'court' and 'courtier'. I am attracted to the usage of this term because the political dimension of gender relations becomes specifically visible when we consider the deep connection between the courtly household and dynastic governance. Since I will be working here with primary material from a European context, I will, however, continue to employ the term 'court' in this thesis, whilst intending for it to refer to the more inclusive semiotics outlined by Duindam.

advantageously and take care to locate my own work. Since the field of court history has been dramatically expanding since the late 1980s, it is evident that this literature review will not be able to even approach comprehensiveness. The majority of the studies included here focus on different territories within the German-speaking Holy Roman Empire. Some important work pertaining to the courts of France and England has been included, where it offers innovative methodological approaches or particularly stimulating insights into the topic of gender at court. Yet, the literature on other topics of the history of the courts of France, Spain, England, Scotland, and further European courts has been omitted. Instead, an effort will be made to extend the perspective on the state of research on the histories of state-building, gender, and princely courts with some impressions on the corresponding debates by scholars of non-European Islamicate courts. This perhaps unusual step is taken consciously in order to prevent the perpetuation of a view of the European state-building exercise as singularly complex, and as extraordinarily progressive in terms of gender relations. Developing an awareness of the fact that other areas of the world bore witness to equally sophisticated experiments of mass governance at the same time as the courts of Europe reached a climax of cultural and political development, is of course an important end in and of itself, but it can also help identify and dislodge preconceived certainties about our own objects of study.<sup>16</sup>

The Reformation in the early sixteenth century and, thereafter, the increasing confessionalisation of most territories in Western Europe are today counted among the greatest catalysts for change of the pre-modern period. Only slightly earlier began the gradual decline of medieval itinerant rulership in favour of residential princely rule. These changes in the constitution of rulership, and the Reformation and its aftermath, had far-reaching consequences for men and women of all status groups. Today there is a consensus that women's lives were particularly affected by these changes, and not necessarily in liberating ways. Lyndal Roper argued influentially

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<sup>16</sup> On the importance of forging connections between localised and world history approaches see Christopher Bayly, 'History and World History', in Ulinka Rublack, ed., *A concise companion to history* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 3–25.

that the Reformation in Augsburg strengthened the patriarchal order of the household, and that it had very ambiguous consequences for women, who lost the opportunity to lead independent lives dedicated to spiritual devotion which Catholicism had afforded them.<sup>17</sup> In a study on the marriage court records of Basel in the sixteenth century and beyond Susanna Burghartz found that judges, and the governing authorities in general, extended their hold on the definition of moral and immoral behaviours, which had a negative impact, in particular, on women's chances of success before the courts.<sup>18</sup> Yet, Burghartz postulates that in Basel we do not observe a 'crisis of gender relations' ushered in with the Reformation, but rather the enduring need to produce and reproduce gender orders, which at this time came to be claimed more forcefully by temporal political institutions.<sup>19</sup> The complex interrelations between fledgling state-power, society, and the "sexual system" have been identified by Isabell Hull. She finds that in the 'absolutist age' (i.e. the seventeenth century), the ruling authorities' ultimate failure to control what came to be considered as immoral sexual behaviours in part inspired the creation of a private sphere defined by individual responsibility. It also inspired the efforts of the state to improve the efficiency of its bureaucratic system in the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Ulinka Rublack confirms and adapts this argument with the example of Württemberg in the early eighteenth century. She shows that the insistence on moral purity could have unforeseen consequences such as the riots staged by citizens of a rural Swabian town in opposition to the sexual transgressions committed by their local governor.<sup>21</sup> Finally, Ulrike Strasser masterfully makes explicit how fledgling state power in Bavaria under the elector Maximilian I appropriated the concept of virginity from

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<sup>17</sup> Lyndal Roper, *The holy household: women and morals, in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>18</sup> Susanna Burghartz, *Zeiten der Reinheit, Orte der Unzucht : Ehe und Sexualität in Basel während der frühen Neuzeit* (Paderborn, 1999), pp. 292–3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*; On the 'crisis of gender' see Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London, 1994), esp. pp. 41f.; and Joel F. Harrington, *Reordering marriage and society in Reformation Germany* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, state, and civil society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Ithaca, 1996).

<sup>21</sup> Ulinka Rublack, 'State-formation, gender and the experience of governance in early modern Württemberg', in Ulinka Rublack, ed., *Gender in Early Modern German History* (Cambridge, 2002) pp. 200–220.

religion, and used it to emphasise and reproduce the gendered political order it aspired to.<sup>22</sup>

When we look at the field of court history, it is notable that its most eminent founding father, Norbert Elias, identified the role of women as an important topic for analysis.<sup>23</sup> However, he viewed them more as an accessory in the larger process of taming the warrior courtier and domesticating the nobility, than as historical actors in their own rights. His model, therefore, has little to say about how their role at court developed over time, or how gendered events, such as marriages, related to his propositions about ceremony and etiquette.<sup>24</sup> Elias has been critiqued at length, and not only by historians of gender. Indeed the literature that is critical of him has been agenda setting in the field of court history for decades, and it is in this context that Elias has a truly far-reaching influence. Jeroen Duindam's *Myths of Power* meticulously teased out the problems in Elias's argumentation, and showed that the Elias model collapses with the insight that the nobility did not become victimised at the French court of the eighteenth century. Rather, they adapted and began to use courtly dynamics for their own ends.<sup>25</sup>

Numerous scholars, including Ronald Asch and Leonhard Horowski, have built on these critiques to develop new research questions to put to the sources. Horowski calls for more investigation into the status interaction within various groups of nobility, and for an increased attention to the differences between everyday etiquette and occasions of high ceremonial importance.<sup>26</sup> Asch emphasises the

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<sup>22</sup> Ulrike Strasser, *State of virginity: Gender, religion, and politics in an early modern Catholic state* (Ann Arbor, 2004), here esp. pp. 173f.

<sup>23</sup> See Norbert Elias, *The court society* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 194, 243.

<sup>24</sup> As argues Claudia Opitz, 'Zwischen Macht und Liebe. Frauen und Geschlechterbeziehungen in Norbert Elias' Höfischer Gesellschaft', in Gabriele Klein and Katharina Liebsch, eds., *Zivilisierung des weiblichen Ich* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), pp. 77–99.

<sup>25</sup> Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of power; Norbert Elias and the early modern European court* (Amsterdam, 1994), here esp. pp. 181f.

<sup>26</sup> Leonhard Horowski made these propositions in: 'Hof und Absolutismus. Was bleibt von Norbert Elias' Theorie?', in Lothar Schilling, ed., *Absolutismus, ein unersetzliches Forschungskonzept?: eine deutsch-französische Bilanz* (München, 2008), pp. 143-72; and he analysed the fight over court offices within the old nobility extensively in Leonhard Horowski, *Die Belagerung des Thrones: Machtstrukturen und Karrieremechanismen am Hof von Frankreich 1661 - 1789* (Ostfildern, 2012);

importance of patron-client relations in order to understand better the courtly system.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, important findings from cultural history have established beyond doubt that the pomp and ritual performed at the early modern court was by no means empty pageantry.<sup>28</sup> Rather, these practices were a prime location for micropolitical negotiations at court, and they are now being treated with the historicised understanding they deserve. The increased attention to status politics, patronage, and cultural practices has opened up completely new perspectives on who took part in the exercise of power and in what ways. In particular, the analysis of dynastic women has been revolutionised in this way, and it is now more than ever an established finding that they made crucial contributions to life and politics at court.

A great number of actor-focused studies on dynastic women are now available, which illustrate the biographical pathways women at court might pursue. Caroline Hanken has singled out the royal mistresses at the French court for analysis and shown that their close proximity to the monarch furnished them with confidence and influence far beyond what has long been assumed.<sup>29</sup> Kathleen Wellman developed this further and considered French mistresses and queens alongside each other, and found that their representational roles often complemented each other.<sup>30</sup> In a study pertinent for my own analysis, Katrin Keller considered Anna of Saxony, who was already viewed by contemporaries as an ideal example of a Protestant *Landesmutter* because of her great piety, her productive collaboration with her husband, her frugal housekeeping, and her skill in the arts of healing.<sup>31</sup> Keller showed that Anna was highly effective as an intermediary between supplicants and

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Giora Sternberg, *Status interaction during the reign of Louis XIV* (Oxford, 2014), considers different contexts of status interaction, as for instance letter-writing or high ceremonial wedding celebrations.

<sup>27</sup> See Ronald G. Asch, Birgit Emich, Jens Ivo Engels, eds., *Integration - Legitimation - Korruption: politische Patronage in Früher Neuzeit und Moderne*, (Frankfurt am Main, 2011); Ronald G. Asch, 'Patronage, friendship and the politics of access: the role of the early modern favourite revisited', in Sebastiaan Derks and Dries Raeymaekers, eds., *The key to power? : the culture of access in princely courts, 1400-1750* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 178–201.

<sup>28</sup> Timothy Blanning, *The culture of power and the power of culture: old regime Europe ; 1660 - 1789* (Oxford, 2002); Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider: Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reiches* (München, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Caroline Hanken, *Vom König geküßt: Das Leben der großen Mätressen* (Berlin, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Kathleen Wellman, *Queens and mistresses of Renaissance France* (Yale, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Katrin Keller, *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532-1585)* (Regensburg, 2010).

her husband, but even she, the daughter of a king, had to take care to emphasise her complete obedience to the duke in order to avoid the politically destabilising accusation of gynocracy. Magdalena Sánchez has been particularly instructive in her study on the Habsburg women Empress Maria, Margaret of Austria, and Margaret of the Cross, where she showed that these actors did not come to hold power despite their gender, but at times were particularly successful because they drew on gendered codes with skill.<sup>32</sup>

On the basis of these studies employing the biographical method, historians are also now working towards analytical syntheses and are producing research focusing on the roles and functions of courtly women, rather than on specific individuals. Pauline Puppel analyses the legal arguments and frameworks within which dynastic noblewomen in Hessen assumed the regency of their territory during the minority of their sons who were to inherit the rule.<sup>33</sup> Clarissa Campbell Orr has broken new ground with her work on queenship, which suggests that there was a marked continuity between the functions of female monarchs at European courts with varied systems of governance. At their common core she sees a ‘fundamental psychic as much as a political role: to suggest in idealised form the symbolic harmony of male and female, the potency and fertility of the ruling male, and the continuity of his dynasty.’<sup>34</sup> Judith Aikin has applied Heide Wunder’s ‘working couple’ concept to the marriage of Aemilia Juliane and Albert Anton of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt and shows how Aemilia Juliane was very much a ‘partner in a state marriage’.<sup>35</sup> Very recently empresses of the Holy Roman Empire and their

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<sup>32</sup> Magdalena S. Sánchez, *The empress, the queen, and the nun: Women and power at the court of Philip III of Spain* (Baltimore, 1998), especially see the conclusion of the book ‘Women and Spanish Policy at the Court of Philipp III’, pp. 172-9, which speaks to several of the themes evoked in this introduction, particularly on the exclusion of women from general political histories, which Sánchez attributes to their absence from official council reports (here p. 177).

<sup>33</sup> Puppel, *Die Regentin: vormundschaftliche Herrschaft in Hessen 1500-1700*.

<sup>34</sup> See Clarissa Campbell Orr, ‘Introduction’, in Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Queenship in Europe 1660-1815: The role of the consort* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Judith Aikin, *A ruler’s consort in early modern Germany: Aemilia Juliana of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt* (Farnham, 2014), see esp. ch. 4 ‘Partner in a State Marriage’, pp. 101-36.

opportunities for political action have been considered in a collected volume for the first time.<sup>36</sup>

The overall effect of these studies has been that the early modern dynastic woman's exercise of political power is now increasingly viewed as normal and expected, whilst the conditions framing their contributions have gained in clarity. Again, it seems useful to remind ourselves that this is not only true for European dynastic women, but also for their counterparts at Islamicate courts. The work of Maria Szuppe has shown that Safavid women belonging to the royal family were considered to have the same charisma needed to rule as their male relatives. She described in particular the careers of Pari Khan Khanum II (1548-1578), who acted as a *de facto* regent of the entire Safavid empire for several months, and of Khayr al-Nisa Begum (d. 1579), the wife of the weak ruler Khodabanda. Pari Khan Khanum was representing him, and Khayr al-Nisa Begum eventually had her killed in order to reach for power herself.<sup>37</sup> Ruby Lal has equally shown that Akbar relied heavily on the contributions of female relatives to the cultural life of the Mughal court.<sup>38</sup>

Especially in the German historiography, the methodological term *Handlungsspielräume* (space for action) has proved dominant in this discussion.<sup>39</sup> Scholars have asked where the *Handlungsspielräume* lay for dynastic females and what conditions constrained them in exploiting their room for manoeuvre to the fullest extent. These contributions have made possible many of the arguments that will be put forward in the present dissertation. However, it is my contention that, if

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<sup>36</sup> Bettina Braun, Katrin Keller, and Matthias Schnettger, eds., *Nur die Frau des Kaisers?: Kaiserinnen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Wien, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> Maria Szuppe, 'La participation des femmes de la famille royale à l'exercice du pouvoir en Iran safavide au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle (Seconde Partie)', *Studia Iranica*, 24 (January 1995), pp. 61–122, here esp. 87-97; On Pari Khan Khanum also see Shohreh Gholsorkhi, 'Pari Khan Khanum: A Masterful Safavid Princess', *Iranian Studies*, 28 (July 1995), pp. 143–156.

<sup>38</sup> Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and power in the early Mughal world* (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> It is used for instance in Britta Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof (1651-1756)* (Kallmünz, 2011); Cordula Nolte, *Familie, Hof und Herrschaft: das verwandtschaftliche Beziehungs- und Kommunikationsnetz der Reichsfürsten am Beispiel der Markgrafen von Brandenburg-Ansbach (1440 - 1530)* (Ostfildern, 2005); Dörthe Buchhester, *Die Familie der Fürstin. Die herzoglichen Häuser der Pommern und Sachsen im 16. Jahrhundert: Erziehung, Bücher, Briefe* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015); Jörg Rogge, ed., *Fürstin und Fürst: Familienbeziehungen und Handlungsmöglichkeiten von hochadeligen Frauen im Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2004).

we continue to rely on delimiting the *Handlungsspielräume* of women at court, we predestine our debates to offer a skewed perspective on the significance of gender difference at the early modern court. For if we do not link the insights gained directly to the mainstream of court and political studies and begin to ask equally about the *Handlungsspielräume* of men, the significance of the role of women will continue to appear as in some sense secondary to the early modern exercise of male rule. This is, on the whole, not strictly speaking incorrect and we certainly cannot allow for the debate to be simplified into a ‘battle between the sexes’. However, the historically more pressing questions are surely no longer whether specific dynastic women were integrated into the practice of power, but why gender difference proved to be such a salient category of difference in so many dynastic centres.<sup>40</sup> In view of what we know now, I argue that we should be asking in what ways the cultural construct of dynasty profited from the continuous reproduction of the category of gender difference in ever-shifting and, at times, innovative guises.

The studies which make the greatest contributions towards the answering of this question analyse gender at the systemic level of dynastic governance. Cynthia Herrup’s article on *The King’s Two Genders* put forward the stimulating proposition that kings, whose bodies were always associated with extraordinary qualities, ‘transcended the confines of a single gender’, which allowed them to embody the many contradictory qualities that were demanded of them, such as, for instance, military courage alongside the love of peace.<sup>41</sup> Her argument that it was a key challenge of governance to keep female and male traits in a fruitful balance is innovative, but it opens up a new set of problems. How do we know which traits were associated with femininity and masculinity in the first place?<sup>42</sup> Fradenburg’s earlier reflections, which point in a similar direction, appear more fruitful to me.

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<sup>40</sup> See also Claudia Opitz-Belakhal, *Das Universum des Jean Bodin: Staatsbildung, Macht und Geschlecht im 16. Jahrhundert*, (Frankfurt am Main, 2006), p. 33, who calls for more investigation into the ‘institutions of the gender order’ at the ‘macro-level of emerging modern statehood’ (‘Institutionen der Geschlechterordnung’; ‘Makro-Ebene der entstehenden frühmodernen Staatlichkeit’).

<sup>41</sup> Cynthia Herrup, ‘The king’s two genders’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 45 (July 2006), pp. 493-510, here p. 499.

<sup>42</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 503.

When she states that ‘most often the ultimate effect of the plasticity of gender in the field of sovereignty is the celebratory confirmation of “difference”’, the relational quality of her understanding of gender allows us to search with precision for gendered difference in any cultural context, without the need for an established view of what constituted the culturally produced gender identities of our chosen setting.<sup>43</sup> For the same reason, Regina Schulte’s rejection of the male/female and ‘two body’ dichotomies in relation to queens’ bodies is important. She shows that the construction of the natural body of the female monarch need not *per se* be detrimental to her exercise of power, but, in fact, can also be transformed into a resource of rule.<sup>44</sup> The famous image of Maria Theresa appearing before the Hungarian nobility with an infant at her breast, which allegedly moved the men in front of her to tears and caused them to pledge their lives for the defence of their queen, is one of the examples Schulte drew on.<sup>45</sup> Rachel Weil develops this argument further and finds that the fleshly bodies of female and male monarchs could serve as projection screens for authors who wished to press their own views of the monarchy. Yet, since they thus intensified thinking about the royal body, this ‘made monarchy more rather than less secure as an institution’.<sup>46</sup> Weil also importantly points out that royal bodies functioned differently in different cultural settings.

For the specific construction of ruling bodies in the German-speaking territories of the Holy Roman Empire, Heide Wunder’s work is indispensable. In her seminal monography *He is the Sun She is the Moon* on early modern women in

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<sup>43</sup> Fradenburg, ‘Introduction: Rethinking queenship’, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> The ‘two bodies’ concept refers to very influential work Ernst Kantorowicz, *The king’s two bodies: a study in mediaeval political theology* (Princeton, 1957); 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) pp. 1–15.

<sup>45</sup> Schulte, ‘Introduction. Conceptual approaches to the queen’s body’; Recently the image of Maria Theresa before the Hungarian estates with her infant has been masterfully analysed and deconstructed in Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Maria Theresia: die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit: eine Biographie* (München, 2017), pp. 80-96.

<sup>46</sup> Rachel Weil, ‘Royal Flesh, Gender and the construction of monarchy’, in Regina Schulte, ed., *The body of the queen: gender and rule in the courtly world, 1500 - 2000* (New York, 2006), pp. 88–100, with this she presents a different reading of royal bodies than 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), pp. 117–38, where the female body and its function as a projection screen is viewed as a vulnerability for the monarchy.

Germany, she introduces the argument that the complementarity of the marital couple was particularly emphasised in this cultural context, with the ‘working couple’ – which comprised a harmonious task-sharing between husband and wife – being viewed as the ideal unit of production and cohabitation.<sup>47</sup> In further work, she emphasises the adaption of this concept to the ruling couple, which helps to reveal that the varied functions of noble ruling women opposite their husbands invested them with a securitising function for the dynasty.<sup>48</sup> Jill Bepler identifies ruling women’s capacity as pious educators as one such function, which has to be understood in decisively active terms, since it was believed that the prayers of the ruling princess played a significant role in the safe-keeping of the territory.<sup>49</sup> Claudia Opitz formulates the concept of the German princely *Landesmutter* as being rooted in the potential for rule inherent in all *Hausmütter*.<sup>50</sup> Joel Harrington equally emphasises the ‘connection between familial and civil authority’ on which basis *Landesväter* sought legitimacy for themselves.<sup>51</sup> He also found, however, that the evidence is ambiguous on whether German princes and magistrates actually strengthened the authority of heads of households, or if instead they used the decision-making power they gained over marriage in the course of the Reformation to extend their own reach over the lives of their subjects.<sup>52</sup> As Rachel Weil proposes, the image of a paternalistic *Landesvater* ruling over a territory is culturally-specific.

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<sup>47</sup> Heide Wunder, *He is the sun, she is the moon: women in early modern Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998).

<sup>48</sup> See Heide Wunder, ‘Geschlechterverhältnisse und dynastische Herrschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit’, in Gabriele Baumbach and Cordula Bischoff, eds., *Frau und Bildnis 1600 - 1750: Barocke Repräsentationskultur an europäischen Fürstenhöfen* (Kassel, 2003), pp. 15–37, on the ‘regierendes Paar’ esp. pp. 23f.; also see Heide Wunder, ‘Einleitung: Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung: Geschlechter und Geschlecht’, in Heide Wunder, ed., *Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung in der Frühen Neuzeit: Geschlechter und Geschlecht* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 9–27, here Wunder calls for more studies on the securitisation of the dynasty through the roles of dynastic women in order to confirm or disprove her suggestions. My own study contributes to this, though its focus lies on gender rather than women’s roles.

<sup>49</sup> Jill Bepler, ‘Die Fürstin als Betsäule - Anleitung und Praxis der Erbauung am Hof’, *Morgen-Glantz*, 12 (2002), pp. 249–264; Sánchez, *The Empress, the queen, and the nun*.

<sup>50</sup> Claudia Opitz, ‘Hausmutter und Landesfürstin’, in Rosario Villari and Andreas Simon, eds., *Der Mensch des Barock* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), pp. 344–370, here pp. 357ff.

<sup>51</sup> Joel F. Harrington, ‘Hausvater and Landesvater: Paternalism and marriage reform in sixteenth-century Germany’, *Central European History*, 25 (March 1992), pp. 52–75., here p. 58.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Nevertheless, Rosalind O'Hanlon's work shows that the ideal image of the Mughal emperor bore at least some resemblance to the *Landesvater* in the sense that it, too, was in part constructed around Akbar's control over who could marry whom and at what age.<sup>53</sup> Another key component of Mughal 'virtuous masculinity' was the rational ordering of Akbar's extraordinary physical prowess, which constitutes perhaps more of a departure from the ideal male ruler in the German context.<sup>54</sup>

It appears to me that these approaches have the greatest potential to generate new and crucial questions for the combined study of gender and political history, and, as a result, I seek to make a contribution to this development with this dissertation. I am particularly motivated in this endeavour by the realisation that even now, decades after the close connection between sovereign power and gender was first articulated, many studies claiming to speak generally to the themes of court, dynasty, and politics continue to be published without any reference at all to how gender is connected with their subject matter.<sup>55</sup> Historians are of course free to choose the approaches that suit their work and interests best, but it seems that the failure to absorb the category of gender into the mainstream of political history has other than strictly scholarly reasons. One of them might be that perpetuating the close association of gender history with women's history, where court studies are concerned and women are demonstrably disadvantaged in the exercise of power (particularly where a modern conception of politics is being applied),<sup>56</sup> allows for the fragmenting of approaches that actually need to be practised in combination. It now needs to be emphasised and demonstrated that the attention to gender facilitates a

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<sup>53</sup> Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Kingdom, household and body history: Gender and imperial service under Akbar', *Modern Asian Studies.*, 41 (2007), pp. 889-923, here esp. pp. 912.

<sup>54</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 892 on 'virtuous masculinity'; but also compare to Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Manliness and imperial service in Mughal north India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.*, 42 (1999), pp. 47-93.

<sup>55</sup> Examples include: Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre: der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711 - 1740)*; Hengerer, *Kaiserhof und Adel in der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts: eine Kommunikationsgeschichte der Macht in der Vormoderne*; Bernhard Jussen, ed., *Die Macht des Königs: Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*, (München, 2005); Jan Hirschbiegel, *Nahbeziehungen bei Hof - Manifestationen des Vertrauens: Karrieren in reichsfürstlichen Diensten am Ende des Mittelalters* (Köln, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> But also compare this to Duindam, *Dynasties*, p. 95, who finds that in a global perspective women usually served as full regents only when there were no male heirs available.

fuller understanding of political processes such as state-building and the dynastic practice of power. This is done not only through the inclusion of a greater number of individual actors in the analysis,<sup>57</sup> but also through the generation of new and crucial research questions aimed at the systemic level of the court and other subjects of political history. Whilst that may not convert all political historians to the benefits of gender history, it will contribute ultimately to the generation of more innovative research. The remainder of this introduction will give a brief overview of the case that this dissertation analyses and provide a discussion of the sources and methods that have been used.

### ***The Duchy and Court of Württemberg***

The main site of investigation for this dissertation is the court of early modern Württemberg during the subsequent reigns of Dukes Friedrich I and his son Johann Friedrich, spanning 1593 to 1628. This case study was chosen for both historical and historiographical reasons. Firstly, the duchy of Württemberg in the late sixteenth century was the largest territory of the German southwest with a relatively well-developed central administration focused on ducal governance at the time of investigation. This facilitates the aim of the dissertation to consider the topics of dynasty, state-formation, and gender alongside each other. Württemberg was bordered to the west by the mountains of the Black Forest, beyond which lay the holdings of the margraves of Baden, and to the southeast by the Swabian Alps just above Lake Constance. Towards the north the territory stretched as far as the imperial city of Heilbronn, and the free cities of Reutlingen, Esslingen, and Weil der Stadt were completely surrounded by Württemberg lands.<sup>58</sup> The lack of cohesiveness

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<sup>57</sup> Compare to Pernille Arenfeldt, 'Wissensproduktion und Wissensverbreitung im 16. Jahrhundert', *Historische Anthropologie*, 20 (2013), pp. 4–28, here esp. pp. 8f., who points out that the inclusion of a greater number of actors in court history is not alone satisfactory, since such an approach would merely an extension of an account already told with men at its centre, rather than a rethinking of the existing historical narrative itself.

<sup>58</sup> See James Allen Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793* (Ithaca, 1984), p. 35; Robert W. Scribner, 'Police and the territorial state in sixteenth-century Württemberg', in E. I. Kouri and

of the territory of a polity appears somewhat strange to modern eyes, but was actually quite characteristic of the entirety of the Holy Roman Empire. Württemberg had also acquired the department Mömpelgard on the east side of the Rhine, which was an enclave on French soil.<sup>59</sup> Estimates of the population of Württemberg before the Thirty Years' War vary between 380,000 and 450,000 inhabitants.<sup>60</sup> The capital city of Stuttgart provided about 9000 of those inhabitants.<sup>61</sup> The majority of Württemberg's people lived in rural contexts and took part in agricultural or other primary modes of production. The population appears to have been rising in the pre-war period and von Hippel postulated that, even without the war, Württemberg would have been risking a crisis in food provision, as the number of people came to outstrip the potential of food production of the territory.<sup>62</sup> The territory's large size dates back to the successful efforts of the counts of Württemberg in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to extend their territory, mostly by purchasing neighbouring departments.<sup>63</sup> In 1495 Württemberg was elevated to the status of a duchy by the emperor, which constituted a gain in prestige and influence in the context of the empire that had been prepared skilfully by Eberhard the Bearded.<sup>64</sup> On the basis of these prerequisites, Württemberg came to be a stronghold of Protestantism in the largely Catholic south of modern-day Germany. The local dukes accepted the

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Tom Scott, eds., *Politics and society in Reformation Europe: essays for Sir Geoffrey Elton on his sixty-fifth birthday* (Houndmills, 1987), pp. 103–120, here p. 106f.

<sup>59</sup> Franz Brendle, *Dynastie, Reich und Reformation: die württembergischen Herzöge Ulrich und Christoph, die Habsburger und Frankreich* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 22f.

<sup>60</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 36, provides the higher estimate; Wolfgang von Hippel, 'Bevölkerung und Wirtschaft im Zeitalter des dreissigjährigen Krieges', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 5 (1978), pp. 413–448, here p. 421, cites 380,000 people.

<sup>61</sup> See Scribner, 'Police and the territorial state in sixteenth-century Württemberg', p. 106; For an in-depth topographical description of early modern Stuttgart see Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 37; For the history of the city of Stuttgart see Otto Borst, *Stuttgart: Die Geschichte der Stadt* (Stuttgart, 1973).

<sup>62</sup> von Hippel, 'Bevölkerung und Wirtschaft', pp. 422-4, calculates that even in years of normal to good harvest, Württemberg had to import grain to feed 16% of its inhabitants. Wine was the key product being exported, and its production took up large swathes of arable land.

<sup>63</sup> Dieter Mertens, 'Württemberg', in Volker Press, Meinrad Schaab, and Hansmartin Schwarzmaier, eds., *Die Territorien im alten Reich* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 1-163, here pp. 83–8.

<sup>64</sup> Brendle, *Dynastie, Reich und Reformation: die württembergischen Herzöge Ulrich und Christoph, die Habsburger und Frankreich*, p. 25.

Lutheran faith in 1534, and were thus among the first princes of the empire to implement the Reformation.<sup>65</sup>

Secondly, the regional historiography of early modern Württemberg is rich and well-developed. The outlines of the political developments of the duchy – then understood to involve mainly the interaction of the duke, his councillors, and the estates – were drawn by the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>66</sup> Although these publications are not unproblematic because of the absence of modern referencing standards, re-readings based on today's state of research reveal that they are still remarkably accurate on their chosen topics. Moreover, we also recognise a certain continuity between these early works and contemporary publications when it comes to the assessment of the personalities of the early modern dukes. Karl Pfaff said of Duke Friedrich I (1557-1608), who will figure prominently in the present dissertation, that he possessed 'an extraordinary degree of political insight and wisdom, which were visible at all times, except when the heat and impatience of his temperament pushed him to precipitance'.<sup>67</sup> In comparison, the subtitle of Paul Sauer's biography of Friedrich published in 2006 is 'boisterous reformer, sophisticated autocrat'.<sup>68</sup> The remarkable coherence of the image of this duke suggests that this particular character holds a prominent position in the regional imagination of Württemberg's past. This is not to discredit Sauer's thorough work, which forms an important basis of the present study, particularly because it is one of relatively few publications discussing life at the court of Stuttgart in the outgoing sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

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<sup>65</sup> Mertens, 'Württemberg', ch. 5. 'Umbau und Krise des lutherischen Landesstaates', pp. 99-120 gives a good overview over the Reformation and the ecclesiastic restructuring undertaken by Duke Christoph. Württemberg by the mid-sixteenth century came to be a key leader of the Lutheran faith. See also Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 30 on the proximity of the Catholic faith to Württemberg, which provided an alternative mode of thinking.

<sup>66</sup> See Christian Friedrich Sattler, *Geschichte des Herzogthums Württemberg unter der Regierung der Herzogen, vierter Theil* (Ulm, 1771); Karl Pfaff, *Geschichte des Fürstenhauses und Landes Wirtemberg: nach den besten Quellen und Hilfsmittel* (1839).

<sup>67</sup> Pfaff, *Geschichte des Fürstenhauses und Landes Wirtemberg*: p. 238, 'einen ungewöhnlichen Grad von politischer Einsicht und Klugheit, welche sich überall, wo nicht die Hitze und Ungeduld seines Temperaments ihn zu Uebereilungen hinrißen, deutlich offenbarten.'

<sup>68</sup> Paul Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608: ungestümer Reformier und weltgewandter Autokrat* (München, 2003).

Much scholarly attention has previously been focused on the political institutions of Württemberg,<sup>69</sup> in particular on the territorial diet,<sup>70</sup> whilst the court is only quite recently coming back into focus. This is of course a development Württemberg shares with many areas of Europe, where post-war historians have - for very understandable reasons - felt a more positive resonance with histories of political participation than explorations of the *ancien régime*. Nevertheless, the present study can refer to an important collected volume on the court culture of Stuttgart around 1600 with a focus on the development of courtly music under Duke Friedrich.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, important research exists on the court of Stuttgart in the fifteenth century,<sup>72</sup> and on what would today be considered as the 'high political' developments of the reigns of Duke Ulrich (r. 1498-1550), Duke Christoph (r. 1550-1568),<sup>73</sup> and Duke Johann Friedrich (r. 1608-1628).<sup>74</sup> Walter Pfeilsticker's *Dienerbuch* is an irreplaceable referencing tool, which allows for the identification of almost all members of the courtly household from the highest to the very lowest in rank.<sup>75</sup> These studies are flanked by many important studies on the cultural history of Württemberg and its court, which have attracted many influential scholars because of their deep and well-organised archives. David Sabean offers a well-known study of

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<sup>69</sup> See Walter Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg und ihre Beamten 1520 - 1629*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1973), vol. 1; Vann, *The Making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*.

<sup>70</sup> Albert Eugen Adam, *Württembergische Landtagsakten*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1910); Walter Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957: von den Landständen zum demokratischen Parlament* (Stuttgart, 1957); Peter Rückert, ed., *Landschaft, Land und Leute: politische Partizipation in Württemberg 1457 bis 2007* (Stuttgart, 2007); Sönke Lorenz, ed., *Auf dem Weg zur politischen Partizipation?: Landstände und Herrschaft im deutschen Südwesten* (Stuttgart, 2010).

<sup>71</sup> Joachim Kremer, Sönke Lorenz, and Peter Rückert, eds., *Hofkultur um 1600: die Hofmusik Herzog Friedrichs I. von Württemberg und ihr kulturelles Umfeld* (Ostfildern, 2010).

<sup>72</sup> Peter Rückert, ed., *Der württembergische Hof im 15. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 2006).

<sup>73</sup> Brendle, *Dynastie, Reich und Reformation: die württembergischen Herzöge Ulrich und Christoph, die Habsburger und Frankreich*.

<sup>74</sup> Axel Gotthard, *Konfession und Staatsräson: die Außenpolitik Württembergs unter Herzog Johann Friedrich (1608 - 1628)* (Stuttgart, 1992); Ingrid Hanack, *Die Tagebücher des Herzogs Johann Friedrich von Württemberg aus den Jahren 1615-1617: Edition, Kommentar, Versuch einer Studie* (Göppingen, 1972).

<sup>75</sup> See Walther Pfeilsticker, *Neues württembergisches Dienerbuch*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1957); Sönke Lorenz, Dieter Mertens, and Volker Press, eds., *Das Haus Württemberg: ein biographisches Lexikon* (Stuttgart, 1997).

the reception and resistance to rulership at the popular level in Württemberg.<sup>76</sup>

Ulinka Rublack's considerations of the crimes of women include many defendants in the duchy,<sup>77</sup> and her very recent analysis of the prosecution of Johannes Kepler's mother includes an important chapter on the cultural and scientific life at the court of Württemberg in the early seventeenth century.<sup>78</sup> Tara Nummedal has investigated closely Duke Friedrich's alchemy laboratories,<sup>79</sup> and Helen Watanabe O'Kelly provides influential readings of a number of court festivals held in Stuttgart in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>80</sup>

Women, gender, and sexuality have so far not been addressed in the history of the court of Stuttgart during our period of investigation.<sup>81</sup> Hence, this dissertation and, in particular, its considerations of the correspondences and political contributions of Duchesses Ursula (1572-1635), Sibylla (1564-1614), and Barbara Sophia (1584-1636), as well as the in-depth discussions of the latter two duchesses' marriages and task-sharing arrangements with their husbands, constitute an original contribution to the regional historiography of Württemberg.<sup>82</sup> Yet, I want to be clear that this study does not define itself over the 'addition' of women to the history of the courts of southern Germany. This is, on the one hand, because many scholars

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<sup>76</sup> David Sabeau, *Power in the blood: popular culture and village discourse in early modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1987).

<sup>77</sup> Ulinka Rublack, *The crimes of women in early modern Germany* (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>78</sup> See Ulinka Rublack, *The astronomer and the witch: Johannes Kepler's fight for his mother* (Oxford, 2015).

<sup>79</sup> See Tara Nummedal, *Alchemy and authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago, 2008).

<sup>80</sup> See specifically Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall shews: tournaments at German-speaking courts in their European context, 1560-1730* (Berlin, 1992); Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, 'The Protestant Union: Festivals, Festival Books, War and Politics', in J. R. Mulryne, Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Shewring, eds., *Europa triumphans: court and civic festivals in early modern Europe*, 2 vols. (London, 2004), vol.2, pp. 15–34; Markus Klinge, 'Triumphall Shews: German and English national identity in Weckherlin's 1616 Stuttgart Triumph', *The Seventeenth Century*, 22 (Autumn 2007) pp. 201–224; Sara Smart, 'The Württemberg Court and the Introduction of Ballet in the Empire', in J. R. Mulryne, Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Shewring, eds., *Europa triumphans: court and civic festivals in early modern Europe*, 2 vols. (London, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 35–45.

<sup>81</sup> For the sixteenth century see Michaela Hohkamp, 'Marital affairs as a public matter within the Holy Roman Empire: The case of Duke Ulrich and Duchess Sabine of Württemberg at the beginning of the sixteenth century', in Jason Philip Coy, Benjamin Marschke, and David Warren Sabeau, eds., *The Holy Roman Empire, reconsidered* (New York, 2010) pp. 213–228; Ruth Blank, 'Magdalena Möringer. Eine Gefangene auf der Festung Hohenurach', *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*, 65 (2006), pp. 49–98.

<sup>82</sup> See chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

have already worked diligently on this.<sup>83</sup> More importantly, however, it does not appear to me that this is the most fruitful way in which to merge histories of the court and histories of gender in view of the development of these disciplines today, as has been shown above.

From the time of Württemberg's elevation to a duchy at the end of the fifteenth century, the dukes of Württemberg had their main residence in the castle in Stuttgart. It was from there that they ruled their territory, which, in the smallest political measurement, consisted, over time, of between forty-five and fifty-eight departments (*Ämter*).<sup>84</sup> In all of these units resided a bailiff or a *Vogt* or *Amtmann*. The bailiffs were salaried representatives of the duke. At times, the duke gave out these offices to noblemen, in which case they took the title of *Obervogt*, and had a deputy *Untervogt*.<sup>85</sup> The bailiffs were responsible for bringing the duke's edicts and instructions to the local people, for overseeing the department's finances, and for organising military endeavours when that became an issue.<sup>86</sup> The local government of most towns was further administrated by a court of law and a council, both of which were staffed with members of the local elite, who were appointed from within their own circles. The *Vogt* also sat on both of these boards, but his administrative power was checked by the other members as well as by the varying levels of cooperation he faced from the common people.<sup>87</sup>

Most *Ämter* had a town and village component. The villages were headed by another administrative officer and were equipped with their own village courts. Despite this division in administration, the town and rural areas of Württemberg were not actually deeply divided, but rather developed a tradition of close collaboration

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<sup>83</sup> See for instance Ute Essegern, *Fürstinnen am kursächsischen Hof: Lebenskonzepte und Lebensläufe zwischen Familie, Hof und Politik in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts : Hedwig von Dänemark, Sibylla Elisabeth von Württemberg und Magdalena Sibylla von Preußen* (Leipzig, 2007); Keller, *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532-1585)*; Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof (1651-1756)*.

<sup>84</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 39.

<sup>85</sup> Helga Schnabel-Schüle, *Überwachen und Strafen im Territorialstaat: Bedingungen und Auswirkungen des Systems strafrechtlicher Sanktionen im frühneuzeitlichen Württemberg* (Köln, 1997), p. 44.

<sup>86</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 40.

<sup>87</sup> On popular resistance to state power see Ulinka Rublack, 'Frühneuzeitliche Staatlichkeit und Lokale Herrschaftspraxis in Württemberg', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 24:3 (1997).

over trade and on local projects to improve infrastructure.<sup>88</sup> Mentioning the *Ämter* in some detail here is necessary because they became the political power base of an urban elite that came to act as a balancing force to ducal power. Already in the sixteenth century this elite was named and identified as the *Württemberg Ehrbarkeit*.<sup>89</sup>

They were by no means a homogenous group, but they were of burgher descent and distinguished themselves by increasing wealth and good internal connections, which were fostered by intermarriage. Each *Amt* sent two delegates to the territorial diets called for by the duke, one of them being the local Vogt and the other a member of the local administrative elite and usually a candidate put forward from among the *Ehrbarkeit*. During the reign of Duke Friedrich, the *Ehrbarkeit* was kept in check quite efficiently, since Friedrich aggressively placed people loyal to himself in the key assemblies of the diet. Yet, in 1629, against the backdrop of warfare and Ludwig Friedrich's regime as ducal administrator on behalf of the underage Duke Eberhard (r. 1633-1674), the government agreed to preclude its *Amtmänner* (bailiffs) from attending future assemblies of the territorial diet. Thereafter, the *Ehrbarkeit* came to firmly dominate these gatherings, and the line between ducal government and the estates was redrawn with greater clarity.<sup>90</sup>

The success of the *Ehrbarkeit* was in part also due to the absence of the local nobility from the diet. The *Württemberg* nobility had retained their *reichsunmittelbarkeit*. Thus, in theory, they did not owe allegiance to the duke, nor did they stand in competition for political influence with him. Nevertheless, their lived reality was somewhat more complicated, particularly when we focus our attention on the court. Despite their absence from the diet, a great number of offices

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<sup>88</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 41.

<sup>89</sup> The term 'Ehrbarkeit' comes from the sources, but it has in the past been used to describe an office-holding elite group of *Württemberg* burghers, although the sources tend to use the term in a much broader sense to describe families of a rank above the common people who were at least in the sixteenth century loyal to the ducal government. On the history of the term see Gabriele Haug-Moritz, *Die württembergische Ehrbarkeit Annäherungen an eine bürgerliche Machtelite der Frühen Neuzeit* (Ostfildern, 2009), pp. 1–2, I use the term in its original broader sense.

<sup>90</sup> Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957 : von den Landständen zum demokratischen Parlament*, pp. 299f.

at the court in Stuttgart were taken by local nobility, and often these stayed within a family over generations. Their own residences in the Württemberg area, in principle, constituted self-governing enclaves answerable only to the emperor. However, in practice, many noble families were being propped up by financial input directly from the dukes, and often they even owed them payment and services for land or privileges. As the nobles multiplied, they needed more lands for their offspring, and, since they often settled on Württemberg lands, they increasingly entered into relationships of obligations with the duke.<sup>91</sup> Their absence from the diet meant that their only way of gaining local political influence was through service at court, and they could not afford to pass up this opportunity for the reasons just outlined. The nobility thus still took an important place in the history of the court of Stuttgart, though it was framed by different conditions than elsewhere.

The territorial diet was comprised, besides the *Ämter* representatives, only of the prelates. They were the Lutheran clerics heading the remaining male monastic holdings, which the dukes had not secularised in the course of the reformation. The diet in Württemberg had a relatively strong legal standing based on the *Tübinger Vertrag* which Duke Ulrich had been forced to sign after the peasant riots of 1514.<sup>92</sup> The treaty stipulated that the duke had to consult the estates on tax collection and military interventions in foreign territories, thus firmly inscribing its role in the political system of the duchy.

Nevertheless, the ducal court was undisputedly the centre of the government of Württemberg. The *Kirchenrat* was reordered under Duke Christoph in 1559 and its tasks concerning the overseeing of Lutheran orthodoxy in all corners of the territory, as well as the handling of the church finances, were centralised under the supervision of the *Landhofmeister* and the provost of Stuttgart. The other important ducal agencies located in Stuttgart included the chancellery, the upper council (*Oberrat*), and the treasury (*Rentkammer*). These will be discussed in more detail in

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<sup>91</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 50.

<sup>92</sup> Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957 : von den Landständen zum demokratischen Parlament*, pp. 83–6.

their spatial contexts in the first chapter of this dissertation and here some remarks on their relationship to ducal rule should suffice. The *Oberrat* was the highest territorial judicial agency, and it oversaw criminal cases in all departments of the duchy, serving as the highest court of appeal within the territory.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, since all noble courtiers and many other government officials were exempt from the regular jurisdiction, any cases involving them came straight to the upper council where the duke could easily insist on discretion for those under his special protection, should he choose to do so. Beyond its tribunal function, the *Oberrat* also made decisions on a large number of governmental affairs, excepting the *Reservatssachen*, which the duke dealt with personally. These included any changes in law, the hiring and firing of administrative and court officials, pardons, the granting of permissions for a second marriage for divorced people, as well as any issues relating to war or the politics of the Empire.<sup>94</sup>

Noble *Oberräte* were in the majority in the early sixteenth century, but that soon shifted and legally trained burghers came to be more strongly represented. This development did not proceed in a linear fashion, however. A fluctuating number of *Oberräte* with a noble background remained all through the period of investigation, though from 1613 even they had to produce proof of legal expertise before their appointment. The increasingly complex nature of the administration put new demands on all persons engaged in its service and the *Landhofmeister*, who used to oversee the *Oberrat*, increasingly passed on this function to a trained lawyer who acted in his stead.

The chancellery had developed out of a medieval scribe workshop, and, even in the sixteenth century, it fulfilled the function of setting in writing any orders, edicts or letters coming from the duke. Yet over time the chancellery officials had also acquired functions as political advisors and some among them (as well as some members of the *Oberrat*) were given the title of privy councillor (*Geheimer Rat*).

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<sup>93</sup> Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg und ihre Beamten 1520 - 1629*, p. 20.

<sup>94</sup> For a full list of the *Reservatssachen* see Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg und ihre Beamten 1520 - 1629*, p. 17.

This did not signify membership in an actual council, but their function as particularly trusted ducal advisors. In the course of the sixteenth century the chancellery began to lose some of its influence, as the dukes developed a taste for developing even more personal solutions for their advisory needs and the *Hofkanzlei* was created. This consisted of a chamber secretary (*Kammersekretär*), his assistant, and some scribes, and it began to take over, in particular, the type of chancellery work that involved close collaboration with the duke.<sup>95</sup>

The concentration of duties on a smaller number of specially trusted councillors and officials is sometimes termed ‘cabinet rule’, and it is seen as a specifically early modern development, in departure from feudal styles of rule that required negotiation with larger councils. In this loosely-structured and dynamic system of rule, it was largely up to the duke whom he wanted by his side to perform the most intimate advisory duties. The secret councillors chosen to do so often held other administrative positions concurrently, and they never met as a separate body before the reign of Eberhard III. The privy councillors had different backgrounds and talents to offer the reigning duke. Some were courtiers in the strictest sense, in that they came from noble families and held positions in the ducal household, offering their advice in the courtly domestic setting. Others were of burgher descent and were highly educated jurists, offering targeted policy advice. These functions usually involved physical presence in the courtly context, but the case of the extremely powerful ducal favourite, Matthäus Enzlin, shows that even the residency requirements of these most trusted of councillors were negotiable. He held his councillor position simultaneously with the chair of the Tübingen law faculty, and spent most of his time away from Stuttgart.<sup>96</sup>

It is thus important to be clear that, even though it is crucial to have an idea of the institutional framework of the duchy of Württemberg, it is impossible to

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<sup>95</sup> Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg und ihre Beamten 1520 - 1629*, p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> Ronald G. Asch, ‘Corruption and punishment? The rise and fall of Matthäus Enzlin (1556-1613), lawyer and favourite’, in John Huxtable Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss, eds., *The world of the favourite* (New Haven, 1999), p. 101.

understand the day-to-day governance of this territory without paying close attention to specific actors and situations at the court of Stuttgart.<sup>97</sup> The tools of governance were so flexible that each administration had the opportunity to tailor them to a significant extent to suit the needs it deemed most urgent. For instance, the role of the head of the chancellery came to be one of the prime court offices during the reign of Christoph, but, by the time Friedrich took over, this office appeared so expendable to him that he left it unoccupied for several years. Setting agendas and developing visions of what ideal governmental practices should look like was a process that we cannot locate exclusively in the rooms of the chancellery, or in the chambers of the duke. Rather, a variety of actors, including women, could exert an influence on these experiments of governance, and gendered roles and hierarchies offered one of the modes for thinking about the optimal relationship between the duke, the estates, and the common people of Württemberg.<sup>98</sup>

Of course, the duke was also constrained in the application of his vision of governance by the legal and symbolic framework offered by the Holy Roman Empire of which he was never independent. It is notable, however, that outside of the Thirty Years' War, there were only a handful of moments in Württemberg history where the power of the Empire exerted an express influence on Württemberg domestic politics, and these moments were, at least in part, connected to a challenge of the duke's interpretation of gendered familial orders. When Duke Ulrich stabbed his mistress's husband in 1515, his marital crisis climaxed, and his wife Sabine fled from Württemberg to seek refuge with her brothers of the ducal dynasty of Bavaria, claiming that she feared for her life at Ulrich's court. In this flight she was assisted by her uncle the Emperor Maximilian I.<sup>99</sup> This marital scandal provided part of the legitimation for Sabine's brother to take military action against Ulrich when he

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<sup>97</sup> Compare this to Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: the courts of Europe's dynastic rivals, 1550 - 1780* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 226, where it is mentioned that the 'elusive and largely unrecorded processes of decision-making at court can be reconstructed only where we have an abundance of correspondence and memoirs, supplementing and correcting the usually bland official records'.

<sup>98</sup> See for instance chapter 2, pp. 109-12.

<sup>99</sup> Hohkamp, 'Marital affairs as a public matter', p. 214.

attempted to take the free imperial city of Reutlingen in 1519. Ulrich was defeated and exiled, and the duchy then passed under Habsburg rule. When Ulrich was allowed to return fifteen years later, Württemberg retained the status of a vassal state (*Afterlehen*), which only Duke Friedrich, in 1599, was able to reverse with an enormous payment to the emperor.<sup>100</sup>

Friedrich's own various extramarital affairs also attracted the interference of the supreme court of the Holy Roman Empire (*Reichskammergericht*), although the consequences were nowhere near as profound as in Ulrich's case. After Friedrich's death, his son, the new Duke Johann Friedrich, attempted to imprison one of his father's favourites indefinitely without levelling an official charge against her, and the *Reichskammergericht* prosecuted this transgression.

Finally, at the start of the eighteenth century, Duke Eberhard Ludwig was only stopped from living in bigamy with his mistress the countess Grävenitz, when the reigning Duchess Johanna Elisabeth managed to bring the estates and the ducal privy councillors to take her side. She convinced them to appeal alongside her to her father, the Margrave of Baden-Durlach, to bring Eberhard Ludwig's case to the attention of the Emperor.<sup>101</sup> The threat of an empire-wide scandal was enough to make Eberhard Ludwig comply, and Vann stresses that one of the most crucial consequences of this moment was the distrust with which the duke now viewed his own privy council which had spoken out against him.<sup>102</sup> Whilst previously the lines of opposition ran between the duke and his privy councillors on one side and the estates on the other, they were now redrawn and the crown was now facing both the estates and the high officials.<sup>103</sup> This configuration ushered in a new round of political developments.

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<sup>100</sup> Hohkamp, 'Marital affairs as a public matter', p. 217.

<sup>101</sup> Vann, *The Making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, pp. 190–3; Peter H. Wilson, 'Women and Imperial politics: the Württemberg consorts, 1674-1757', in Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Queenship in Europe 1660 - 1815: the role of the consort* (Cambridge, 2004) pp. 221–251; Sybille OBwald-Bargende, *Die Mätresse, der Fürst und die Macht: Christina Wilhelmina von Grävenitz und die höfische Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000).

<sup>102</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 192.

<sup>103</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 214.

These examples show that dukes remained ultimately bound not merely by the authority of the emperor, but also by contemporary orders of gender, which they could only bend so far until their choices came to cause fissures in their aura of legitimacy. This could be used to generate efficient arguments for change in territorial politics. It might prove fruitful to investigate further how gender difference functioned more broadly in the charged interaction between territorial princes and the emperor, but this dissertation has to remain within a manageable temporal and geographical frame in order to achieve completion.

The subsequent reigns of Dukes Friedrich (r. 1593-1608) and Johann Friedrich (r. 1608-1628) have been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, Friedrich attempted to implement profound changes in how governance in Württemberg operated and his rule is thus an interesting test case to observe the flexibility of the institutions of ducal governance. He has often been called an ‘early absolutist’ by regional historians because of his refusal to collaborate at eye-level with the estates, his mercantilist economic policy, and the restructuring of administrative pathways which now all had to lead through his own hands.<sup>104</sup> Interestingly, he had not actually been prepared since his earliest childhood for this task. He was born into a side branch of the Württemberg dynastic line, and thus administered the left-rhine department of Mömpelgard for ten years before his uncle Ludwig died in 1593, without leaving any male heirs. This cleared the way for Friedrich to become the next Duke of Württemberg.<sup>105</sup> He and his wife Sibylla were thus the founders of a new line of the Württemberg ducal dynasty, and, as a result, they did not begin their rule with a surplus of legitimacy. Perhaps this influenced Friedrich’s extraordinary desire to be perceived as a strong and capable leader by foreign potentates.

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<sup>104</sup> See for instance Sabine Holtz, *Bildung und Herrschaft: zur Verwissenschaftlichung politischer Führungsschichten im 17. Jahrhundert* (Leinfelden-Echterdingen, 2002), p. 20; Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 112-24.

<sup>105</sup> On his rule of Mömpelgard see Juliane Krinninger-Babel, ‘Friedrich I. von Württemberg als Regent der Grafschaft Mömpelgard (1581-1593) - Forschungsstand und Perspektiven’, in Sönke Lorenz and Peter Rückert, eds., *Württemberg und Mömpelgard: 600 Jahre Begegnung: Beiträge zur wissenschaftlichen Tagung vom 17. bis 19. September 1997 im Hauptstaatsarchiv = Montbéliard-Wurtemberg: 600 ans de relations* (Leinfelden-Echterdingen, 1999), pp. 251–284.

He strove for good relations with the King of France and pursued a long campaign to be granted the honour of becoming a knight of the garter by Queen Elizabeth I of England. It has been suggested that Friedrich had ambitious plans for creating a land-bridge between Württemberg's main territories and the Mömpelgard holdings on the other side of the Rhine. His efforts to build the new and splendid city of Freudenstadt from 1599 onwards underlines this theory, as its location (between Stuttgart and Strasbourg) and its design would have predisposed it for becoming the new capital of an enlarged Württemberg state that would have constituted a vigorous force wedged between France and the lands of the Empire.<sup>106</sup> Friedrich operated his reform-oriented regime with the help of highly skilled ducal favourites. One of his greatest successes was the more or less legal dissolution of the principles of the *Tübinger Vertrag* in 1607, which was designed to free up ducal leadership even further.<sup>107</sup> His early death in January 1608, however, prevented many of the grand changes he envisaged from becoming institutionalised.

His son, Johann Friedrich, took quite a different political path and reconciled himself with the estates, which regained a lot of ground during his reign. Nevertheless, Johann Friedrich overall maintained a confident foreign policy and increased spending on representational efforts.<sup>108</sup> He had the dubious fate of reigning Württemberg at the outset of the Thirty Years' War. As a result he was forced to weigh carefully his loyalty for the emperor with the need to protect the Lutheran orthodoxy of his territory, and the last decade of his life was determined by his engagement in the politics of the Protestant Union. When he died in 1628 Württemberg was being squeezed from several sides and it was a particularly precarious moment for a difficult succession.

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<sup>106</sup> See on this Gerhard Hertel, 'Die Residenzstadt Herzog Friedrichs', in Stadtarchiv Freudenstadt, ed., *Planstadt, Kurstadt, Freudenstadt: Chronik einer Tourismusstadt* (Karlsruhe, 1999), pp. 11–28, here esp. pp 14-22.

<sup>107</sup> See Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, p. 271, Friedrich used intimidation tactics and as a result the vote on this issue did later not hold up, since the estates regarded it as illegitimate.

<sup>108</sup> See Holtz, *Bildung und Herrschaft: zur Verwissenschaftlichung politischer Führungsschichten im 17. Jahrhundert*, p. 20f.; On the detail of Johann Friedrich's foreign policy see Gotthard, *Konfession und Staatsräson: die Außenpolitik Württembergs unter Herzog Johann Friedrich (1608 - 1628)*.

For Johann Friedrich's heir Eberhard was only fourteen at the time of his father's passing, and, as a result, a council of guardians took over the reign for several years until Eberhard stepped in, in 1633, having been declared of age at the age of eighteen.<sup>109</sup> Very shortly thereafter, in 1634, Eberhard and all of his dynastic relatives saw themselves forced to flee Württemberg and seek exile in Strasbourg when the pressures of war became too great. This dissertation will take the departure for exile as the point of conclusion, but it should nevertheless be pointed out here that the leader-less territory suffered enormously from pillaging troops. It is estimated that Württemberg lost 57 % of its inhabitants and around 43 % of its infrastructure in the years that followed.<sup>110</sup> Duke Eberhard returned to the duchy in 1638, but had to accept the loss of fourteen male monasteries and their lands, as well as a handful of departments the emperor now reclaimed. The privy council, having been institutionalised in 1629, gained significantly in confidence and corporate identity during and after the war.<sup>111</sup> The long reign of Eberhard, which lasted until 1674, is now viewed as a moment when the estates and the various councillors came into their own and shouldered a lot of the burden of rebuilding Württemberg after the devastation of war.<sup>112</sup>

This part of the political history of Württemberg is well-known, and the purpose of this dissertation is not to retell it. Rather, I am interested in connecting this part of the narrative with the interesting shifts in the organisation of ducal familial life and the gendered task-sharing practised between Friedrich, Johann Friedrich, and their respective wives Sibylla and Barbara Sophia. Friedrich, in contention with the Lutheran ideal of a monogamous lifestyle, entertained several extramarital affairs during his reign of the duchy. Interestingly, after Friedrich's death, Johann Friedrich and his mother Sibylla moved determinedly against these

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<sup>109</sup> Lorenz, Mertens, and Press, eds., *Das Haus Württemberg: Ein biographisches Lexikon*, pp. 152–5, the regular age of majority was twenty-four.

<sup>110</sup> Wolfgang von Hippel, 'Bevölkerung und Wirtschaft', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 5 (1978), pp. 413–448, here pp. 437f.

<sup>111</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 84.

<sup>112</sup> See Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, ch. 3 'A Balance in Government', pp. 89-132.

former mistresses and had about a dozen women imprisoned who were thought to have had illegitimate relationships with the late duke.<sup>113</sup> This was, of course, a delicate affair, and, without implicating the memory of the late *Landesvater*, it was not possible to keep so many women imprisoned without official procedure for very long. Most were freed quickly and escaped relatively unscathed, except for one particular female favourite named Magdalena Möringer. Her story will form the focus of the fourth chapter of this thesis. Moreover, Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia led a much more collaborative marriage than the previous ducal couple, and this left Barbara Sophia prepared for taking an important role in the council of guardians of her oldest son Eberhard when her husband passed away. The interesting tension between the interpretations of gender roles and marital lifestyles between the two ducal couples under consideration constitutes a further reason for the choice of this example.

It will be argued that linking these family histories with the standard political history of Württemberg at this time is not an optional style choice to add more depth to the leading characters of this story. In fact, it will enable us to understand more comprehensively how the rule and governance of this Lutheran territory of the Holy Roman Empire unfolded. Finally, Württemberg is an interesting case study for this endeavour since its administration, which was outlined above, is comparable to that of larger European dynastic territories, though it is of course smaller in scale.<sup>114</sup> This feature renders it ideal for a pointed empirical investigation of the intersections of gender and political orders, and it can thus be reasonably assumed that the blueprint of the present study could be applied to other, larger, courts, as is envisaged by this study.

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<sup>113</sup> Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, p. 312f.

<sup>114</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-179,3* p. 19, Württemberg's similarity to 'larger European states' in microcosm.

## *Sources*

Another reason for the choice of this case study was the richness of the sources in the archive of Stuttgart. I have made an effort to comb through all the holdings of documents produced in the courtly context for the time period chosen, without restricting myself to source types normally used for histories focusing on dynastic women, such as correspondences and marital contracts. As a result, this dissertation draws on a wide variety of sources, such as court ordinances, administrative documents, chancellery records of judicial proceedings against courtiers, seating plans, festival descriptions, a ducal journal, and the *Reichskammergericht* trial records of the legal suit of Friedrich's favourite, Magdalena Möringer. These official records were read in connection with the correspondence of the Württemberg family members under discussion. Both the men and women under consideration engaged extensively in letter-writing, though the survival of these documents is at times restricted to specific phases of their lives. It is fortunate, however, that, in particular, the women who are less present in the administrative documents are revealed to be deeply involved in life at court through their letters. It should further be noted that I do not consider the correspondence to be a completely different source type from the administrative documents, since most aristocratic correspondence had a semi-public character and must not be read as a form of naïve self-expression.<sup>115</sup>

## *Methodology and Terms*

Much has already been said on the subject matter of this dissertation without yet making explicit how the research was approached. First of all, the term 'gender' has been used quite liberally and now should be the time to reflect on what this dissertation means by it. It is evident that this work is indebted to the reflections of Joan Scott who put gender as an analytical category on the map. However, the

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<sup>115</sup> An exception is perhaps the correspondence between Sibylla and Friedrich which is written entirely in concept hand without many of the formalities that usually attach to this kind of communication.

present study will also take into account views from her critics in order to avoid some of the pitfalls of a too rigidly binary conception of gender.<sup>116</sup> The reflections of Jeanne Boydston are a crucial influence on my work, as her insistence on the reformulation of gender as a question has to stand at the heart of a study critiquing a historiography for too readily associating gender with femaleness.<sup>117</sup> Boydston is pertinent in reminding us that we cannot presuppose that constructions of gender mattered at all times for historical actors equally. Rather, the clout of gender in specific situations has to be established, and, if we keep this in mind, we will find it easier to avoid automatically assuming that the gender of dynastic women was an eternal obstacle in their attempts to exercise power and to achieve autonomy. When I use the term gender in the following, I mean it as a reference to the concept of ‘gender difference’, not femininity or masculinity. At times it will be necessary to refer more specifically to the gendered roles actors at court might take (such as those of husband, wife, *Landesvater* etc.), and where this is the case it has been made explicit in the text.

Furthermore, the review of the literature has shown that courtly politics cannot be understood to take place solely in the governmental agencies staffed with male courtiers and jurists. It has, in fact, a much more diffuse character that included diverse practices of representation, such as cultural patronage (and patronage more generally), access politics, as well as information gathering and intercessions, which often bypassed official channels of administration. These can at times be difficult to locate in the sources, but we are precluded from the outset from doing so if we do not work with inclusive language in order to discuss decision-making processes and political strategy at the early modern court. This dissertation will thus work with the term ‘practice of power’, which here serves as an umbrella term for all practices that contribute to the visibility, legitimacy, and authority of the dynastic government of Württemberg. The term ‘practice’ itself has been defined by Füssel, Schatzki et al. as

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<sup>116</sup> Joan W. Scott, ‘Gender: A useful category of historical analysis’, *The American Historical Review*, 91 (December 1986), p. 1053-75.

<sup>117</sup> Boydston, ‘Gender as a question of historical analysis’.

‘the situated exercise of language and deeds by actors in cooperation with things and bodily routines’, and thus has a narrower connotation than ‘act’.<sup>118</sup> In the context of early modern governance I would add to this that, in order to qualify as a practice, the ‘situated exercise’ has to have a repetitive character and/or make reference to earlier, similar exercises, for dynastic power is always constructed over repetition and references to continuity.<sup>119</sup> In this way it will become possible to reinterpret subjects such as pregnancies and relationship management which carry connotations of passivity, and claim them for the practice of power.

Although this thesis focuses on a single court of the Holy Roman Empire, its approach is influenced by comparative work on dynastic centres in a global perspective. I first became interested in the political dimension of sexual systems and the orders of dynastic reproduction at court in a comparative perspective, as I was intrigued by the similarities and contrasts between monogamous and polygamous dynastic centres. There is an ingrained euro-centric line of thought that views polygamy as a particularly cruel form of female oppression, which in the late early modern period came to be thought of as synonymous with oriental despots.<sup>120</sup> Yet,

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<sup>118</sup> Marian Füssel, ‘Die Praxis der Theorie. Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft im Dialog’, in Arndt Brendecke, ed., *Praktiken der Frühen Neuzeit: Akteure – Handlungen – Artefakte* (September 2015), pp. 21–33, here p. 26, ‘kann eine Praktik als *situierter Vollzug von Sprechakten und Handlungen im Zusammenspiel von Dingen und körperlichen Routinen von Akteuren* verstanden werden’, original emphasis.

<sup>119</sup> See on this point Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider: Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reiches*, esp., pp. 7-16; also see Gabriele Jancke and Daniel Schläppi who underline the centrality of ‘practices’ in the model of a social economy in, ‘Einleitung: Ressourcen und eine Ökonomie sozialer Beziehungen’, in Gabriele Jancke and Daniel Schläppi, eds., *Die Ökonomie sozialer Beziehungen: Ressourcenbewirtschaftungen als Geben, Nehmen, Investieren, Verschwenden, Haushalten, Horten, Vererben, Schulden* (Stuttgart, 2015), pp. 7–33, here esp. pp. 22f., the authors argue that practices constitute both relationships and resources, and that in turn relationships act as catalysts for new practices. Their reflections are illuminating for analyses of the dynamics, meanings, and risks of social interactions in dynastic centres, but the social economy model has not been chosen here, in order to avoid running the risk of ending up with another comparison of the stakes held by men and women in the ‘social economy’ of the court.

<sup>120</sup> See on this Claudia Opitz-Belakhal, ‘Orientalische Despotie im Harem? Zur Geschichte einiger Missverständnisse im christlich-islamischen Kulturkontakt’, in a lecture held at the conference *Männerfreundlich, frauenfeindlich? Ein christlich-islamischer Dialog über Geschlechterrollen* in Stuttgart-Hohenheim, 14–16 November 2008, in which she traces back this connection between polygamy and ‘oriental despotism’ to Montesquieu’s literary and state-theoretical writings. Also see Johann Georg Krünitz, *Oeconomische Encyclopädie, oder allgemeines System der Staats- Stadt haus- und Landwirthschaft*, vol. 14 (1778), s.v. ‘Frauen=Zimmer’, when discussing the benefits women

the more I learned about Islamic courts, the more sceptically I viewed the supposition that the Christian prescription of monogamy gave European dynastic women some kind of a head start in terms of personal liberty.<sup>121</sup> On their own the dynamics of reproduction at European courts can appear to be self-evident. Yet Jeroen Duindam postulates that: ‘Dynasties are cultural constructs, based on conventions regarding reproductions and eligibility for the throne’, and he shows further that these conventions were in fact highly variable in a global perspective.<sup>122</sup> In light of this, it struck me that the really intriguing question was not to find out about the gradations of female oppression in various cultural contexts, but to question why gender difference was so centrally reproduced by dynasties in the first place. In order to do this, it appeared suitable to focus on a single case study to hone a perspective on a previously neglected aspect of dynastic rule, although my approach had been shaped by comparative methods. Throughout the dissertation I will refer to dynastic centres in different cultural contexts, where it appeared interesting to offer at least the rudimentary beginnings of a comparison. The idea behind this is not to attempt to typologise different models of dynastic governance, but rather to hint at the great variability with which gender roles could be defined and mobilised in various practices of power.

In order to achieve these objectives Monika Mommertz’s ‘tracer’ concept will be employed.<sup>123</sup> This arose out of Mommertz’s own research into the role played by

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gained through being permitted more freedom in roaming beyond their appointed living spaces the author came to the following conclusion: ‘Too great an oriental pressure has undesired consequences, yet too much freedom even more so.’ (‘Ein allzugroßer orientalischer Zwang hat seine unangenehme Folgen, und eine zu große Freyheit im Umgange noch mehr.’), ‘Oriental’ is here thus used as shorthand for the enclosure and oppression of women.

<sup>121</sup> This notion was first evoked by Montesquieu, but it has proved remarkably persistent to this very day. On its origins see Claudia Opitz-Belakhal, ‘Montesquieu from a gender perspective. An introductory essay’, in Edgar Mass, ed., *Montesquieu zwischen den Disziplinen: Einzel- und kulturwissenschaftliche Zugriffe. Internationale Konferenz aus Anlass des 250. Todesjahres von Charles-Louis de Montesquieu an der Universität Potsdam, Forschungszentrum Europäische Aufklärung* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 263–71, here esp. pp. 265–7.

<sup>122</sup> Duindam, *Dynasties*, p. 88.

<sup>123</sup> This concept is laid out over a series of articles. The best overview of all aspects is given in Monika Mommertz, ‘Geschlecht als “tracer”: Das Konzept der Funktionenteilung als Perspektive für die Arbeit mit Geschlecht als analytische Kategorie in der frühneuzeitlichen Wissenschaftsgeschichte’, in Michaela Hohkamp and Gabriele Jancke, eds., *Nonne, Königin und*

gender in the history of science, and it offers a systematic way to analyse the category of gender difference in a given historical setting. The term ‘tracer’ is taken from the natural sciences where it usually designates a detectable substance that can be introduced into a specific system in order to trace its reactions as it progresses through the system. Where and when the tracer reacts will in turn tell the scientist something about the system under investigation. Using gender as a ‘tracer’ thus means scanning a historical setting, such as an early modern court, for instances when gender difference becomes meaningful. This means that gender is not conceived of as a rigid category, but, in Mommertz’s view, it resembles more of a flag or a marker that can at times single out individuals, but it is neither constantly meaningful, nor does it always need to be attached to a specific person.<sup>124</sup>

This latter suggestion represents in my view a particularly innovative and useful development in the methodology of gender history. Considering gender difference as a marker creates an analytical distance to our subject of study.<sup>125</sup> For this case, even more importantly, it allows us to shift our research questions away from the constitution of gendered identities and their effects on specific ‘men’ or ‘women’ (questions which have been treated at length in the courtly context), towards asking what the difference itself meant for the historical setting of the court. Gender can thus be abstracted from the interpersonal level, and we are free to consider it as neither specifically male nor female, but as a third category, namely as a resource.

Mommertz provides numerous examples of how gender acts as a resource in natural science. She mentions, for instance, that established forms of knowledge in the eighteenth century could be questioned by way of critiques of traditional interpretations of gender difference. The ‘true’ knowledge of women might thus be

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*Kurtisane. Wissen, Bildung und Gelehrsamkeit von Frauen in der frühen Neuzeit* (Königstein, 2004) pp. 17–38.

<sup>124</sup> Monika Mommertz, ‘Theoriepotentiale ,ferner Vergangenheiten‘, *L’Homme*, 26 (January 2015), pp. 79–97, here pp. 83–5.

<sup>125</sup> Mommertz, ‘Geschlecht als “tracer”’, p. 21.

praised in opposition to the pedantic forms of knowledge of learned physicians.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, imaginations of nature itself came to be clearly gendered during the development of natural sciences in that century, whereas male researchers imagined themselves as being led to knowledge by a female personification of nature.<sup>127</sup> When new concepts of knowledge were being developed, learned men often leaned heavily on contemporary constructs of gender both in order to steer their reflections, and later to lend them plausibility when they were disseminating their findings.

In accordance with Mommertz's proposed methodology the chapters of this dissertation have been constructed around instances where gender difference came to be meaningful at the court of Stuttgart. The first two chapters are particularly concerned with the usages of gender difference in everyday life at court. The first chapter considers how gender worked as an ordering principle of the courtly space and how it intersected with rank to serve representational purposes. Furthermore, the court will be considered here as a gendered 'super-household' that allowed only selected dynastic persons to take up the gendered roles associated with the greatest authority in the dynastic centre. This chapter will equally consider how courtiers and councillors moved between different households during their service at court and what potential for conflict these multiple memberships entailed. Here, it will emerge that the gender roles inhabited by court members of all ranks could at times rub against each other and create significant tension. Yet, as long as the duke could then step in to mediate the conflict, the overall hierarchical order was reaffirmed rather than destabilised.

The second chapter investigates the glamorous court festivals staged in Stuttgart during Duke Friedrich's and Duke Johann Friedrich's reigns. These events are doubly interesting for the present inquiry, for gender difference was staged both in the meta-level framing device of the tournament, which consisted of the homage

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<sup>126</sup> Monika Mommertz, 'Geschlecht als Markierung, Resource und Tracer: Neue Nützlichkeiten einer Kategorie am Beispiel der Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit', in Christine Roll, Frank Pohle, and Matthias Myrczek, eds., *Grenzen und Grenzüberschreitungen: Bilanz und Perspektiven der Frühneuezeitforschung* (Köln, 2010) p. 573-92, here p. 586.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 584.

paid to the female audience observing the tournament contestants, as well as within the narratives that were superimposed on festivals and tournaments at this point in time. Many noblemen chose to transgress narrow boundaries of gender identities via their costumes, with Amazons being particularly popular motifs of these festivities. The tournament grounds were thus a key space for the affirmation of the elevated status of those who could claim noble rank, and this was not only achieved through manly pursuits, but also through stagings and transgressions of gender difference. In the final three chapters there will be a closer focus on how specific actors interpreted the dynastic system of rule and how they distributed its tasks amongst themselves.

In the third chapter, I will argue that we have not yet fully appreciated how important the labour of the consort, emotional and otherwise, could be to the upkeep of problematic marriages. The complementary labour of the duke and the duchess will be considered as a work system which, particularly in the German Lutheran context, relied, to a significant extent, on the duality of the ruling couple. Its symbolic function constituted a particularly crucial resource of power and, consequently, the efforts made for its upkeep formed a distinct part of the practice of power.

The fourth chapter will consider the consequences of a duke's attempt to shift the idealised image of the 'working couple' rule in favour of his own visibility. The trial records of the prosecution of Friedrich's favourite, Magdalena Möringer, will provide the source base for this part of the dissertation. The final fifth chapter will consider the marriage of Barbara Sophia and Johann Friedrich as a counter-example to the problematic union of Sibylla and Friedrich. This younger ducal couple collaborated much more easily, and they deployed their respective representational labour in an effective and complementary manner. This chapter will also ask about the contributions of widows to the practice of power, and, in particular, the functions of Barbara Sophia and the Dowager Duchess Ursula of Württemberg will be considered.

The final chapter will argue that the vague prescriptions for the roles of dynastic females in the practice of power created a certain room for manoeuvre that

could foster competition among a range of dynastic actors, at the end of which usually a particularly skilled person managed to take the reins of power. Overall, it will thus be shown that gender was not only a category that impacted on the concepts of personhood of specific dynastic actors, but that the category of gender itself was a resource that functioned in myriad ways to increase the longevity of the dynastic form of rule.

## Chapter 1: Everyday Life at Court. Space, Gender, and Household

This chapter seeks to make two distinct but linked arguments. Firstly, it wants to consider the practice of gender segregation at court as a way to enhance the internal differentiation and thus the representational value of the ‘super-household’ that constituted the princely court.<sup>1</sup> In a second step, it will be argued that members of the court were allocated different levels of integration into the courtly household system according to their rank, gender, and marital status. The levels of integration scaled downwards from the duke, who was unique in being surrounded by his dynastic family and enjoying access to all courtly spaces. He also had the ultimate authority to arbitrate conflicts not only within the courtly household, but also within the distinct households of his courtiers. In this way he positioned himself truly as the head of a larger-than-life household and as the *Landesvater* of his territory. The duchess also was invested with decision-making power over the specific courtly spaces and the female personnel working within it. Yet, since both she and the women in her service had to recognise the authority of a husband, father, or the *Landesvater* above them, the hierarchy of power remained quite distinct. It must be stated from the outset that space and spatiality are not considered to be rigid physical entities. Rather, they are understood to be constructed via social practices and legal norms.<sup>2</sup> As a result, material boundaries and structures have the potential to shift in order to reflect specific social dynamics, but, in turn, they also have an active impact on everyday life at court. In the following, I will begin with some remarks on the methodological aspects of a constructivist perspective on space. I will then review the relevant existing literature on gender and space at the early modern court, where I will return to the argument that it is useful to consider scholarship on non-European courts,

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<sup>1</sup> This way of conceptualising the court follows Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie; mit einer Einleitung: Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft* (Neuwied, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Martina Löw, *Raumsoziologie*, 8th edition (Frankfurt am Main, 2015).

since this research has long recognised the importance of spatial gender segregation as an important topic in political history. Then, I will begin the first part of my case study of the court of Württemberg in Stuttgart, which will discuss the local organisation of spatial structures according to gender specific dynamics in their practical application. The female household (*Frauenzimmer*) and its associated areas at the court of Stuttgart will serve as an example here, and, as will be shown, this discussion inevitably leads into a consideration of (imagined) boundaries and connective spaces. Subsequently, the ‘knights’ salon’ (*Ritterstube*) and chancellery buildings will be discussed, as examples of spaces bearing male connotations. Finally, instances of conflict at court will be considered with a view to what they reveal about the power dynamics of the courtly household and in how far rank, gender and marital status affected the level of integration of individual members of the courtly household. Here the court will be described as a larger-than-life household, which served as a stage for the *mise-en-scène* of dynastic legitimacy, as well as a point of coalescence where temporal and sacred orders were given shape and meaning. In short, courtly space came to be the crucial site for the practice of power, and gender difference was one of its key ordering principles.

### ***Historical Spatial Analysis***

Why should we consider the material spatiality of the court at all in a historical perspective and, if doing so, why is it necessary to introduce another set of methodological tools to this dissertation? In answer to the first question, it has to be noted that the change from medieval itinerant rule to the residential court system is considered to be a key influence on the lives of dynastic women ever since they came to be recognised as a subject worthy of historical attention.<sup>3</sup> The narrower association

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<sup>3</sup> Brigitte Streich, ‘Frauenhof und Frauenzimmer’, in Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Das Frauenzimmer: die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit. 6. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 247–262, here esp. pp. 247-8, who argues that the lives of noblewomen previous to the development of sedentary courtly structures used to be characterised by ‘relative freedom and autonomy’, but thereafter their lives were subjected to ‘a greater confinement into space’. My translations.

of their everyday lives with specific spaces has been identified as both a symptom and a cause of the lack of women's participation in the political process.<sup>4</sup> The assumption that the access control of women's quarters constituted a barrier to a 'private' and hence apolitical space is a fallacy instigated by a projection of contemporary understandings of households and politics into the pre-modern past.<sup>5</sup> Theoretical reflections are needed to guard against such mistakes. The themes of this chapter have come into focus through the application of gender as a 'tracer' and a question of historical analysis, which leads us to consider why and how gender segregation was inscribed in the courtly space, rather than assuming we already know the answer to this.<sup>6</sup> In order to approach the category of space in a methodologically sound way, we have to reach beyond received interpretations of absolute spatial categories (such as size and distance), and consider the social construction of the spaces in question.<sup>7</sup> As has been pointed out in the introduction, this dissertation builds on the premise that historically meaningful categories can be advantageously studied by a focus on the socially embedded practices that constituted them.<sup>8</sup> This focus will be adapted here to the analysis of spatiality.

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<sup>4</sup>This narrative is long reaching. Already the proponent of the Enlightenment Johann Georg Krünitz stated in his *Oekonomisch-technologischer Encyclopädie* in 1786 that the women's chambers at princely courts (*Frauenzimmer*) were instruments that turned the noblewomen into slaves, and the men into tyrants. On this see Claudia Opitz, 'Das Frauenzimmer. (K)ein Ort für Frauen?', in Barbara Duden, ed., *Geschichte in Geschichten: ein historisches Lesebuch* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), pp. 62-9, here esp. p. 64; While Krünitz stands at an extreme of this interpretation, the association of enclosed spaces and a political disenfranchisement endures. See for instance, Streich 'Frauenhof und Frauenzimmer', p. 262; but also Katrin Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Wien, 2005), p. 127, where it is argued that the ladies-in-waiting in the *Frauenzimmer* at the court of Vienna led a life that was kept separate from the 'affairs of the state in the narrow sense'. My own translation.

<sup>5</sup> Though Löw discovers similar projections in sociological studies of the 1930s on the ranges of movement of teenage boys and girls, where it was assumed that the fact that girls had a smaller range stemmed from the fact that they felt closer ties to the domestic space and that as a result they did not profit as much as the boys from a varied living environment. Löw points out that these interpretations were based entirely on absolute spatial categories, and nobody asked what the boys and girls were doing on their excursions and what the quality of their experience was. See Löw, *Raumsoziologie*, pp. 246-54.

<sup>6</sup> See the Introduction, p. 33-8.

<sup>7</sup> Löw, *Raumsoziologie*.

<sup>8</sup> See Introduction, p. 34f.; and Dagmar Freist, 'Diskurse - Körper - Artefakte: Historische Praxeologie in der Frühneuzeitforschung - Eine Annäherung', in *Diskurse - Körper - Artefakte: Historische Praxeologie in der Frühneuzeitforschung*, ed. by Dagmar Freist (Bielefeld, 2015), pp. 9-32.

Susanne Rau offers the methodological reflections for the application of spatial analysis to historical research.<sup>9</sup> She breaks these down into four steps. An ideal analysis begins with the consideration of the initial configuration of a space and its development up until its eventual dissolution. The perceptions and representations of said space should then be studied, as well as the usages of and the movements within the space under investigation.<sup>10</sup> Rau allows for the unpredictable and incomplete nature of historical evidence and states that it is usually neither possible, nor necessary to follow all the steps offered in order to produce results.<sup>11</sup> The sources uncovered at the court of Württemberg allow me to focus particularly on how the practice of spatial gender segregation was normatively envisaged, and to offer some insights into how the practice functioned on an everyday basis and how it was challenged. Furthermore, attention to where gender difference became meaningful will also lead us to the consideration of a range of courtly conflicts in the second part of this chapter. The prescriptions of courtly order, task-distribution, and peaceful co-existence, as well as the various transgressions of these regulations, will be considered as practices standing in continuous interaction with the material spatiality of the court. In this way, it will be possible to ask new questions of the courtly ‘super-household’ and the complex hierarchies ordering its members.

### ***Court and Space in Historiography***

I will begin here with a brief discussion of previous work on spatial arrangements in relation to gender difference at court. The aim is to show that gender segregation was practiced by a range of early modern courts to varying degrees. The specific characteristics of the segregation are revealing in terms of how different courtly cultures related to the political dimension of gender. In all cases discussed here, however, gender segregation enhanced the internal differentiation of the courtly household and thus the representational value of the court in relation to local elites

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<sup>9</sup> See Susanne Rau, *Räume: Konzepte, Wahrnehmungen, Nutzungen* (Frankfurt am Main, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. ‘Raumanalyse’, pp. 122- 191.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

and subjects.

Already Norbert Elias, in his fundamentally important work *The Court Society*, published in 1969, proposed that gender relations both gave form to the design of royal palaces, and, in turn, shaped the relationships between men and women living at court.<sup>12</sup> Elias believed that in the ‘absolutist courts’ in Europe the ‘most complete equality between the spheres of life of men and women, and also of their behaviour, had so far been achieved.’<sup>13</sup> In his work on the court society of Versailles he elaborated that the ‘structure of dwellings’ spoke to his argument, since the *appartements* of the regent and his consort were designed to mirror each other and to be of equal size, thus underlining the fact that both partners in the state marriage held a certain amount of independence and representational power.<sup>14</sup> Elias extrapolated his analysis from a footprint of a typical Parisian *hôtel* of a French noble family, which was published in Diderot and Alembert's *Encyclopédie* in the mid-eighteenth century. On such a property there was a clear sense of trajectory. Visitors would arrive on the public, road-facing side, which provided space for the arrival of carriages. They would pass through the first arch into the *basse cours* surrounded by kitchens, stables and other more profane necessities, and move onwards to the interior part of the winged residential structure arranged around the *cours privés*. Here, the caller would find the *appartements privés* and the *appartements de société*, where he or she would finally be received, if of sufficient rank.<sup>15</sup> The *appartements* of the husband and wife were separated in this design by almost the entirety of the inner courtyard, which led Elias to the assertion that the couple’s relationship with the outer world was actually of greater importance than the quality of the relationship between them (once the duty of heir-production was fulfilled, of course). Their gender roles thus differed from those of the bourgeois couple, which was certainly part of the point, and this structure was reproduced by French nobility all the way up

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<sup>12</sup> See Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, pp. 78–81.

<sup>13</sup> Norbert Elias, *The civilizing process: sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigations*, eds. Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom, and Stephen Mennell (Oxford, 2000), p. 248.

<sup>14</sup> See Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, pp. 78–83.

<sup>15</sup> Compare to Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, pp. 78–80.

to the highest echelons of the household of the king, which in principle was organised in a similar fashion, though much larger in scale.<sup>16</sup> The idea that the footprint of the court could be read like a map of the hierarchy of power has since come under intense scrutiny and attracted many critics. Sybille Oßwald-Bargende argues that Elias's approach did not give enough credit to the fact that baroque building principles gave enormous weight to symmetry as an 'aesthetic principle', which must, to a degree, account for the similar size of the *appartements* of the ruler and his consort.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, she importantly stresses that a footprint can only ever show one moment in time, but that some of the crucial developments in status politics could be analysed only via a diachronic view of the developments of fluctuating usages and new building projects within the representational courtly space.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that Elias's method of spatial analysis is not rejected outright in her work, and it continues to be important in the more recent historiography on this subject.<sup>19</sup>

The number and the level of differentiation of the personnel in female households are at times cited to indicate the standing of women at a specific court.<sup>20</sup> In France, the separation of the households of the king and queen reaches back to the Middle Ages and appears to have been so successful that Louis X's attempt in 1315 to collapse his queen's household into his own in order to save on costs had to be revoked within months.<sup>21</sup> After this event the queen's household gained steadily in independence, although not in a linear fashion. Zum Kolk shows that a remarkable

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<sup>16</sup> Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>17</sup> Oßwald-Bargende, 'Der Raum an seiner Seite. Ein Beitrag zur Geschlechtertopographie der barocken Höfe am Beispiel von Schloß Ludwigsburg', in Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Das Frauenzimmer: die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit. 6. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 205-231, here p. 225.

<sup>18</sup> Oßwald-Bargende, 'Der Raum an seiner Seite', p. 228.

<sup>19</sup> Oßwald-Bargende, 'Der Raum an seiner Seite', p. 209.

<sup>20</sup> See Streich, 'Frauenhof und Frauenzimmer', esp. p. 262, who proposes that the development of sedentary princely residences in the late Middle Ages brought with it a greater integration of the *Frauenzimmer* personnel within the main courtly household (*Hofstab*), which indicated a certain loss of influence of the ruler's consort.; Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 29f., implies a similar reading.

<sup>21</sup> Caroline zum Kolk, 'The household of the queen of France in the sixteenth century', *The Court Historian*, 14 (June 2009), pp. 3-22, here p. 7.

growth of Anne de Bretagne's household took place in 1496, when it nearly tripled in size to 253 people. This translates into 88% of the king's household, the closest the queen's *maison* was ever to come to parity.<sup>22</sup> Anne counted not only on numbers, but also on the strategic creation of offices such as that of the *Grand Ecuyer* in order to approach the differentiation of the king's household.<sup>23</sup> In the time of Catherine de Medici's regency the female royal household grew once more, though its size relative to that of the king had again decreased significantly. Finally, the queen's household differed from the male royal household(s) at the French court, in that she had more women in official positions than the king, whilst she did not have councillors like him, nor, normally, a military branch of her officials.<sup>24</sup> Recently, however, Regina Schleuning has found that even a dynastic woman's courtly household could be appointed military personnel when specific circumstances (such as the death of a spouse) required it.<sup>25</sup>

The female households of the court of France were centrally important.<sup>26</sup> Francis I reportedly said: 'a court without ladies is a court without a court'.<sup>27</sup> Yet, the visibility of Catherine de Medici's large female household, for instance, did not go uncontested. Contemporary satirical works took aim at her and her ladies and suggested that she used her 'stable of whores' in order to seduce men in key positions and to achieve her own ends. Historians have at times only too willingly

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<sup>22</sup> zum Kolk, 'The household of the queen of France in the sixteenth century', p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> zum Kolk, 'The household of the queen of France in the sixteenth century', p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Regina Schleuning, *Hof, Macht, Geschlecht: Handlungsspielräume adeliger Amtsträgerinnen am Hof Ludwigs XIV.* (Göttingen, 2016), p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>26</sup> See for instance Oliver Mallick, 'Clients and friends: The ladies-in-waiting at the court of Anne of Austria (1615-66)', in Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben, eds., *The politics of female households: ladies-in-waiting across early modern Europe* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 231–264, who argues that women in prestigious court offices engaged in patronage in much the same way as men did, but that their gender gave them a further advantage when it came to creating personal bonds with the queen, since only the ladies-in-waiting were allowed to be close to her person at all times. Mallick further emphasises that monarchs Philip III, Louis XIII, and Marie de Medici were all keen to establish good relationships with the women of the queen's household, knowing that this would provide them with an invaluable political advantage.

<sup>27</sup> Pierre de Bourdeille Abbé Séculier de Brantôme, *Des hommes: grands capitaines estrangers et françois, couronnels et maistres de camp françois, discours sur les duels*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1838), vol. 1, p. 258, 'Pour fin, une cour sans dames est une cour sans cour.'; Zum Kolk cites the same passage: 'The household of the queen of France in the sixteenth century', p. 21; Kathleen Wellman cites a similar passage on Francis I in *Queens and mistresses of Renaissance France* (Yale, 2013), p.111.

perpetuated such myth making.<sup>28</sup> This reveals the uneasiness with which female power was viewed at the French court. The need to communicate splendour and pomp through the gendered differentiation of the royal households competed with the equally crucial need for the representation of a gender hierarchy that did not allow for disruptive female influence on the practice of power.<sup>29</sup> This competition was bound to cause friction, and I suggest that Zum Kolk's meticulous study of the in- and decrease of the numbers and offices of the queen's household could be read as a process of balancing out these competing goals.<sup>30</sup>

England is an interesting case since its court did not become fully sedentary until well into the seventeenth century. For a long time, the royal household travelled between summer and winter residences, as well as conducting country house visits, where the royal guests temporarily took over the residence of one of their noble subjects.<sup>31</sup> Despite this mobile lifestyle, both king and queen kept large separate households, to the extent that they could only rarely be hosted at the same time in the same palace or mansion.<sup>32</sup> In the royal palaces in London, the queen's lodgings were somewhat smaller than those of the king, but they were of key political importance. When the ruling couple was quartered in the same palace, the king took regular trips

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<sup>28</sup> Una McIlvenna, "'A stable of whores'?: The 'flying squadron' of Catherine de Medici", in Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben, eds., *The politics of female households: ladies-in-waiting across early modern Europe* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 181–208, here esp. p. 181.

<sup>29</sup> On the specific preoccupation with the avoidance of female influence on governance in the French context see Opitz-Belakhal, *Das Universum des Jean Bodin Staatsbildung, Macht und Geschlecht im 16. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2006); Abby E. Zanger, *Scenes from the marriage of Louis XIV: Nuptial fictions and the making of absolutist power* (Stanford, 1997), for instance on p. 5; Sarah Hanley, 'The monarchic state in early modern France', in Adrianna E. Bakos, ed., *Politics, ideology and the law in early modern Europe. Essays in Honor of J.H.M. Salmon* (Rochester, 1994), pp. 107–126.

<sup>30</sup> See the article zum Kolk, 'The household of the queen of France in the sixteenth century' which is based on the author's unpublished Ph.D. thesis *Catherine de Médicis et sa maison: la fonction politique de la maison de la reine, 1533-1574*, supervised Jacques Gélis and Joël Cornette, Université Paris VIII.

<sup>31</sup> Emily Cole, 'King and queen in the state apartment of the Jacobean country house (1603-1625)', in Monique Chatenet and Krista De Jonge, eds., *Le prince, la princesse et leurs logis: manières d'habiter dans l'élite aristocratique européenne (1400-1700): Actes Des Septièmes Rencontres d'architecture Européenne, Paris 27-30 Juin 2011* (Paris, 2014), pp. 75-92, here p. 77.

<sup>32</sup> Simon Thurley, 'The king in the queen's lodgings: The rise of the drawing room at the English court', in Monique Chatenet and Krista De Jonge, eds., *Le prince, la princesse et leurs logis: manières d'habiter dans l'élite aristocratique européenne (1400-1700): Actes Des Septièmes Rencontres d'architecture Européenne, Paris 27-30 Juin 2011* (Paris, 2014), pp. 67-74, here p. 69.

to the queen's rooms, since these were more difficult to access for courtiers, and thus they provided him with a quieter environment. Thurley proposes that conjugal visits also took place in the queen's bedchamber, with the king returning to his own chambers to sleep.<sup>33</sup> When Queen Henrietta Maria began the so-called 'circles' event where she invited various courtiers for informal conversations in her lodgings, the queenly chambers soon became a nodal point of courtly politics, which was institutionalised in the 1660s as the 'drawing room' events.<sup>34</sup> This coincided interestingly with the firm installation of the royal household in London, which now relinquished its regular trips to country mansions.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to France, England saw a number of queens regnant and it appears that during their reigns they used the parts of the palaces and mansions that were originally built to house the king, while in Elizabeth's case the lodgings of the consort remained empty.<sup>36</sup>

Current historiography has established that the matter of gender segregation at court was executed in quite a distinct fashion at the Habsburg courts of Europe, as well as at the smaller territorial courts that made up the Holy Roman Empire. Both in terms of personnel and its topographical location, it seems that the household of the female consort had less independence at these courts than, for instance, in England or in France.<sup>37</sup> Keller stresses that since the Habsburg emperors had become sedentary, the Empress's household was more closely connected with the Emperor's household, whilst at the same time it became internally enclosed.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the empress was attended by ladies-in-waiting who were unmarried as a rule, unlike those at the Anglo-French courts.<sup>39</sup> These ladies occupied a series of rooms directly adjoining

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<sup>33</sup> Thurley, 'The king in the queen's lodgings', p. 70.

<sup>34</sup> Thurley, 'The king in the queen's lodgings', p. 71.

<sup>35</sup> Cole, 'King and queen in the state apartment of the Jacobean country house', p. 86.

<sup>36</sup> Thurley, 'The king in the queen's lodgings', p. 70.

<sup>37</sup> Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, p. 28.

<sup>38</sup> Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 25f.

<sup>39</sup> See Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 28f.; Schleuning, *Hof, Macht, Geschlecht*, p. 124f., where it is shown that whilst the filles d'honneur were unmarried, the women in higher offices, such as the dames d'honneur, dames d'atour, and the gouvernante were usually married, widowed, or even divorced; Anna Whitelock, *Elizabeth's bedfellows: an intimate history of the queen's court* (London, 2013), the marriages and pregnancies of Elizabeth's ladies of the privy chamber caused friction at court at times, as the queen was loathe to give her most trusted ladies leave of absence, even when they had the very good excuse of giving

the consort's lodgings. The rooms were called *Frauenzimmer* at the German-speaking courts, and they constituted a specific feature of the Empire court style.<sup>40</sup> The *Frauenzimmer* was usually located in an elevated position, often above the chambers of the empress or princess, which were in turn regularly stacked above the lodgings of the ruling prince.<sup>41</sup> This positioning supported the prescribed strict access control to these rooms. Courtiers were to visit the *Frauenzimmer* only at specific times and after specific arrangements, and the ladies quartered in these areas were supposed to move as little as possible away from their assigned living space. Whenever they did move, they were to ask for the permission of the *Hofmeisterin* or the princess herself.<sup>42</sup> To what extent these prescriptions were adhered to will be a subject of discussion in this chapter, but it should also be noted that the association of the noblewomen with their spatial location was so profound that the term *Frauenzimmer* was also used to designate the members of the female courtly household, either individually or collectively.

Whilst it is important to note the differences between the 'closed-off' Habsburg model and the more fluid Anglo-French household organisation, it is argued here that it should not be assumed too readily that the greater emphasis on

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birth. For instance, when Lady Frances gave birth in November 1565 whilst Elizabeth was reeling from the loss of her beloved Kat Ashley, she left only shortly before giving birth and had to be back at court within weeks postpartum, see p. 102.

<sup>40</sup> Stefan Hoppe, 'Architectonic parity. The coordinated apartments of ruling princes and princesses in German court residences, 1470-1547', in Monique Chatenet and Krista De Jonge, eds., *Le prince, la princesse et leurs logis: manières d'habiter dans l'élite aristocratique européenne, (1400-1700): Actes Des Septièmes Rencontres d'architecture Européenne, Paris 27-30 Juin 2011* (Paris, 2014), pp. 159-176, here p. 164.

<sup>41</sup> Stephan Hoppe, 'Bauliche Gestalt und Lage von Frauenwohnräumen in deutschen Residenzschlössern des späten 15. und des 16. Jahrhunderts', in Jan Hirschbiegel, and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Das Frauenzimmer: die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 151-174, here p. 172.

<sup>42</sup> For the case of Stuttgart see on this HStAS A 20 Bü 27, Ordinance for the *Frauenzimmer Hofmeister*, 6 May 1598, fol. 1v, 'he should pay attention [...] that nobody wanders about anywhere else than in the place where they have work to do', ('demnach soll er achtung darauf haben [...] das Niemandt weitter vmb her schwaifft, den an das bestimbt Ort, da er zuschaffen'); the restriction in movement also applied to the maidservants, see A 20 Bü 27, Ordinance for the *Frauenzimmer Hofmeisterin*, undated (see also footnote 91), fol. 4rv, 'the *Hofmeisterin* should not allow the maidservants to visit their friends in the city [...] if one of the maidservants wants to go into the city, the *Hofmeisterin* should indicate this to my lady', ('die Hofmaisterin soll den Mägden nit gestatten, zue ihren freunden zugehn, es in die Statt oder ander wohin [...] wann ihr der Mägdten eine in die statt begeren, solle die hofmeisterin ein solches meiner gnedigen frawen anzaigen.').

enclosure in the German territories was akin to an expression of the limited significance of the female household in these polities. This chapter is less interested in measuring the exact level of female oppression than it is in asking what effects stricter gender segregation had on the court as a dynastic centre making political claims.<sup>43</sup> In order to find answers to this question, we have to rely less on the absolute categories of spatial ordering for our interpretation, and instead focus on how practices shaped courtly spaces. Specifically, it will in the following be considered how living and governing spaces at court were gendered through both norms and practices, and what the added value of this process might have been for the enterprise of rule.

This line of questioning is inspired by scholarship into courts further afield. Historians of early modern Middle Eastern court societies have had to contend with spatial perceptions disconnected from the dynamics of social construction from the very beginning of their endeavour to redress the perspectives on the considerable female presence at these courts, which has given rise to all sorts of hyper sexualised fantasies in the predominantly European and male psyche.<sup>44</sup> As a result of this, scholars of Islamic courts, particularly those interested in gendered power hierarchies, are deeply aware of the limiting potential of static perspectives of spatiality. Leslie Peirce, Ruby Lal and Katherine Babayan have worked towards a

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<sup>43</sup> Compare this to Opitz, 'Das Frauenzimmer. (K)ein Ort für Frauen?', p. 68, who ends her insightful reflections on how the Frauenzimmer was no longer regarded as an appropriate living structure in the nineteenth century with the somewhat depressing thought that by that time women had interiorised the qualities of chastity and interiority to such an extent that physical walls were no longer necessary to keep them in check; also see Streich, 'Frauenhof und Frauenzimmer', p. 262 who argues that the development of residential rulership curtailed the fields of action for women as they were now much more closely guarded.; also more recently in a different context Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Beauty or beast? The woman warrior in the German imagination from the Renaissance to the present* (Oxford, 2010), p. 50, where it is argued that German dynastic women were never depicted in paintings as ancient heroines such as Amazons 'because German princesses simply did not have enough political power to make their representation as Amazon queens credible', which she opposes with an image of Marie de Medici in Amazon costume. Whilst Watanabe-O'Kelly's study uncovers an enormously interesting field, this comparison appears uneasy to me in view of the pragmatics of French Salic Law and the general distrust placed in female rulership in the French royal tradition (see also chapter 3, pp. 124-6 on this). More importantly, however, I argue that such comparisons are of only limited usefulness, since they do not move beyond the perspective of specific women towards questions of how gender as a category impacted on dynastic politics.

<sup>44</sup> For a deeply insightful analysis of such fantasies see: Fatema Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different harems* (New York, 2001).

reframing of the harem as a deeply structured and politicised space that was integral for early modern experiments on how to structure imperial power.<sup>45</sup> Peirce, in particular, remains highly instructive in her assessment of how and why the female harem came to be enclosed in the innermost circle of the New Palace in Istanbul, which simultaneously came to house the lodgings of the sultan in the late sixteenth century.<sup>46</sup> She shows that this development had little to do with the restriction of female influence, and much more with the relationship of the female royal family to the sultan and thus to imperial power. The most senior of the royal women was the sultan's mother, the *valide sultan*, and she usually had ample opportunity to develop her influence far beyond the harem walls through clients, who were eager to serve her and to gain favour in return.<sup>47</sup> Enclosure thus cannot be equated with a loss of power.<sup>48</sup>

These studies serve as an inspiration for the present chapter to not merely take the finding that the lodgings of noblewomen were more tightly enclosed at German-speaking princely courts than elsewhere in Europe, to translate into a lack of female influence in these polities. In accordance with the 'tracer' concept, this part of the dissertation aims to scan the courtly space of Stuttgart to find out where specifically gender difference mattered, and to consider what the answers to this might mean for the court in its entirety.<sup>49</sup> This analysis will probe the gendered task sharing of the courtly household, which allocated many of the functions of household maintenance and representation along gendered lines. The consideration of the

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<sup>45</sup> See Leslie Peirce, *The imperial harem : Women and sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 1993); Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs: Cultural landscapes of early modern Iran* (Cambridge, Mass, 2002); Kathryn Babayan, 'The Aqa'id Al-Nisa': A Glimpse at Safavid Women in Local Isfahani Culture', in Gavin Hambly, ed., *Women in the medieval Islamic world: Power, patronage, and piety* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 349-383, discusses an unusual source authored by a cleric who appears to be complaining about Isfahani women's failure to comply with rules for behaviour he envisages. The source reveals that women in local as well as royal *andaruns* often entertained very close relationships of support and friendship with each other.; For the Mughal context see Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and power in the early Mughal world* (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Peirce, *The imperial harem*, p. 124f.

<sup>47</sup> Peirce, *The imperial harem*, pp. 126f, 143-6.

<sup>48</sup> A point which Ruby Lal makes in reference to the Mughal context. See Lal, *Domesticity and power in the early Mughal world*, p. 215.

<sup>49</sup> Here I am leaning on Mommertz, 'Geschlecht als "tracer"', pp. 21-5.

Stuttgart case study will first be concerned with an overview of the courtly space, before picking out some specific areas for closer inspection. This section is based on normative sources such as court ordinances, as well as relevant pieces of correspondence and specific directives, which reveal more about the practical usage of these spaces.

### *The Court of Württemberg in Stuttgart*



Figure 2: An early seventeenth-century view of Stuttgart, printed in Vann, *The making of a state*, p. 26.

The history of the courtly space in Stuttgart reaches back well into the Middle Ages.<sup>50</sup> Some of it will be examined here in order to illustrate how the space associated with the court fluctuated and was anything but well defined. It will emerge that the court of Stuttgart, too, relied on gender segregation as one strategy in

<sup>50</sup> Klaus Merten, *Altes Schloss Stuttgart* (München, 1975), pp. 1–2.

order to differentiate itself from the households of those of lower rank. This practice was carried onwards from the medieval Stuttgart residence, into the construction of Renaissance representational spaces such as the *Lustgarten*. Gender difference was afforded a material reality in these constructions. Furthermore, the continuous practice of the gendering of specific courtly spaces further served to connect spaces of governance and of courtly sociability, and thus to create one coherent device of dynastic power.

From the early fourteenth century there existed a *Burg* in Stuttgart that served the counts of Württemberg as a home during their stays in the city.<sup>51</sup> At this time, however, Stuttgart was not the centre of power it came to be in the sixteenth century. The counts of Württemberg were as likely to spend time in Waiblingen, Cannstatt, Leonberg or Urach, and it was only in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries that Stuttgart gradually came to be more central to the business of governance.<sup>52</sup> Yet, the history of its residence did not progress in a linear fashion. In 1441/2 the territory of Württemberg was divided between the dynastic brothers Count Ulrich V (r. 1433-1480) and Count Ludwig I (r. 1426-1450). The latter chose Urach as the second capital city of Württemberg, and he built a princely castle there to accommodate him.<sup>53</sup> During this division of Württemberg the rivalry between its most important cities Stuttgart, Urach and Tübingen inspired a lot of construction activity.<sup>54</sup> In Stuttgart, Ulrich rebuilt the *Stiftskirche* directly facing his residence. He extended the animal park adjoining the residence and built a falcon shed and a ball house, thus elaborating on the potential for representation of power of the Stuttgart residence.<sup>55</sup> The castle in Urach was also further developed and came to feature the well-known

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<sup>51</sup> Oliver Auge, 'Kongruenz und Konkurrenz: Württembergs Residenzen im Spätmittelalter', in Peter Rückert, ed., *Der württembergische Hof im 15. Jahrhundert: Beiträge einer Vortragsreihe des Arbeitskreises für Landes- und Ortsgeschichte, Stuttgart* (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 53–74, here p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> Auge, 'Kongruenz und Konkurrenz: Württembergs Residenzen im Spätmittelalter', p. 60f.

<sup>53</sup> Walther-Gerd Fleck, *Die Württembergischen Herzogsschlösser der Renaissance* (Braubach, 2003), p. 44.

<sup>54</sup> See Auge, 'Kongruenz und Konkurrenz: Württembergs Residenzen im Spätmittelalter', p. 65-9 who argues that the rivalry led not only to increased building activity but also to marked parallels in the courtly constructions.

<sup>55</sup> Auge, 'Kongruenz und Konkurrenz: Württembergs Residenzen im Spätmittelalter', p. 68.

‘salon of palm trees’.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile in Tübingen in 1476 the foundation of its university took place, which was likely aided by the family connections of Barbara Gonzaga, the wife of Count Eberhard the Bearded (r. 1459-1496).<sup>57</sup> Yet, when Württemberg was subsequently reunited in 1482, Eberhard chose Stuttgart as his main residence. It has been proposed that Stuttgart’s main advantage in the rivalry with Tübingen and Urach was that it had been the seat of the Württemberg chancellery since before the partition of the territory.<sup>58</sup> The decision was crucial for, in 1495, Württemberg was elevated to a duchy, and from this time onwards Stuttgart served as the main residence for the dukes of Württemberg.

Even so, Urach and Tübingen remained closely connected to the court city. The male ducal offspring went to Tübingen for their studies, and the residence of Urach continued to be used as accommodation for the dynastic family when they travelled through the city. As Stuttgart became the main residential city, the transformation of its medieval *Burg* into a Renaissance castle was driven forward by the efforts of the Dukes Christoph (r. 1550-1568), Ludwig (r. 1568-1593), and Friedrich (r. 1593-1608). Christoph added three wings to the existing medieval *Dürnitzbau* and thus enclosed a literal *courtyard* with his construction. He also added further storeys to the existing central building, in which the ducal family was to find their new lodgings. Alongside this, Christoph built an impressive *Rittertreppe* (rider’s stairs), which could be accessed from the inner courtyard and allowed access

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<sup>56</sup> Why Eberhard the Bearded chose palm trees as a motive to be painted on the walls of this large hall has been discussed at length. The debates are summarised in Regina Cermann, ‘Stephan Schriber und der Uracher Hof - samt Neuinterpretation der Palme Graf Eberhards im Bart’, in Klaus Beuckers, ed., *Stadt, Schloss und Residenz Urach: neue Forschungen* (Regensburg, 2014), pp. 53–83, who also proposes a new theory that the palm tree was an amalgamation of a *Minne* symbol and a codification of virtue, which Eberhard chose in the run-up to his wedding to mark the beginning of his virtuous life.

<sup>57</sup> On this point see: Katharina Laier-Beifuss, ‘So hat dieser treffenlich Regent und Landesfürst ... auch stattlich gebawet. Eberhard im Bart als Förderer sakraler Baukunst am Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts’, in Peter Rückert, ed., *Der württembergische Hof im 15. Jahrhundert: Beiträge einer Vortragsreihe des Arbeitskreises für Landes- und Ortsgeschichte, Stuttgart* (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 177–193, here p. 180.

<sup>58</sup> Fleck, *Die Württembergischen Herzogsschlösser der Renaissance*, p. 44.

to the higher storeys of the central wing comfortably on horseback.<sup>59</sup> Thereafter, under Duke Ludwig, two round towers were added to the northwest and southeast corners of the castle, and attention was turned to the further development of the garden site adjoining the castle.<sup>60</sup> Duke Friedrich began his reign in 1593 and at this time the castle, which was built around a medieval core, had reached its full architectural potential, and further attempts at achieving effects that represented the exalted nature of princely power were thus focused on the environment of the castle. Friedrich's administration negotiated with a number of burghers living outside the castle doors and eventually bought their houses, demolishing them in order to create an empty square in front of the castle that would make it appear even more impressive.<sup>61</sup> This square is today called the *Schillerplatz*. Since it was framed by the *Stiftskirche*, the chancellery buildings, and a third building that was being constructed as lodgings for emissaries, it gave the impression of another enclosed 'courtyard' mirroring the one inside the castle confines.<sup>62</sup> A richly ornamented entrance bearing the coats of arms of Württemberg and Anhalt<sup>63</sup> was also constructed after the bridge that led over the moat and thus connected the castle courtyard to the square.<sup>64</sup>

The pleasure gardens (*Lustgarten*) adjoining the Stuttgart residence had been extended by Duke Christoph, who had sought inspiration for in the princely gardens in Munich in 1554. By 1566 he added a maze and a greenhouse for figs to his creation.<sup>65</sup> Duke Ludwig added elements for princely exercises with masculine connotations. In 1575 he had a race course built, which would be used in

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<sup>59</sup> Annegret Kotzurek, *Kleine Geschichte des Alten Schlosses in Stuttgart* (Leinfelden-Echterdingen, 2003), pp. 18–30.

<sup>60</sup> Kotzurek, *Kleine Geschichte des Alten Schlosses in Stuttgart*, p. 30f.

<sup>61</sup> Werner Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg* (Stuttgart, 1971), p. 275: notes that Duke Friedrich bought eleven houses on this mission, which were demolished in 1599; also see: Merten, *Altes Schloss Stuttgart*, p. 12.

<sup>62</sup> Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, p. 275, comments on the framing of the square.

<sup>63</sup> Sibylla, Friedrich's wife, was born a princess of the duchy of Anhalt.

<sup>64</sup> Kotzurek, *Kleine Geschichte des Alten Schlosses in Stuttgart*, p. 38; Merten, *Altes Schloss Stuttgart*, p. 12.

<sup>65</sup> On this see Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, p. 39.

tournaments, and in 1579 he added a ‘bird pole’ on the lower edge of the garden, which served to hold up the target in shooting competitions.<sup>66</sup> Finally in 1580, a wall enclosing the garden site was constructed.<sup>67</sup> In 1583 construction works began in the *Lustgarten* for a large new pleasure château (*Lusthaus*), which was to provide a hall measuring over one thousand square metres that would offer space for festivities of a scale that had previously been unknown in the residence of the dukes of Württemberg (see fig. 3 below).<sup>68</sup> Although Friedrich was not involved in the redesigning of the *Lustgarten* and the building of the new *Lusthaus*, both these projects came to term at the beginning of his reign and the subsequent usage of these new spaces is a concern for the following chapter. It emerges clearly that the castle or palace did not in itself make the court.

The material development was important because it alerts us to developments in the social dynamics of court society, such as the increasing need for additional representational spaces like the *Lusthaus*. Yet, it must be borne in mind that the court depended to a greater extent on the presence of the prince and his dynastic family, than on the architecture. This is underlined by the flexible nature of the judicial norms that ordered the courtly space. In the court ordinances of Dukes Friedrich and Johann Friedrich, as well as their predecessors, the respective ruler added to all of his prescriptions the claim that the rules laid out in writing should be understood to be active ‘not only here in our ordinary court, but also in every other place, where we will be in person’.<sup>69</sup> Hence, it does not suffice to focus on the inside of the castle walls. For the purposes of this investigation of the bearing of gender difference on the spaces of the court of Stuttgart, our attention will focus on the area of the city that stood under the *Burgfrieden* legislation. The *Burgfrieden* is a topographical expanse within which the rules laid out in the court ordinances took effect. The concept was developed originally to order the co-habitation of different noble families in a single

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<sup>66</sup> Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, p. 70.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> On the design and architectural importance of the *Lusthaus* in Stuttgart see Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, pp. 54-74.

<sup>69</sup> HStAS A 21 Bü 215, ‘Hofordnung’, 1611, fol. 4v-5r, ‘nit alleine bey vnser ordinari Hoffhaltung allhie, sonder auch an einem jeden annderen ort, da wür jedesmals Inn der Person sein werden’.

castle without feuds breaking out.<sup>70</sup> The term was retained in Württemberg and in many other German territories, where it came to acquire a new meaning and was used to refer to a specific area in and around the ducal residence, which was defined by common legal codes that differed from the surrounding cities or villages.<sup>71</sup> The court ordinance from 1611 stipulates that in Stuttgart the *Burgfrieden* covered the following areas:

In all of our castle and animal park, also the ditch from the falcon house until the gate towards the suburb of Eßlingen, also the chancellery, and no less the entirety of the old and the new stables, falcon-, livestock-house, arsenal [...] also the building courtyard, workshops and barns, to our privy secretary advisor's garden and house, upwards from there over the new bridge to the provost's lodgings, and again from there on the whole church yard until the lodgings of von Kaltenthal where our hunting master lives [...] we have special small plaques painted, which will be hung up publicly in different places [...].<sup>72</sup>

This definition of the *Burgfrieden* area focused on functional spaces of work and of lodging, rather than on the anonymous descriptions of buildings and roads we might use today in order to describe a specific precinct in a city. The mention of small plaques to be painted further demonstrates that visual clues were needed to define the catchment area of the court, since there was no fixed physical boundary. In the following, a number of spaces within this area will be analysed as examples of how gender segregation functioned within the courtly space. I will begin the discussion in the heart of the castle and move outward towards the chancellery and the gardens. It

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<sup>70</sup> For an in-depth discussion of *Burgfrieden* ordinances in the context of the court of Stuttgart see: Anja Kircher-Kannemann, 'Stuttgarter Burgfrieden und Burgfriedensbezirk im Spiegel der württembergischen Hofordnungen', *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*, 76 (2017), pp. 177–215, here esp. p. 179.

<sup>71</sup> On the semantic development of this term see Kircher-Kannemann, 'Stuttgarter Burgfrieden und Burgfriedensbezirk im Spiegel der württembergischen Hofordnungen', pp. 179-87.

<sup>72</sup> HStAS, A 21 Bü 215, 'Hofordnung', 1611, fol. 4v.-5r, 'Im gantzen begriff vnsers Schloß, vnnd Thiergartens, darunder auch der grab von dem Falckhenhauß, biß zum Thor gegen der Eßlinger Vorstatt hinauß, Item In der Canzley, wie nit weniger auch im gantzen begriff des neuen, vnd alten Marstalls, Falckhen: Vick: Jäger: Zeüg: Vnnd Bündthaus, allso auch Bauhoff, hoffwerckig, vnd herscheünen [...], an Vnsers Cammer~~Secretarii~~ Rahtgeber Garten vnnd hause, hinauffwerck, vnd dannen über die newe Brückhen, biß an die Probstey, vnnd abermahlen von dannen auff dem gantzen Kürchhoue hinüber biß zuo deren Von Kaltenthal Behaußung, so vnnser Jägermaister bewohnt, [...] wie wir dann deßwegen sondere täfelein mahlen, vnd die an underschidlichen ortten öffentlich auffschlagen laßen.', original cursive.

will emerge, however, that through the application of gender as a tracer, we cannot draw clear distinctions between the inner and the outer areas of the court.

### *The Ducal Lodgings*

The chambers of the principal residents of the court of Stuttgart were located in the central, medieval core of the castle of Stuttgart. The heart of this building consisted of a so-called *Dürnitz*, a large room on the ground floor which could be heated, and thus served many everyday functions. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this was the place where the lower ranking servants had their meals and much of the everyday comings and goings at court took place.<sup>73</sup> This hall was so large and high that it took up the equivalent of two storeys in the other wings.<sup>74</sup> Duke Christoph had added storeys on top of this in the 1550s and it was on these new floors that the ducal chambers were located. The first floor above the *Dürnitz* could be reached via the impressive ‘rider’s stair’ (*Reittertreppe*) and, after a large antechamber, the *Ritterstube* opened up to the right. This was the location where the higher-ranking male courtiers had their meals and where festive feasting took place.<sup>75</sup> Adjoining it, were the duke’s chambers, which wound around the southeast corner tower and gave access to a large balcony in two places. After the tower room towards the east, there was a bay room facing out towards the ducal gardens, and finally on the court side the ‘glass and silver chambers’ were located. The *Reittertreppe* could be further followed to the second floor, where the apartment of the duchess was situated directly above the chambers of the duke. We know little about the specific functions of each room, but, at the very least, the layout of the chambers was largely the same

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<sup>73</sup> Fleck, *Die Württembergischen Herzogsschlösser der Renaissance*, pp. 46-8, 51, also see Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, pp. 85f.

<sup>74</sup> In some of the older literature this leads to confusion, as at times the uppermost floor is described as the fourth floor, when it actually is only the third in the *Dürnitz*-wing. See Fleck, *Die Württembergischen Herzogsschlösser der Renaissance*, p. 50.

<sup>75</sup> As is described for instance in the travel account of Philipp Hainhofer who attended the court tournaments in Stuttgart in 1616. See Philipp Hainhofer, ‘Beschreibung seiner Reise nach Stuttgart 1616’, in Ludwig Krapf and Christian Wagenknecht, eds., *Stuttgarter Hoffeste. Texte und Materialien zur höfischen Repräsentation im frühen 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 317–358, here pp. 325ff.

as in the ducal chambers, with one of the biggest differences being that there was no balcony access from this floor. In return, it appears, however, that the bay window room was considerably larger on this floor. The two ducal apartments were connected with a spiral staircase. The lodgings of the duchess's ladies-in-waiting were adjoining her chambers on the second floor, while the third floor was most likely taken up by the lodgings of the *Edelknaben*, the young noble boys entrusted to the care of the ducal couple by local noble families.<sup>76</sup>

### *The Frauenzimmer, Court Pharmacy, and the Duchess's Gardens*

A list in the records of the Stuttgart court administration from February 1607 counts 176 persons 'currently eating at court'.<sup>77</sup> The *Frauenzimmer* residents were differentiated further on an inserted piece of paper, indicating that in the mind of the official compiling the listing they constituted a separate entity. The list stated that they included, besides the duchess and her court mistress, three noble ladies-in-waiting, a female pharmacist with a staff of three people, three *Edelknaben*, as well as the maidservants and *knechte* for all the noble residents.<sup>78</sup> Nine of the people listed were male, thus indicating that the *Frauenzimmer* in the German context was not an exclusively female space. Britta Kägler argues that it is in fact 'gender-neutral', since male servants and, at specific times, also noblemen entered these areas.<sup>79</sup> In my view, however, the spatial configuration of the *Frauenzimmer* had clear gendered connotations, which will emerge in the following discussion of the functions fulfilled by its residents.

For instance, the female court pharmacist listed is no anomaly<sup>80</sup> as Lutheran

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<sup>76</sup> On this see Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, p. 318.

<sup>77</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 1, doc. 21, February 1607.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, this is an increase from 1582 when twenty-one people were listed for the *Frauenzimmer*. See HStAS A 21 Bü 204, 'Setzordnung', 1582.

<sup>79</sup> Kägler, 'Rückzugsort oder Anlaufstelle?', p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> Anja Kircher-Kannemann, 'Organisation der Frauenzimmer im Vergleich zu männlichen Höfen', in (Germany) Jan Hirschbiegel, and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Das Frauenzimmer: die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit. 6. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 235-246, here p. 241, found an *Apotheker* listed in

noblewomen were regularly associated with the practice of medicine at this time.<sup>81</sup> Sibylla was an active participant in this practice, and her medical expertise, which she offered to nobles as well as to her subjects, was part of the reason why the sermon on her death recalled her as ‘our heartily beloved territorial princess and mother’.<sup>82</sup> In her courtly household she had space to accommodate knowledgeable women to assist her in the court pharmacy, which was located in the vicinity of her apartments.<sup>83</sup> This part of the *Frauenzimmer* was perhaps even too active in Duke Friedrich’s view. In January 1607 he condemned the ‘disorder and notable immoderation’ in the court pharmacy, and ordered the kitchen master to begin taking exact notes of the exact amount of foodstuffs he sent to the pharmacy in the *Frauenzimmer*.<sup>84</sup> Friedrich was also unhappy at times about what he perceived to be the disorder of the *Frauenzimmer* personnel:

the court mistress of the children and the four noble girls are not appointed to the court pharmacy, they should stay in the childrens’ rooms and the *frawenzimmer* [...] and our spouse should look after the castle pharmacy alone.<sup>85</sup>

His remarks betray a broad interest in Sibylla’s medicinal endeavours within her household, as well as a certain impotence on behalf of the duke to control the details of the activities in the women’s lodgings.<sup>86</sup>

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the *Frauenzimmer* at the court of Margrave Johann von Küstrin in 1561, and described this as ‘unusual’.

<sup>81</sup> As shows Alisha Rankin, *Panacea’s daughters: noblewomen as healers in early modern Germany* (Chicago, 2013).

<sup>82</sup> See Erasmus Grüninger, *Leichenpredigt*, 1614, ‘hertzliebe Landsfürstin und Mutter’, cited in Gerhard Raff, *Hie gut Wirtemberg allwege II: Das Haus Württemberg von Herzog Friedrich I. bis Herzog Eberhard III.: mit den Linien Stuttgart, Mömpelgard, Weiltingen, Neuenstadt am Kocher, Neuenbürg und Oels in Schlesien*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Schwaigern, Württ., 2014), p. 58; see also Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 314f.

<sup>83</sup> Rankin, *Panacea’s daughters: noblewomen as healers in early modern Germany*, p. 28, counts the *Frauenzimmer* and the personnel connected to it as one of the distinct advantages for female practices of healing.

<sup>84</sup> HStAS, A 20 Bü 1, doc. 16a, 24 January 1607, ‘ohnordnung vnd merckhliche übermas’.

<sup>85</sup> HStAS, G 60 Bü 9, letter from the 28 September 1606, ‘der kinder hofmeisterin, noch die vier unterschribene adeliche maidlein, seind auff die schlos apoteck nicht bestellt, sondern ihr kind stuben und frawenzimmer besser abzuwarten,[...] vnser Gemahlin soll allline auff die schlos apoteck achtung geben’, evidently there was an additional lady-in-waiting in the *Frauenzimmer* as opposed to 1607.

<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, this also reveals that the duke considered himself to be the ultimate authority over the *Frauenzimmer*. See on this point Nolte, *Familie, Hof und Herrschaft*, p. 225, Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich*

This sense of a painstakingly, but not always efficiently, prescribed order can also be gleaned from the court ordinances detailing the tasks of the *Frauenzimmer* court master and mistress (*Hofmeister* and *Hofmeisterin*). The *Hofmeister* was charged with the locking of the *Frauenzimmer* doors between the hours of 8 pm and 5 or 6 am depending on the season. He was to screen all ‘letters and messages’ arriving and leaving the *Frauenzimmer*, and was advised to inform the duchess at all times of the ongoing correspondence of her household.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, he was not to allow ‘the noble pages, footmen, ladies’ servants and others to wear frivolous clothing and much less to enter the *Frauenzimmer* without doublets or coats’, nor to suffer the noble pages to ‘run in to the *Frauenzimmer* early in the morning, but to stay in their chamber until the appointed time’.<sup>88</sup> The wording of these admonitions lets us guess that such behavior was not altogether uncommon in the ducal *Frauenzimmer*. Beyond the observation of proper decorum when meeting the ladies, it was an important task of the duchess and her *Hofmeister* to instill piety in the young residents of the *Frauenzimmer*. The *Hofmeister* was to quiz the young *Edelknaben*, after they heard the sermon, to make sure that they retained the main points. Beyond this, the ordinance states that the boys were to practise their writing and mathematical exercises daily.<sup>89</sup> Girls were not mentioned in this respect. This may be because at the time none in the *Frauenzimmer* were young enough to learn to read, for it is clear that in the late sixteenth century noble girls as well as boys learnt to read and write, even if education beyond the basics of literacy and piety

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*I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 314-6, comments briefly on Sibylla's expertise with herbs and the distillation of medicine.

<sup>87</sup> HStAS, A 20 Bü 27, ‘Staat und Ordnung’ for the Hofmeister, 6 May 1598, fol. 4r.

<sup>88</sup> Both quotes from HStAS, A 20 Bü 27, ‘Staat und Ordnung’ for the Hofmeister, 6 May 1598, fol. 1r.-2v, ‘die edle knaben, am morgens früe Im FrawenZimmer [...]einlauffen, sondern In Irem Gemach, biss zur ge purend zeit, vnnd erfordern, verharren thüen’; ‘nicht gestatte, das die Edle knaben, Laggeyen, Jungfraue knecht, vnd andere, zu leicht ferttigen klaidern, vil weniger ohne Röckh, oder Mänttel Im Frawen Zimmer vmbher ziehen’.

<sup>89</sup> Dörthe Buchhester, *Die Familie der Fürstin. Die herzoglichen Häuser der Pommern und Sachsen im 16. Jahrhundert: Erziehung, Bücher, Briefe* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015), pp. 69-77, identifies the early education of children as a key function of the *Frauenzimmer* of Pommern and Saxony, which she studied; also see Jill Bepler, ‘Die Fürstin als Betsäule - Anleitung und Praxis der Erbauung am Hof’, *Morgen-Glantz*, 12 (2002), pp. 249–264, here p. 252, where Bepler argues that we need more reflection on the consorts didactic role in the *Frauenzimmer*.

diverged.<sup>90</sup> The tasks of the *Hofmeisterin* revolved to a great extent around childcare. She was tasked with tasting the meals of the children, enforcing their bedtimes, washing them, as well as with the cleaning and the maintenance of their living areas.<sup>91</sup> Everyday life in the duchess's household was meant to have a didactic impact on the princely children.<sup>92</sup> The *Frauenzimmer* lodged both the ducal couple's own children, whilst they were too young to be sent away for further education, as well as the boys of other noble families who were hoping their offspring would get a first-class education in courtly behaviour and etiquette in a ducal household. Similarly, the positions for ladies-in-waiting were greatly coveted by noble families for their unmarried daughters, since they too could profit immensely from the exposure to courtly etiquette. If placed at court, the young women could also act as intermediaries for their families and increase their visibility at the seat of power.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, ladies-in-waiting in a representational ducal household were ideally placed to attract advantageous marriage projects, which would benefit both them and their families.<sup>94</sup> The raising of the next generation of nobility was a crucial task for a social group that legitimised its very existence over dynastic lineage. That this fell squarely into the remit of the duchess is a key indicator of the importance of her role as a political entity in the court.<sup>95</sup>

Labour in the *Frauenzimmer*, as elsewhere at court, was allocated according to gendered principles. As has been indicated the *Hofmeisterin*, who was usually a

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<sup>90</sup> Buchhester, *Die Familie der Fürstin*, discusses the gender specific education of German princes and princesses in chapters 3 and 4 of her study.

<sup>91</sup> See HStAS A 20 Bü 27, ordinance for the *Frauenzimmer Hofmeisterin*, no date. Only very few *Frauenzimmer* court ordinances have survived. This particular piece probably served as a template as the ordinances were usually reissued under every duke and whenever it was deemed necessary to add alterations.

<sup>92</sup> Duchess Sibylla evidently took her duty as an educator seriously, in her extensive library we find a copy of Reinhard Hadamarius, *Wie Junge Fürsten und Herrn Kinder zue instituirn* (Marburg, 1537), the library catalogue is found in the WLB, Cod. Hist. 2° 1069.

<sup>93</sup> See also Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, p. 49.

<sup>94</sup> Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof (1651-1756)*, p. 99; Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, p. 35.

<sup>95</sup> This underlines Amanda J. Flather's call to abandon the 'separate spheres' model of the gendered household in favour of spatial analysis, as meanings were attributed to spaces via practices. See 'Space, place, and gender: The sexual and spatial division of labor in the early modern household', *History and Theory*, 52 (October 2013), pp. 344–360, here p. 345.

widow of nobility, was tasked with many aspects of childcare. Furthermore, she organized the labour of the maidservants, while the male servants stood under the authority of the duchess's *Hofmeister*.<sup>96</sup> The ordinances stipulated that *Hofmeister* and *Hofmeisterin* should 'meet with each other' at least daily, presumably for an exchange on their respective spheres of authority.<sup>97</sup> Both of them answered to the duchess in the first instance, though the ordinances detailing the profile of their offices were issued by the duke himself and he retained the ultimate authority. It appears, however, that differentiation of labour according to gender was even more multifaceted than the ordinances would let us guess. During duchess Sibylla's rule in the *Frauenzimmer* of Stuttgart an accident was only narrowly averted when a servant let burning cinders drop on the bed in a chamber shared by the young princesses Anna and Barbara. Sibylla wrote to her husband Duke Friedrich to inform him of the shocking event and to let him know that she was examining the situation, stating that 'I ordered the *hofe meister* to question all servants that are men on their oath [...] and I did the same with all of the servants of the *frazzimmer*'.<sup>98</sup> This passage reveals that even in the absence of her husband Sibylla firmly placed the duty of rule over the male servants in the hands of the *Hofmeister* and not with herself, even where an issue concerning the *Frauenzimmer* was at stake.<sup>99</sup> We note thus, that the differentiation of courtly labour and authority according to principles of gender was considerable, and in this sense, too, the dynamics of smaller households were augmented at court on a princely scale.

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<sup>96</sup> See HStAS A 20 Bü 27, ordinance for the *Frauenzimmer Hofmeisterin*, 6 May 1577, here esp. fols. 1r-6v; also *ibid.*, ordinance for the *Frauenzimmer Hofmeister*, 6 May 1598, esp. fol. 1r.

<sup>97</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 27, ordinance for the *Frauenzimmer Hofmeister*, 6 May 1598, fol. 1v, 'zu den bestimbten Stunnden, vfwelche sich hofmaister, vnnd hofmaisterin mit einander vergleichen'.

<sup>98</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, no date (*terminus post quem* would be 1599 as the letters states Anna averted her to the danger by coming out of the room and she was born the 25 March 1597), 'ich den hofe meister befohlen das gesindt lein was manns ber shon for zu nemer vndt auf iren eidt zu fragen [...] hab ich in gleichen in frauzimmer vnder dan ganzen gesindt auch um fragen'.

<sup>99</sup> This also further relativises Kägler's view of the *Frauenzimmer* as a 'gender neutral' space because male servants were also present within it. At least in this case it would appear that despite the presence of men in this space, the authorities within it were firmly gendered. See Kägler, 'Rückzugsort oder Anlaufstelle?', p. 10.

Furthermore, whilst it has emerged that we cannot think of the *Frauenzimmer* as a hermetically sealed off living space, it is clear that everything, from its securitised spatial location on the upper floors of the strong *Dürnitzbau* to the oversight of the duchess and her household staff, created a space in which the chastity of noblewomen was treated as a valuable resource. Interestingly, such prescriptions were made in almost equal measure for the maidservants as for the noble ladies-in-waiting. If either a maidservant or a young noblewoman had visitors at court or wanted to go into town, the gate guard was to notify the court mistress, who in turn should discuss the matter with the duchess herself. ‘When a lady-in-waiting or a maidservant wants to leave the *Frauwen Zimmers*, then there should always be two of them going together’,<sup>100</sup> was another prescription stemming from one of the rare court ordinances for a *Frauenzimmerhofmeisterin* that is available to us.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, none of the young women were allowed to write letters in secret, but, whenever they had correspondence to attend to, they were to do so where they could be seen and their letters would be read by the gate keeper or the court mistress before they could be sent off.<sup>102</sup> Socialisation within homosocial groups of noble rank was considerable.<sup>103</sup> While the women of the *Frauenzimmer* took all their meals within its walls, at times the young *Edelknaben* of the *Frauenzimmer* left these chambers at mealtimes in order to eat in the *Ritterstube* with the other male

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<sup>100</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 27, ‘Der Hofmaisterin Staat vnnd Ordnung’, 1577, ‘wan ein Jungfrauw oder ein magtt, wellt ausserthhalb des Frauen Zimmers geen, so sollen alleweg Ire Zwo mit einander geen’, fols. 6r-6v, since so few of these survive, I use here a document that falls slightly outside my timeframe.

<sup>101</sup> See Kircher-Kannemann, ‘Organisation der Frauenzimmer im Vergleich zu männlichen Höfen’, pp. 241f, who discusses the poor rates of transmission of such documents.

<sup>102</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 27, ‘Der Hofmaisterin Staat vnnd Ordnung’, 1577, fol. 6v; also see Cordula Nolte, ‘Gendering princely dynasties: Some notes on family structure, social networks, and communication at the courts of the Margraves of Brandenburg-Ansbach around 1500’, *Gender & History*, 12 (November 2000), pp. 704–21, p.715, where the same practice is described for the *Frauenzimmer* at the courts of the Margraves of Brandenburg-Ansbach around 1500.

<sup>103</sup> For the late medieval period compare to Nolte, ‘Gendering princely dynasties’, pp. 704-21, here p. 714-15, who argues that for both prince and consort it was a sign of status to be surrounded by their respective households at all times, but that particularly the noblewomen of a court spent most of their time together in their quarters and often formed close relationships as a result.

courtiers.<sup>104</sup> Even during great court celebrations, when the highest-ranking princes and princesses ate in the *Ritterstube*, the tables were gender segregated.<sup>105</sup> The fact that the ordinances addressed maidservants as well as noblewomen suggests to me that *Zucht* or chastity was not an individualized concept at the time. Either all of the women living together could be described as chaste, or none of them could. Since the Reformation had in principle done away with convents as spaces where unmarried women could lead lives beyond reproach of sexual impropriety, princely *Frauenzimmers* were an even rarer instance of a female community.<sup>106</sup> Ulrike Strasser has pointed towards the problematic standing of female communities under the impact of (Counter-)Reformation politics, which designated virginity or marriage as the only acceptable estates for women.<sup>107</sup> In this mode of thinking any self-governing community of females, even those of an explicitly religious nature, could easily become associated with excessive and disordered sexualities and thus had to be enclosed firmly and placed under male surveillance.<sup>108</sup> Since the guarantee of an orderly sexuality was still crucial for concepts of aristocratic female honour,<sup>109</sup> the access-controlled *Frauenzimmer* that connected its chaste ladies-in-waiting to the marital order by incorporating them into a marital courtly household must thus be viewed as a crucial resource of legitimate dynastic continuity.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> A 'Sitzordnung' from 1582 lists the 'drey Frauen Zimmer Jungen' at the Edelknaben table in the *Ritterstube*. See HStAS A 20 Bü 204, for later years the table orders are not clear on this aspect.

<sup>105</sup> See Hainhofer, 'Beschreibung seiner Reise nach Stuttgart 1616', p. 324.

<sup>106</sup> Although in practice many religious institutions run and staffed by women adopted the Reformation and continued their work. They were often allowed to do this, since the nobility was highly interested in having an alternative option for unmarried daughters, but also because the leadership of women in these institutions was not viewed as politically threatening. See on this Merry E. Wiesner, *Gender, church, and state in early modern Germany: essays* (London, 1998), pp. 59–62; Teresa Schröder-Stapper, *Fürstbittissinnen: frühneuzeitliche Stiftsherrschaften zwischen Verwandtschaft, Lokalgewalten und Reichsverband* (Köln, 2015), p. 2f.

<sup>107</sup> Here particularly ch. 4 'Behind closed doors: The public dimensions of private acts' in Strasser, *State of virginity*, pp. 119–48.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>109</sup> See for instance: Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, p. 94f.

<sup>110</sup> Since similar privileges were afforded the female *Frauenzimmer* servants, it might be interesting to investigate if, as result, these *Mägde* were more likely to make advantageous marriages themselves than their colleagues, who worked in the ducal kitchens or laundries.

The *Frauenzimmer* was a physical manifestation of the idea that women stood at the heart of the interests of a dynasty, which, above all, needed to reproduce in order to stay relevant.<sup>111</sup> It constricted the movements of women to a greater extent than those of male courtiers,<sup>112</sup> which may have affected their opportunities for action at times. For the practice of power, however, the symbolic and pragmatic opportunities offered by a collective of pious, chaste, and medically-expert women, embedded in its palace walls, was evidently not one to be missed. In order to mobilise these opportunities, it was not possible to have an imagined impenetrable boundary between the *Frauenzimmer* and the rest of the court. Rather, the limits of its chambers were thought of more as a connective membrane between one courtly organ and another. Besides the traffic of human bodies to and from these areas, there were other forms of interaction with the rest of the court that were explicitly encouraged. For example, the ladies-in-waiting were not supposed to look out of the windows constantly, but to remain focused on their work, which consisted mostly of sewing and spinning. Yet, the ordinances stated further ‘except it would happen that foreign people would come or go, or that my merciful lord or the young lords went out or in, in that case they should look out’.<sup>113</sup> The female gaze in this instance was used to validate the everyday movements of the princes.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> According to an inventory from 1621, the two salons of the *Frauenzimmer* contained combined sixty-eight small paintings of princely ancestors. See Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, p. 318.

<sup>112</sup> See the evidence cited in part ‘Households and Conflicts’ of this chapter, which illustrates that male courtiers roamed the castle grounds quite freely, which on occasion entailed conflicts among them.

<sup>113</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 27, ‘Der Hofmaisterin Staat und Ordnung’, 1577, ‘es wer denn, sach, das frembdt Leüth ein oder auß ziehen, oder das mein gnediger fürst vnd herr ein oder auß zieh, oder die jungen herren so sollen sie hinaus sehen/’.

<sup>114</sup> This function will be discussed in-depth in chapter 2.

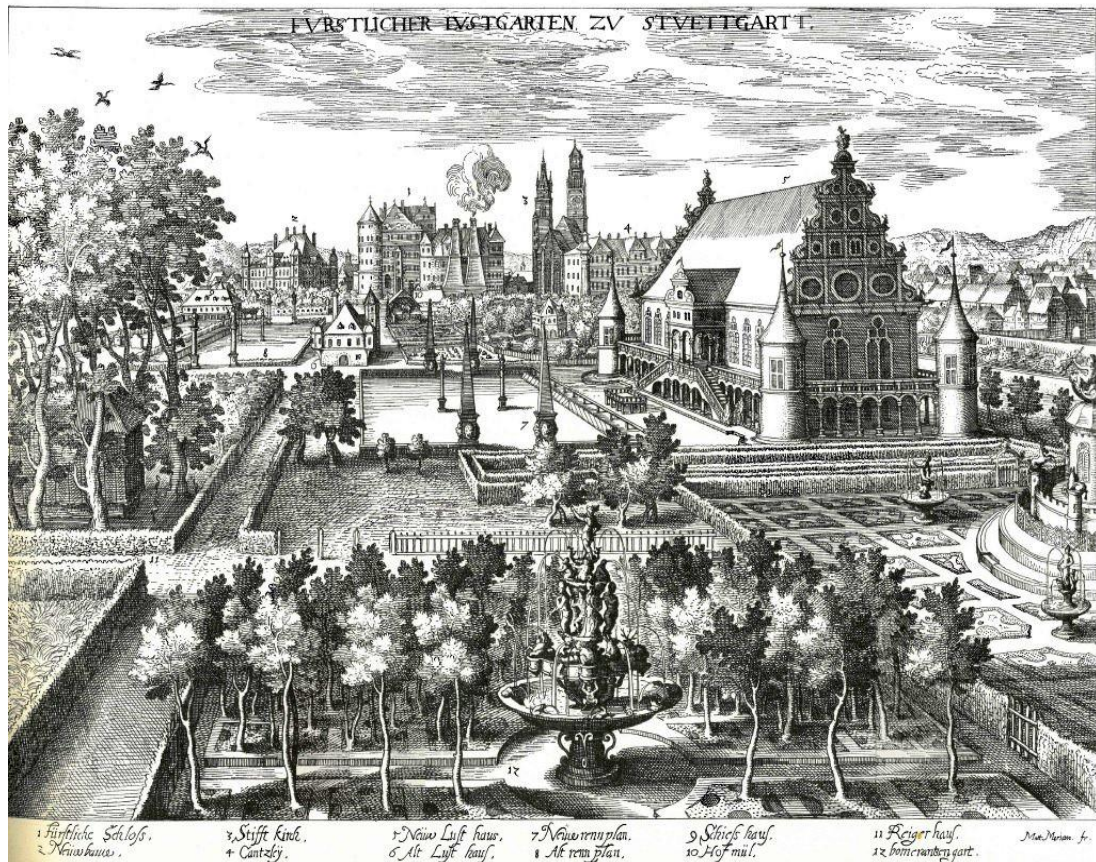


Figure 3: Etching of the *Lusthaus* and *Lustgarten* in Stuttgart by Matthäus Merian, 1616, printed in Esaias van Hulsen and Matthäus Merian, 'Repraesentatio der fvrstlichen Avzvg vnd Ritterspil': Die Kupferstichfolge von 1616 in Ludwig Krapf und Christian Wagenknecht, eds., *Stuttgarter Hoffeste. Texte und Materialien zu höfischen Repräsentation im frühen 17. Jahrhundert* (1979, Tübingen), p. 5.

Another courtly space associated with dynastic women was that of the garden of the duchess, which in the period under investigation consisted of a portion of land closest to the castle, where the older *Lusthaus* stood. The garden comprised a 'bird house', a small maze, flower, vegetable, and herb beds. It also showed a number of features in a smaller format that were then replicated in the larger *Lustgarten*. The central patch of land was divided into four different beds, which served the production of flowers and vegetables.<sup>115</sup> These subdivisions were reproduced in the

<sup>115</sup> Stefan Gugenhahn, *Die Landesherrlichen Gärten zu Stuttgart im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1997), p. 204; The produce of the garden was given to the Duchess's household and any surplus was sold. See HStAS G 87 Bü 4, agreement between Julius Friedrich and Duchess Barbara Sophia on her widow's portion and her role as guardian of Duke Eberhard III, 27 July 16[30], 'An Garten

beds in the rest of the garden. Furthermore, the duchess's garden contained a small pool, stocked with fish, as well as an orange house built for Duchess Sibylla in 1610.<sup>116</sup> The eastern end of the *Lustgarten* again had a 'grotto' in which impressive waterworks were being built in the reign of Johann Friedrich,<sup>117</sup> and the engraving by Matthäus Merian from 1616 (Fig. 3) shows a second orange garden beyond the new *Lusthaus*. Associations with the natural elements are inevitable. Water, earth, and air came together in these garden features and could be enjoyed and appreciated by those who had leave to wander within it. Engagement with nature was multilayered and it included contemplation, as well as active cultivation of fruits from the earth. Most exotically, oranges were being grown in wooden conservatories in both the duchess's garden and towards the other end of the pleasure garden.<sup>118</sup> Walking in the garden, in the presence of divine abundance and rare plants, was one of the only ways in which noblewomen could exercise their bodies, and, accordingly, this was regarded as a crucial activity for dynastic women. When in 1607 Friedrich suggested to his oldest son that he live in the residence of Neuenstadt in the north of Württemberg after his marriage, Johann Friedrich countered that this was not possible because his bride of noble rank would be accustomed to restore herself by walking in pleasure gardens in the company of her *Frauenzimmer*. Since Neuenstadt did not offer such an amenity, he doubted that his future wife would agree to live there.<sup>119</sup>

In Stuttgart, the association of the duchess with her gardens was structural. The doubling of some design elements in the duchess's garden and in the wider *Lustgarten* constituted a similar pattern to the arrangement of the internal structure of the *Frauenzimmer*, which evoked a simplified reflection of the organisation of the

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Gewächsen von dem fürstl. Lustgarten soll alle Notturft geuolgt, das übrige aber mag verkhaufft werden.?

<sup>116</sup> Eugenhan, *Die Landesherrlichen Gärten zu Stuttgart*, pp. 201–9.

<sup>117</sup> Kotzurek, *Kleine Geschichte des Alten Schlosses in Stuttgart*, pp. 40f.

<sup>118</sup> On the engagement with nature and the divine order in gardens built by the nobility see Horst Bredekamp, *Leibniz und die Revolution der Gartenkunst: Herrenhausen, Versailles und die Philosophie der Blätter*, (Berlin, 2013), here esp. pp. 72–81.

<sup>119</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, doc. 58, 23 April 1607, also see chapter 5, pp. 201–17 for further analysis of this correspondence.

larger court. The ordinance of the court mistress listed as one of her tasks ‘also she should, when y[our] g[race the duchess] asks her to, go outside to the fish house [...] and in the maze, in the bird house and see how one keeps house there and then she should report it to y.g.’.<sup>120</sup> The *Hofmeisterin* thus functioned as a link between the duchess’s dominion inside the castle walls, and her holdings in the gardens.<sup>121</sup> It remains only to be restated, that the emphasis on separate spaces for living, working, and exercising for dynastic women underlined the dynasty’s financial ability to differentiate its household in this manner according to gender, as well as rank. The privilege of living in a *Frauenzimmer* required noble status, and in turn the presence in this specific space continuously reaffirmed the rank of its inhabitants.<sup>122</sup>

### *Upper Council and Ritterstube*

What should we make, then, of the areas of the *Burgfrieden* that were not connected to the *Frauenzimmer*? Should we think of them as a uniformly male space? Of course, noblewomen and their maidservants moved widely in these areas on errands or special occasions, and of course female servants were ever present in the courtly kitchens and laundries. A look at the normative prescriptions for these spaces, however, reveals that the order aspired to within them was dependent on somewhat different factors than the order of the *Frauenzimmer*. Similarly, the documents pertaining to the remainder of the court evoke a social system that put piety centre stage. The very first prescription of the court ordinance from 1611 stated that all ‘counts, lords, noblemen, as well as all servants’ had to attend the sermons and they were reminded to attend the entire sermon and to refrain from chatting (*schwetzen*)

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<sup>120</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 27, ‘Der Hofmaisterin Staat und Ordnung’, 1577, ‘Auch soll sie wann sies mein F.G. heist, hinaus In das fischhauß [...] vnd In den Irrgang, In das Vogel hauß vnd besehen, wie mann darinnen hausheltt, vnd solliches mein F.G. berichten [...]’.

<sup>121</sup> As we shall see in the following chapter 2 the remainder of the grounds beyond the duchess’s garden as well as the *Lusthaus* offered noblemen and noblewomen a space for interaction during festivities. This space allowed for opportunities for fluid and playful engagements with gender, which would not have been possible within the castle walls.

<sup>122</sup> See Kägler, ‘Rückzugsort oder Anlaufstelle?’, pp. 8-10, for further reflections on the semantics of this term which encompassed both the space and its inhabitants.

during it.<sup>123</sup> The rest of the ordinance is concerned with a great many administrative details, not all of which need to be reviewed here. Specifics are listed on how new servants should be registered with the court marshal,<sup>124</sup> how noblemen were not allowed to leave court without seeking the consent of the court marshal, and, if they received such permission, that they were either supposed to take all their servants and horses with them, or otherwise at least arrange for food and money for their care in their absence.<sup>125</sup> As always with these documents, we must see them as a work-in-progress of ordering principles, which were read out loud to everyone at court twice a year, and which were developed on an *ad hoc* basis in order to respond to issues newly arising.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, we can safely assume that many of the issues described in the ordinances did not work out as smoothly as the normative documents might lead us to believe. Specific attention was placed on the notion of peace-keeping at court: ‘none who are equal, should mock another with words, nor challenge him, threaten, or curse him, nor should he hit, stab, push or insult him in any other criminal manner [...]’.<sup>127</sup> The avoidance of brawls and disputes rested firmly on the mutual respect of all court residents, and the guarding of this balance appears to have been an increasingly complex challenge in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. In the court ordinance of 1611 four pages were concerned with unseemly words, violence, and conflict within the *Burgfriede*, but by 1614 and 1618 this passage had more than doubled in size.<sup>128</sup> Much of this space was dedicated to the punishments that could be expected for failure to comply with the ordinance, and, unsurprisingly, issues of precedence deeply mark jurisdiction on intra-courtly

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<sup>123</sup> HStAS A 21 Bü 215, ‘Fürstliche Hofordnung’, 1611, ‘Grauen Herrn, vnd hoffjunckherrn, sampt annderm vnnsremn hofgesindt zuo dem Predigtagen’, fol. 3v.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., fols. 15v-19v.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., fol. 20r.

<sup>126</sup> Anja Kircher-Kannemann, *Heilsame auffzicht und verfassung. Hofordnungen vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit*, unpublished dissertation submitted to the Heinrich-Heine University Düsseldorf (October, 2014), p. 275.

<sup>127</sup> HStAS A 21 Bü 215, ‘Fürstliche Hofordnung’, 1611, fol. 4rv, ‘das keiner wer der gleich seye, Inn anndern mit wortten schmehen, oder hochmuechten, hinausfordern, tröwen, fluchen, noch auch schlagen, stechen, stoßen oder sonnstun tun ainichen weg freuenlich belaidigen solle’.

<sup>128</sup> A 21 Bü 215, the 1611, 1614, and the 1618 ordinances are all in this carton, as well as a number of others.

violence. If noblemen brawled within their own ranks, they should be confined to their lodgings for a certain period as a punishment. Should a lower ranking person, however, attack an officer of the court with ‘ignominious words’, he could count on four weeks in the tower prison on a diet of water and bread. Should he use his fists instead of words, the ordinance prescribed the loss of a hand.<sup>129</sup> Whilst the questions of conflict and punishment will be considered in their practical manifestations in the third part of this chapter, for the moment it should be noted that these normative prescriptions pertaining to safety and order were designed to protect and stabilise specifically male concepts of honour. This is not to say of course that women had no capacity for violence. For instance, the ordinance discussed earlier for the *Frauenzimmer* court mistress stated explicitly that ‘the maidservants are not allowed to hit the children with their fists or with wooden boards’, which reads as somewhat unsettling to modern eyes. Yet for noblewomen, in particular, the practice of violence was never an efficient option in order to defend their honour,<sup>130</sup> whereas men were under pressure to actively expose their bodies to danger in order to regain theirs, should they be slighted by another.<sup>131</sup>

Gender and rank interacted in the representational order to which the court of Stuttgart aspired. The *Ritterstube* adjoining the duke’s lodgings already evoked masculine connotations with its mere name, which translates to ‘knight’s salon’. In everyday court life, this space served specifically as a hall where high-ranking courtiers came together for meals, and where they were at times joined by the duke himself. Mealtimes were also heavily regulated in the court ordinances, which insist strongly on the fact that all persons eating at court, irrespective of rank, adhered to clear seating orders, and came and left the eating areas without shouting, pushing, or

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<sup>129</sup> HStAS A 21 Bü 215, Hofordnung 1618, fols. 2v-3r, ‘schmählichen wortten’.

<sup>130</sup> Although Martin Dinges, ‘Ehre und Geschlecht in der Frühen Neuzeit’, in Sibylle Backmann and Ute Ecker-Offenhäuser, eds., *Ehrkonzepte in der frühen Neuzeit: Identitäten und Abgrenzungen* (Berlin, 1998), pp. 123–147, here pp. 142–5, finds that female citizens of Paris of the eighteenth century on occasion actively defended their honour.

<sup>131</sup> See for instance: Pieter Spierenburg, ‘Masculinity, violence, and honour: An introduction’, in Pieter Spierenburg, ed., *Men and violence: gender, honor, and rituals in modern Europe and America* (Columbus, 1998), pp. 1–36.

causing any other kind of disorder.<sup>132</sup> For the reign of Johann Friedrich, a handful of these seating orders survive.<sup>133</sup> They reveal that the tables in the *Ritterstube* were reserved for the highest-ranking court officials, such as the court master, the *Landhofmeister*, the chancellor, the stable and hunting masters, the physicians, as well as the court preachers. The ordinance describes seven different tables, which make visible a progression in rank as well as in age, with the last table being appointed to the *Edelknaben* allocated to the duke and his two brothers Ludwig Friedrich and Julius Friedrich.<sup>134</sup> The company in the *Ritterstube* was entirely male. The tables in the *Dürnitz*, on the other hand, were reserved for the non-noble court servants. Here, also, a strict order according to rank and function was observed which grouped, for instance, the barbers, the court butcher, and the duke's *Mundkoch* together, and the gate and body guards at another table. In this space, some women also took their meals, such as the seamstresses, and the light chamber woman and her maidservants.<sup>135</sup> There must have been a great number of other servants who performed more menial tasks taking their meals at court, and, although for them no seating order has survived, it appears not unlikely that the laundresses and *knechte* also shared a space during their meals. If we thus think of the *Ritterstube*, the *Frauenzimmer*, the *Dürnitz*, and the everyday usages of these spaces, it emerges that the areas where the highest-ranking individuals of the court resided were clearly segregated by gender.<sup>136</sup> Even something as pragmatic as seating orders at court were developed to represent and reinforce power hierarchies and thus it appears that at least temporary residence in gender segregated spaces stood for elevated rank in this context.<sup>137</sup>

Paying attention to the interweaving of gender and status hierarchies can also help us to come to new readings of courtly decision-making bodies where gender

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<sup>132</sup> HStAS A 21 Bü 215, 'Hofordnung', 1611, fols. 7r-8v, 10v.

<sup>133</sup> In HStAS A 21 Bü 204.

<sup>134</sup> HStAS A 21 Bü 204, 'Sezordnung Inn der Ritterstube', 26 July 1618.

<sup>135</sup> A 21 Bü 204, 'Dürniz Sezordnung', 1618.

<sup>136</sup> The high-rank, gender-segregated spaces also shared a chromatic programme with all of them being clad with red curtains and drapes. See Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, p. 319.

<sup>137</sup> On such orders of rank in space see also chapter 2.

segregation was so entrenched that it has ceased to appear meaningful. The early modern ducal chancellery is one such space that was ‘manned’ uniquely with persons marked by the male gender. The chancellery in the period treated in this dissertation occupied the large building facing the *Altes Schloss* on its north side. It housed what came to be known as the ‘upper council’ (*Oberrat*) in the 1550s, although source documents occasionally interchanged the terms *Oberrat* and *Kanzlei*, even in the seventeenth century.<sup>138</sup> This administrative body was the supreme judiciary authority of the territory and acted as a counselling body for the duke in some of the government affairs he reserved for himself, such as any issues concerning his person or his family, changes to and creations of new laws and orders, punishments of officials, and issues relating to warfare.<sup>139</sup> Alongside the *Rentkammer* (treasury) and the *Kirchenrat* (church council), this council formed the heart of institutional governance in early modern Württemberg.<sup>140</sup> The upper council comprised a fluctuating number of burgher and noble members, which in the early seventeenth century came to be tilted in favour of the non-noble councillors.<sup>141</sup> The *Landhofmeister* was meant to act in lieu of the duke in the upper council, but as professional legal experience came to be more central to the role in the seventeenth century, the position was often hired out to a legal scholar instead. Parallel to (and often overlapping with) the upper council existed the secret councillors (*Geheime Räte*) or the court council (*Hofräte*). These were advisors who worked directly with the duke and often formed a permanent part of his entourage. This body of privy councillors was only given an institutionalised form after the Thirty Years’ War, whilst in our period of discussion it constituted more of ‘pool of advisers’, from which the duke could choose at will.<sup>142</sup> The members of this loosely-formed group often had held or were holding other administrative offices concurrently to acting as

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<sup>138</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, pp. 62f.

<sup>139</sup> For a full list of the *Reservatssachen* see Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg*, p. 17.

<sup>140</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, ch. 2 ‘Central Administration’, pp. 58-88 is key on this.

<sup>141</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, pp. 63f.

<sup>142</sup> As they are described by Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 64.

special advisors to the duke. They stemmed from noble lineages, as well as burgher backgrounds, though, increasingly, professional training was required of all who aspired to such a position. Whereas the roles of courtly household staff and policy advisors used to be inseparably intertwined, Vann argues that by the end of the sixteenth century the lines between administration and court staff were beginning to emerge more clearly.<sup>143</sup> So far no attempts have been made, however, to understand these men in the plurality of roles that their membership of multiple households assigned to them.<sup>144</sup> Hence, in traditional works on political history this group of people can at times appear unsexed and somewhat anodyne, when placed alongside the ruling monarchs and their often considerable sexual conquests.

In the following, these considerations shall be brought to bear on the noble and non-noble political elites of Württemberg, without aiming to achieve a complete analysis, but rather as an attempt to propose a new reading of established state-building narratives via selected examples. In order to do so, we will follow the men working in the chancellery on some of their daily spatial movements between work place, dining room, and personal household. Most of the labour that took place in the chancellery buildings was confidential and as a result access to its rooms was restricted to its (male) personnel.<sup>145</sup> Many of the non-noble ducal councillors working in the chancellery and in courtly offices came from the ranks of the *Ehrbarkeit*, which consisted of wealthy burgher families, who managed to gain dominance over the *Ämter* of Württemberg. After the reign of duke Friedrich, they

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<sup>143</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 72.

<sup>144</sup> By 'multiple households' I mean the courtly household, and the noble/burgher households from which the councillors stemmed, as well as any new household unit they might establish themselves. For the French context Sarah Hanley, 'Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern France', *French Historical Studies*, 16 (1989), pp. 4–27, which offers crucial reflections on how the family concerns of the new juridical elite at the court of France shaped policies and fundamental legislation.

<sup>145</sup> See Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg*, p. 2, who remarks that the breaches in the secrecy of the chancellery were an enduring problem. Apparently there were many voices calling for a tightening of rules, since it was common that one could have the latest news of the chancellery business on the market day in Stuttgart. In order to push back against such breaches the desks dealing with the most important matters came to be enclosed behind a grille in 1602, albeit with limited success.

also steadily increased their control over the territorial diet.<sup>146</sup> Successful non-noble councillors often sought to make marriages above their rank. The highly successful councillor Melchior Jäger, for instance, made three marriages in the course of his long career, all of which reflected his rise in the ranks. First, in 1570, he married the daughter of a scribe, some fifteen years later the daughter of a knight, and finally, at the turn of the century, a local noblewoman.<sup>147</sup> With success came more lucrative marriage opportunities for these men, but it would certainly be worth exploring if the connections these marriages afforded them were not in turn also connected to their rise in the administration.

If we return once more to the seating arrangements at court meals of 1618, we notice a striking difference between the noble councillors of Johann Friedrich, and those stemming from burgher backgrounds. Eberhard von Limpurg, the *Landhofmeister* and chairman of the upper council, as well as Daniel von Bouwinghausen, Ludwig von Janowitz, Hans Willhelm Schilling von Cannstatt, and Hans Caspar von Menlishofen were all noble *Oberräte*, and they were all seated in the *Ritterstube* for their meals.<sup>148</sup> On the other hand, the non-noble, but learned *Oberräte* are not to be found in the courtly seating, with the sole exception of Paulus Schnepf.<sup>149</sup> Their absence cannot be connected with their lack of influence. Councillors Kielmann, Hormoldt, and Broll were serving at this moment in time and they were instrumental to the court administration of their day.<sup>150</sup> Rather, their absences must be connected to their lack of nobility, which meant that they were not incorporated in the ducal household in the same way as the noble councilors. We know that the burgher councillors had their own homes in Stuttgart, which at times

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<sup>146</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, pp. 41–3; On the social and economic backgrounds of the *Ehrbarkeit* after the Thirty Years' War see Gabriele Haug-Moritz, *Die württembergische Ehrbarkeit Annäherungen an eine bürgerliche Machtelite der Frühen Neuzeit*, (Ostfildern, 2009).

<sup>147</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 62, also see p. 81 where it is shown that other non-noble councillors made similarly advantageous marriages.

<sup>148</sup> HStAS A 21 Bü 204, 'Sezordnung Inn der Ritterstube', 26 July 1618.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> This dissertation will come back to them in chapter 4.

were directly adjoining the chancellery.<sup>151</sup> Since marriage often went hand in hand with the taking up of a post in the ducal administration,<sup>152</sup> we can assume that the majority of these officials would have had their own households close-by, to which they returned when their working hours in the chancellery were over.<sup>153</sup> The structure of family life looked somewhat different for the noble courtiers, many of whom were either unmarried, or had wives who lived away from court, while their duties required them to remain in Stuttgart for extended periods (for instance they remained at court for mealtimes). Individuals of varying social backgrounds were integrated into the courtly ‘super-household’ in ways that reflected their rank and gender. This dynamic, as well as the relationship between said integration and access to the practice of power remains extremely understudied.<sup>154</sup> The remainder of this chapter will seek to make a contribution to this important field of study for its chosen historical setting.

### ***Households and Conflicts***

As is often the case in historical enquiry, it is cases of conflict that leave traces, where otherwise silence would have been kept over dynamics that were too obvious for contemporaries to be mentioned in chronicles or other historiographical documents. The same is true for everyday life at the court of Württemberg, where

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<sup>151</sup> HStAS A 252, Bd. 2, ‘Diener- und Besoldungsbuch’, from 1579, fols. 2r-5r and 14v-19v show that most noble councillors were housed at court, and their non-noble counterparts in the city. Since the wives of the noble councillors do not appear in these listings, nor in the seating orders, or *Frauenzimmer* listings, we can reach the conclusion that they did not accompany their husbands to court.

<sup>152</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 80, ‘Most Geheime Räte married at least once, usually before reaching the apex of their careers’.

<sup>153</sup> On these working hours see Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg und ihre Beamten 1520 - 1629*, pp. 4–5, also see *ibid.* p. 29, where it is shown that it was expected of many of the office holders working in the chancellery, treasury and the church council to travel frequently in order to fulfill their obligations. They often spent considerable time away from Stuttgart as a result.

<sup>154</sup> Important exceptions are the already mentioned Hanley, ‘Engendering the State’, as well as Pauline Ferrier-Viaud, *Pouvoir, présence et action de femmes. Les épouses des ministres au temps de Louis XIV*, unpublished dissertation, submitted to Sorbonne Paris IV, (2016), who could show that the wives of courtly ministers played crucial networking roles, which were facilitated by the fact that they had lodgings at court.

specific cases of discord among courtly residents allow us glimpses of the extent to which the ducal administration could claim authority over the lives of those who lived and worked within the *Burgfrieden* in Stuttgart.

In the documents about disputes at court, the *Ritterstube* emerges as a hotbed of friction between the courtiers. In January 1607 a dispute between a nobleman named Besserer and a group consisting of a von Schleinitz, Münchberger, and Daxberger escalated in the city of Stuttgart.<sup>155</sup> In the inquisition that followed, a watchmaker stated that he had heard that ‘a nobleman was hitting another in the face’ upon which he proceeded immediately to the location where he had been told the fight was taking place, and indeed he saw two noblemen fighting each other in a ring of onlookers.<sup>156</sup> In the course of this fight, Besserer was injured with a dagger. He later stated that previously Schleinitz and his friends ‘had let him have much abuse in the *ritterstube* and Münchinger pushed him with his elbow, so that at one time he fell in the *stube*’.<sup>157</sup> On another occasion Schleinitz hit him in the face in the *Ritterstube*, and Besserer noted that ‘this is why he sat at the lowest table to remove himself from them, as the preceptor [...] and others would know’.<sup>158</sup> With his account Besserer made it evident that he eventually was forced to defend himself in order to uphold his masculine honour, which was tied to notions of bodily integrity and defiance in the face of pain or death.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, letter from bailiff Andreas Lehnert to Duke Friedrich, 28 January 1607; The family name ‘Besserer’ is most likely short for ‘Besserer von Thalfingen’, which is the family name of a small Swabian noble house with known ties to the dukes of Württemberg, see Ernst Heinrich Kneschke, ed., *Neues allgemeines deutsches Adels-Lexicon*, 9 vols. (Leipzig, 1859), vol. 1, s.v. ‘Besserer von Thalfingen’, pp. 383-5.

<sup>156</sup> HStAS, A 20 Bü 58, ‘Inquisition’, 31 January 1607, in the statement of Christoff Klaiber: ‘das ein Edelman einen andern Edelman [...] eins ins Gesicht gegeben’.

<sup>157</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 3, ‘Des hofjunckers Besserers Anzaig’, undated, ‘es hab schlenitz, Münchinger, dagberger[...], ime etlich Zeit her, in der riterstuben vill schimpff beweisen, mit dem elenbogen der Münchinger In gestossen das er eines mals in der stuben nider gefallen [...]’.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., ‘deßwegen er etwan an den vndersten dises [sic] gesessen, sich von inen zu absentieren, wie der praeceptor, [d. porten], vnd anderen wissen werden’.

<sup>159</sup> Spierenburg, ‘Masculinity, violence, and vonour: An introduction’, p. 5; On the importance of bodily integrity for masculine honour see also Valentin Groebner, ‘Losing face, saving face: Noses and honour in the late medieval town’, *History Workshop Journal*, 40 (Autumn 1995), pp. 1–15, here p. 10.

In 1604 the court preacher Erasmus Grüninger and the famous court physician Oswald Gabelkofer both reported that they had overheard the young noblemen von Wittershausen and von Remchingen during the evening meal in a heated exchange. Apparently, von Wittershausen asked von Remchingen many questions about his recent stay in France and, in particular, he wanted to know ‘what bread, plate, knife and others were called in French, Remchingen answered in return you ask like a young boy’.<sup>160</sup> Wittershausen felt that his honour had been impugned and replied ‘if we were not in the *Burgfrieden* I would know what I would do’.<sup>161</sup> The morning after this exchange the two young men engaged in a sword fight just outside the city gates, during which Remchingen inflicted fatal wounds on Wittershausen.<sup>162</sup> Finally, a somewhat more harmless dispute between noblemen Firksen and Dela Frene began ‘in an exchanged conversation held at y[our] g[race’s] table during a meal, which either of them took and understood to be a lessening and disadvantage to their long-standing noble honour’<sup>163</sup>. Apparently the dispute circled around a variation of the ‘pen and sword’ conflict, since Dela Frene accused Firksen of understanding nothing of the business of war, and told him he ‘should go work with his pens and quills’.<sup>164</sup> The men quarrelled all the way from the

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<sup>160</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 2, ‘Inquisition’ 2 August 1604, ‘was Brot Deller, Meßer vnd dergleichen vff Französisch heißen, Remchingen hatt druf geantwortet du fragst wie ein bachant’.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., ‘wan es nit in Burgfrieden were wisse er wol was er thun sollte’.

<sup>162</sup> Although such an armed meeting evokes associations with the practice of early modern honour duelling, this is not exactly what is happening here. In the Holy Roman Empire the duel as a legal category was not recognised until the mid-seventeenth century, and even then it was named only in laws designed to prohibit the practice. Duels, which were recognised as legitimate conflicts over noble male honour, did not emerge in the German lands until the mid-eighteenth century, when they were imported alongside other French cultural influences. On this see Ulrike Ludwig, ‘Das Recht als Medium des Transfers. Die Ausbreitung des Duells im Alten Reich.’, in Ulrike Ludwig, Barbara Krug-Richer, and Gerd Schwerhoff, eds., *Das Duell: Ehrenkämpfe vom Mittelalter bis zur Moderne* (Konstanz, 2012), pp. 159–174, as a result the fight discussed in this instance constituted a clear transgression against the *Burgfrieden* stipulated in the court ordinances.

<sup>163</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, letter from Landhofmeister Layming to Duke Friedrich, December 1595, ‘In ainer ob Ihr f.Gn. Tafel bey gewehrter Maalzeytt, fürgange *conuersation* solliche weden gewechßlet worden, welche Jedtweden zu verklarinerung vnnnd nachtheyl seiner wolhergebrachten adellichen Ehren, vffnehmen vnd verstehen’, original cursives.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., ‘vnnnd [er dem] Firxen gesagt, er verstünde sich nichtz vmb das kriegs wesen, sollte dar für mit seinem schreibzeug vnnnd federn vmbgehen’.

*Ritterstube* to the ‘open streets’ of Stuttgart and a fight between them could only be avoided by the intervention of some nearby courtiers.<sup>165</sup>

Evidently a community of noblemen, who were trained in the craft of war, were not easily organised into a harmonious courtly household. The head of the household (i.e. Duke Friedrich I), had to make sure that each and every one of these disputes was examined and a solution was found, so as to prevent further disorder in his castle and court precinct. Despite the harsh punishments proposed in the court ordinances, the realities of courtly conflict resolution were oriented towards consensus building. Detailed inquisitions were made in cases where physical harm had been done, such as in the Besserer and Wittershausen cases. In the former case, the perpetrators had to write long and detailed apologies and stay away from court for a period of time until the duke was satisfied.<sup>166</sup> Von Remchingen experienced the harshest punishment with an indefinite ban not only from Stuttgart but from the territory of Württemberg, whilst in the Dela Frene and Fircksen dispute a mere *Vergleich* was imposed on the participants, which stated that from now on they would respect each other and only say honourable things about their former opponent. In no case that survives from 1573 to 1633 was corporal punishment, such as the loss of a hand, even discussed.<sup>167</sup> Allowances had to be made for the sentiments of honour of the men involved. Nevertheless, they could not be allowed to settle their disputes purely amongst themselves, even when they were purposefully placed outside the immediate area of the *Burgfrieden* (as in the von Wittershausen/von Remchingen fight). The duke and his councillors were still involved in the sentencing, and, in this way, disturbances of the peace gave the duke an opportunity to reassert his position as the legitimate leader of the courtly community.

Noblewomen do not appear in these documents, but we do learn that the duke even extended his influence to disputes involving sexual transgressions of low-

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> They are to be found in HStAS A 20 Bü 58.

<sup>167</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 57-9, these are the only documents about the courtly ‘Streitsachen’ surviving from the court of Württemberg.

ranking female servants. In March 1573 Duke Ludwig (r. 1568-1593) heard that the daughter of his kitchen master Anstet Herbst had given birth to a child, although she was unmarried. He immediately wrote to the deputy bailiff of Stuttgart and explained, that

we found it strange that we heard about this from people other than the bailiff who should dutifully have informed us, but, be that as it may, it is now our order that you will inform us henceforth with all good reports of those involved, when she gave birth, who christened the child (and when), who the godparents were and who was present at the christening, as well as whether the child is still alive or now dead.<sup>168</sup>

The *Amtmann* obeyed these pointed instructions and a full inquiry was made, which found that the kitchen master's daughter had become engaged to the kitchen scribe without the consent of her parents and that the couple had had intercourse before their marriage 'out of human weakness'.<sup>169</sup> Even the *Landhofmeister* and the chancellor at the time were asked to give an opinion on how this transgression should be treated, and, finally, it was recommended that the scribe should suffer a punishment of two weeks in the tower, whilst his fiancée was to be forbidden from wearing a wreath to their wedding, but should be spared jail, since she was 'simple and pious'.<sup>170</sup> An even larger inquisition was launched when Catharina Buechlerin, the daughter of the court laundress, gave birth to a child in early 1583. Since the father was not immediately known, Catharina, a second laundress, the two sons-in-law of the chief laundress, as well as the gate guard were quizzed closely on who might have to answer for the new born child.<sup>171</sup> It emerged quickly that Catharina had had dealings with the nobleman Seyfrid von Muhlheim, and, since she could prove that he had given her money for the baby, his paternity was quickly established

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<sup>168</sup> HStAS, A 20 Bü 57, letter from Duke Ludwig, 31 March, 1573, 'weil wir dessen von andern leutten vnd nicht von dir den als den amtman, wie du billich gethan haben solltest, verständiget worden, mit befrembden engehört, Aber wie dem so ist vnser beuelch, Ir du wöllesd vnns fürderlich mit allen guten vmbstenden berichten wann sie khinds gelegen, wer dasselb vnd wem {auch zu welcher zeit} gestaufft habe, Item wer gevatter vnd bei der tauff erscheinen, desgleichen ob es noch In leben oder todt seie'.

<sup>169</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 57, doc. 3, 4 April 1573, 'mentchlicher blede'.

<sup>170</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 57, doc. 4, 8 April 1573, 'einfelttig vnnd from'.

<sup>171</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 57, 'Inquisition', 2 March 1583.

beyond doubt.<sup>172</sup> Catharina had given birth in Uhlbach, not far from Stuttgart, and the local bailiff assured the duke that, as soon as he heard ‘of a young woman from Stuttgart with a great pregnant body’, he instructed his servant to find out more about her situation.<sup>173</sup> There was, then, a widespread assumption among officials linked to the court of Württemberg that the duke would want to know about any unaccounted-for babies that were linked to his court, even if their mothers were not of noble lineage. This must certainly be read in connection with a wider drive at this time towards the ordering of sexuality within marriage in Lutheran territories, which was understood as crucial for the welfare of the territory.<sup>174</sup> Yet, I would argue that it was also regarded as a delicate subject, because access to legitimate of reproduction was a rare attribute of status within the confines of the *Burgfrieden*, and the duke had a great interest in policing this issue.

The paternal authority of the reigning duke over the members of the court was not a one-way street. Courtiers themselves, on occasion, turned to the duke for help to establish order in their own households. In September 1599 Duke Friedrich received a supplication from his courtier Carl Egen saying that his wife had run away and ‘last Saturday, while I was at the court dinner she broke into my writing cabinet and opened all the locks and stole cash monies and handwritings at the instigation of godless and hostile people’.<sup>175</sup> He immediately suspected that she had fled to her father Hans Hirschmann in Schorndorff. He rode there and confronted the local bailiff, telling him that his wife had run away and that she had taken with her not only his things but also ‘what y[our] p[rincely] g[race] ordered him to do at the

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> HStAS Bü 20 Bü 57, letter from the bailiff of Cannstatt to the duke from the 23 February 1583, ‘einer junge[n] Tochter von Stuttgarten mit grossem schwangerem Leyb’.

<sup>174</sup> As was shown again recently in: Heide Wunder, ‘Marriage in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century: Moral, Legal, and Political Order’, in Silvana Seidel Menchi and Emlyn Eisenach, eds., *Marriage in Europe: 1400-1800* (Toronto, 2016), pp. 61–93, here esp. pp. 71f.

<sup>175</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 2, 4 September 1599, ‘mein hausfrau durch anregung gottloser vnd feindselgen leutt mir vergangnen samtag die weil ich beim hoffessen gewessen in mein schreibstüblin eingebrochen alle schloß geofnet [...] baarschaft vnnd handschriften mitt sich genommen [...]’.

coming fair of Frankfurt'.<sup>176</sup> The bailiff was not too inclined to help Egen, who was comporting himself in a rude manner, and so he insisted on a direct order from the duke before he would act.<sup>177</sup> Egen went on to procure such an order and wrote to the duke saying that his wife had left him without any cause, that her father was acting as 'if she could not be safe in life and limb with me', but that actually he 'would only at times slap an uncouth mouth'.<sup>178</sup> Margaretha's father also wrote to Friedrich saying that he had married his daughter to Egen in hopes that he would comport himself like a nobleman, but in the last eight years he had treated her very badly, as many people had witnessed, 'for he did not merely hit and push her, but he also threw naked swords after her'.<sup>179</sup> Despite these damning accusations, Friedrich immediately demanded that Hirschmann return the cash and documents to Egen, and that his daughter come to the chancellery in Stuttgart in order to attend a reconciliation with Egen.<sup>180</sup>

Only six months after this incident, in June 1600, Hyrus Hieronimus von Homburg, another courtier, addressed Friedrich, stating that while he was on duty in Mömpelgard 'my wife without any cause (as can witness first God and then all neighbours, *knechte*, maidservants and many others) and without my knowledge she left Stuttgart and took with her the children, gem stones, the bed linen, and the best that my poor fortune could offer'.<sup>181</sup> He, too, suspected that she had gone to seek refuge with her relatives, and he needed Friedrich to 'enjoin my wife earnestly' to release his eldest son and the eldest daughter alongside his material wealth.<sup>182</sup> The

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<sup>176</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 8, 20 October 1599, fol. 1r, 'was E.F.G. Ime Im vorsteenden franckfurter herpstmeß Inn schrifften zuerichten beuohlen'.

<sup>177</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 2, second letter from *Untervogt* Christoff Ruoff, 4 September 1599.

<sup>178</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 5, 4 October 1599, 'als ob sein tochter bei mir leibs vnd lebens nicht sicher gewesen were', 'Das ich ettwan vf ein vngezogen maul ein maul deschen gebotten'.

<sup>179</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 4, 9 October 1599, 'dan er sie nit allein geschlagen vnd gestoßen auch Ir bloße delgen [sic] nachgeworffen [...]'.  
<sup>180</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, see marginalia in doc. 5 and doc. 7.

<sup>181</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, 6 July 1600, fol. 1r, 'ist mein weib ohne alle gegebene vrsach (. So ich zuuorderst mit Gott danach allen nachbarn, knecht, vnd mägden, vnd sonsten meniglichen vnd be=zeigen kan, vnd ohne mein vorwißen vnd willen von Stuttgart weget gezogen, vnd außgerißen, auch die kinder, kleinotter, bethgewandt, vnd das beste, so ich in meiner armüttey vermögt, alles mit ihr hinnweck genommen [...]'.  
<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 1v, 'wollen meinem weib mit ernst aufferlegen laßen'.

courtiers in these cases understood their own households as being subordinate to the courtly household, to which their primary allegiance belonged. It was at court that they took their meals and on the orders of the duke that they travelled to conduct his business. When, as a result, their wives used the opportunity of their absence to respond to mistreatment, von Homburg and Egen assumed without further questions that it would be their lord who would help them reinstate some kind of order in their own households. When Duke Friedrich reacted, he reasserted his position as the primary *Landesvater*, who was the real head of household to those connected to his court.

This role as superior, and indeed only, real husband and father at court was guarded closely. In 1605 Friedrich decreed, for instance, that none of the wives of his guards should be permitted to enter the castle on penalty of the termination of their husband's service at court.<sup>183</sup> This decree reveals that it was not merely the threat of illegitimate sexuality that was a concern for the duke, as it emerged from the *Frauenzimmer* ordinances. Rather, it was also his aim to make full representational use of his privileged position as the only man at court who was surrounded by his entire household at all times, and who had sexual access to his wife within the *Burgfrieden*, in the absence of foreign potentates who might be visiting. Friedrich pushed this claim even further, for he even entertained a sexual relationship with one of the guards' wives for a time, indicating his supreme access to all members of his courtly household. Gender roles in this sense were truly a resource of power.<sup>184</sup>

Finally, we will return once more to the question of household differentiation between the noble *Oberräte* and those of burgher descent. As was stated earlier, the non-noble councillors had their own townhouses in Stuttgart, where they took their meals and lived their lives outside the chancellery in the heart of their own households. In some ways, they were thus more independent of the duke and his ordinances than the noble councillors and courtiers. This was likely to bring some

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<sup>183</sup> HStAS A 21 Bü 221, doc. 3, 1605, 'das keines Trabantten frau in das schloss gehen soll, bei abschaffung Ihres manes'.

<sup>184</sup> See HStAS G 60 Bü 9, 'Gutachten', from Melchior Jäger for Johann Friedrich and Sibylla, 7 July 1608, fol. 15r.

advantages with it. For instance, Haug-Moritz has shown that it was not unusual that the wives of burgher councillors independently led agrarian production on the family landholdings, which could result in considerable additional income.<sup>185</sup> Her examples stemmed from the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century, but it is likely that similar ways of partitioning labour between non-noble councillors and their wives already existed in our period of investigation. The household of a non-noble councillor could thus form a relatively autonomous unit of production, and it is likely that this circumstance would have added to the sense of confident professionalism with which the *Ehrbarkeit* began to position itself as an increasingly successful governmental elite.

Back at the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, noble lineage had sizeable advantages, even for those whose households stood in clear dependence of the ducal court. The case of von Wittershausen and von Remchingen can serve to illustrate one of the key differences between the family units of burghers and noble courtiers. As we have seen, von Remchingen was banished from Württemberg in 1604, after having stabbed to death Hans Ulrich von Wittershausen. Both of the men involved in this fight were very young at the time of the incident, and thus von Remchingen was essentially sentenced to a long life of exile, which would have made it next to impossible to live according to his rank. It was not to come to this, however, and that was largely due to the efforts of his mother, Maria von Remchingen, née Schilingin von Cannstatt (as she signed her letters).<sup>186</sup> She was the widow of Weylandt Hans Sigismundt von Remchingen, the former bailiff of Kirchheim, and in the years following her son's banishment she began to make many attempts to contact the father of her son's victim von Wittershausen, in order to

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<sup>185</sup> Haug-Moritz, *Die württembergische Ehrbarkeit*, p. 108, shows that Christiane Friederike Autenrieth, wife of Geheimer Rat Jakob Friedrich Autenrieth (m. 1767), earned 400fl. a year by running the family vineyards.

<sup>186</sup> See for instance her letter to Duke Friedrich: HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 6, 8 February 1605; Maria von Remchingen née Schilling had served as a *Hofmeisterin* for a Württemberg princess from 1579 to 1581. She was again employed as a *Hofmeisterin* for the ducal children from 1614 to 1616, indicating that she had enduring connections with the Württemberg *Frauenzimmer*. For her biographical information see Walther Pfeilsticker, *Neues württembergisches Dienerbuch*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1957), vol. 1, § 386.

broker a conciliation with his family, which she hoped would eventually enable her son to return to the territory. Von Wittershausen resisted her attempts, however, and so she made full use of the range of the opportunities and networks that were available to her as a noblewoman. She reached out to Anna von Ostfriesland, the widow of both the Count Palatine Ludwig VI (r. 1576-1583), and the Margrave Ernst Friedrich of Baden-Durlach. It is difficult to say exactly how the two women knew each other, but it is likely that they met in 1604 when Anna's husband, the margrave, died suddenly of a stroke during a short stay at castle Remchingen.<sup>187</sup>

In any case, Anna eventually gave Maria's son a position as a courtier in her entourage, and, in 1607, she wrote to Duke Friedrich of Württemberg asking, on Maria's behalf, 'that he may be granted free and safe access and passage through y[our] g[race's] duchy and land, and that he may be reconciled with his opposing party'.<sup>188</sup> At the same time Anna mobilised her son-in-law,<sup>189</sup> the new Count Palatine Friedrich IV (1583-1610) and Duke Friedrich's Protestant ally, to write a second 'intercession' on behalf of the young von Remchingen to the Duke of Württemberg. Friedrich IV wrote that his 'beloved mother and relation Anna the Margravine of Baden' had told him about the case of her courtier von Remchingen, and he 'had pity with the supplicant and would like to see him helped'.<sup>190</sup> Although the final resolution of von Remchingen's troubles was to take another six months and was in its final stages overseen by the new Duke Johann Friedrich, these intercessions eventually hit their mark and his banishment was lifted. This kind of intercession through networks of noblewomen is a practice that is well documented

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<sup>187</sup> See Otto Bickel, *Remchingen - Geschichte seiner Ortsteile und der Adelsfamilie gleichen Namens* (Remchingen 1993), p. 107.

<sup>188</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 12, letter from Anna Markgräfin zu Baden to Duke Friedrich, 28 September 1607, 'daß demselbigen ein freyer sicherer zugang vnd wandel durch E.Gd. fürstenthumb vnd Landtschafft gestattet, auch seine sach, wo möglich mit seiner widerpartey in der gütte verglichen werden möcht.'

<sup>189</sup> Anna had married Count Palatine Ludwig VI in July 1583, only months before his death.

<sup>190</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 58, doc. 11, Pfalzgraf Friedrich to Duke Friedrich, 25 September 1607, 'vnser freundtliche liebe mutter vnd Geuatterin fraw Anna Marggräuin zu Baden wittib'; 'wir ein mittleiden mit dem *supplicanten* haben vnd ihm gern verholffen sehen', original cursives.

in the entirety of the Holy Roman Empire, as well as in France and England.<sup>191</sup> It was facilitated by the emphasis many courtly cultures placed on socialisation through homosocially gendered groups at court, which meant noblewomen would be put up in the queen's or princess's *Frauenzimmer*, should they come to court. This gave them much-coveted access to networks of information and patronage that they could often use efficiently to the advantage of their families. The wives of the non-noble ducal councillors, in their independent households, were excluded from this kind of networking, which meant that they did not have the same opportunities to broker benefits for their families in the courtly environment. We can, then, come to the conclusion that the competition between noble and burgher ducal councillors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries should not be framed as playing itself out merely between individual men and their different backgrounds, but we should broaden our perspective in order to include the different gender orders and household organisations they could draw on.<sup>192</sup> When the creation of the 'private sphere' in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries rendered the brokering of noblewomen increasingly less legitimate and efficient, the nobility lost a key political advantage.<sup>193</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

It was the aim of this chapter to consider the spatial dimensions of the courtly household of Württemberg with a specific focus on how and why gender segregation was implemented. At the outset, it has been shown that gender segregation was a widespread phenomenon, not only at European courts, but also in the Islamic world.

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<sup>191</sup> See for instance Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 165–79; Sharon Kettering, 'The patronage power of early modern French noblewomen', *The Historical Journal*, 32 (December 1989), pp. 817–841; Sara J. Wolfson, 'The female bedchamber of queen Henrietta Maria: Politics, familial networks and policy, 1626–40', in Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben, eds., *The politics of female households: ladies-in-waiting across early modern Europe* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 311–41.

<sup>192</sup> Hanley, 'Engendering the State', has achieved impressive results using this approach, but unfortunately we still lack comparative studies from other cultural contexts.

<sup>193</sup> On the circumstances for the creation of the 'private sphere' see Rublack, 'State-formation, gender and the experience of governance in early modern Württemberg', p. 213.

Studies of the harem precincts have inspired the aim of this chapter to move beyond the absolute spatial characteristics of female quarters, such as size and degrees of enclosure, towards the consideration of the relationship between the female living spaces and the remaining court, as well as the implications of this relationship for the practice of power. It has been shown that the court of Württemberg followed a model of segregation that was well established in the Holy Roman Empire. This model stacked the rooms of the duchess and her *Frauenzimmer* above the apartment of the duke in the most central wing of the princely castle. This space was associated with the important tasks of the early education of dynastic offspring, the preparation of medicines, as well as the guarding of the female virtue of its inhabitants. On the other hand, it was shown that the *Ritterstube* functioned as an all-male space of the court, conferring greater standing upon those with access to this space, than upon the servants who took their meals in the heterosocial company of the *Dürnitz* hall. In the period considered here, the demand for additional outdoor spaces grew and the *Lustgarten* in Stuttgart was considered here as a space of courtly sociability, which once more reflected conceptions of gender difference in its very design. Gender segregation thus functioned as an additional tool of social differentiation, and simultaneously it helped relate these varied spaces to each other. In a final step, instances of courtly conflict were considered in order to learn more about the practicalities of integrating men and women from various social backgrounds in one courtly household. It emerged that the *Ritterstube*, with its all-male and all-noble clientele, proved to be a source of potential disorder, with many conflicts about injured sentiments of honour being traced back to it. As a result, court ordinances devoted considerable space to the punishments that should be administered to those who disturbed the peace. In reality, however, it appears that ducal investigations into conflicts between courtiers were designed to reconcile, rather than to inflict exemplary corporeal punishments. With every internal conflict the duke had an opportunity to emphasise his position as *Landesvater* and as head of his courtly household. In this position he was interested in noblemen fighting each other, as well as in kitchen maids who fell pregnant illegitimately, for either one of these

transgressions inflicted was contrary to the courtly order, which prescribed the differentiation between those who had access to legitimate reproduction and violence within the confines of the Burgfrieden and those who did not. In the course of this analysis it has emerged that members of the courtly household enjoyed varied levels of integration into its structures, which in turn conferred specific markers of status upon them. The duke obviously stood at the head of this hierarchy, but in particular noble courtiers perceived their own households to be so closely interwoven with the household of their patron that they turned to him at times of domestic strife. Burgher councillors enjoyed less access, not least because their wives were excluded from entry into the central *Frauenzimmer* institution. In this manner, membership in multiple households and the gender roles occupied within them created complex dynamics of in- and exclusion, which served above all the stabilisation of the courtly hierarchy and the affirmation of the exalted position of the *Landesvater* and the *Landesmutter* atop their ‘super-household’. In the following chapter, we will consider in more detail the outdoor areas of the ducal residence. Our viewpoint will shift away from everyday court life, and focus on the high ceremonial festivities for which these spaces were built.

## Chapter 2: Court Festivals and Gender as a Resource of Power

This chapter will investigate how gender was mobilized to serve as a resource of the practice of power during the great court festivals that took place outside the walls of the castle in the *Lustgarten* and *Lusthaus* of Stuttgart. The reigns of Dukes Friedrich I and Johann Friedrich bore witness to some of the grandest celebratory tournaments that Stuttgart would ever see. The male participants in these events were costumed whilst they competed in events testing their skill with arms on horseback, as well as on foot. The characters they assumed included ancient goddesses, mythical kings, knights and untamed Amazons. Participants and characters were integrated into the event by a narrative which held them together and which was laid out in such a way as to flatter the organizing ruling host. These costumed contests were staged before a varied audience, which always comprised the noblewomen of the court, alongside representatives of the estates and their families, important aristocratic guests, and even the subjects of the territory, depending on the occasion. The events usually began with the ceremonially complex arrival of the noble guests, who would stay for the duration of the festivities, usually several days or even weeks. Dynastic events such as baptisms or marriages often provided the occasions for such gatherings and, depending on their nature, the speeches, dances and processions punctuating the event could vary. Finally, great feasts and other *divertissements*, such as fireworks, accompanied the festivals. All these different elements were woven together to form occasions that allowed for courtly self-affirmation and power displays *par excellence*. Representations of gender threaded through these celebrations, and they clarified and nuanced the messages being transmitted. In the following I want to discuss the role gender played at key moments of the celebrations. I will begin by offering a brief overview of what we know about the courtly festivals of the period from the existing literature, and I will elaborate on why it is crucial to introduce the gender perspective into this historiography. Then it will be considered how and why

gender was staged at moments framing the celebrations, such as the arrival of the guests and the conclusion of the festivities. Secondly, the usage of gender in setting up the dramatic narrative holding the events of the festival together will be analysed, before moving on to how gender difference and transgression was used during the theatrical and competitive elements of the celebratory tournaments. This chapter will draw on festival books, which were created to commemorate these extraordinary events. These sources were specifically constructed in order to commit to memory an ideal version of the festival proceedings and, therefore, it must be stated from the outset that this chapter will offer insights into the complex representational structures of the court of Stuttgart as they were imagined by its most prominent members. It is thus an analysis of idealized political fantasies and can only offer limited views of the lived realities at court. It will emerge clearly, however, that gender difference lay at the heart of representational politics at court and that considerations of status interaction can be instructively complicated if we analyse them in terms of their gendered dimensions.

### ***Court Festivals***

Towards the end of the sixteenth century a specific type of court festivity had begun to establish itself in the Holy Roman Empire, which is now sometimes referred to as the 'Renaissance Tournament'.<sup>1</sup> This had its origins in the medieval courtly tournament but had adopted specific new contests in lieu of jousting and tilting, which were declining as a result of their often devastating impact on the health of princes and, by extension, their territories.<sup>2</sup> The competitions gaining in popularity now were less dangerous, but they still required great skill on horseback and in the wielding of different weapons. For instance, the running at the ring, which had its debut at the court of Saxony in the 1550s, quickly spread to many other courts of the Holy Roman Empire, especially after it had been performed for the first time by

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<sup>1</sup> See Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall shews*, pp. 13–35.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, in 1559 Henri II of France died in a tournament accident, which had a deeply negative effect on the sport.

costumed participants in 1561.<sup>3</sup> The running at the ring consisted of a rider charging down a race track at high speed, before he would attempt to pick up a ring hung from a wooden contraption with his weapon. Other popular variations of this combat were running at the quintain or running at the head. In the former, the rider had to strike a wooden figure, often representing a Turk, and in the latter he had to hit a series of fake 'heads' lying on the ground, whilst using different weapons. All of these contests usually involved two types of participants: *Mantenidoren* and *Adventurier*. The *Mantenidor* would compete against representatives from the different sections competing in the games, the *adventurers*, who demonstrated their team affiliation with matching costumes.<sup>4</sup> The *Mantenidor* was competing for the hosting party and the rules of the game favoured him and his side. The *Carisel*, on the other hand, was an event involving entire teams at the same time, in which representatives of each team met each other in the middle of the field, with the goal of chasing one another while accurately throwing hollow earthenware balls. The teams had to break and regain formation very quickly and were supposed to try and protect their team mates.<sup>5</sup> Besides these events on horseback, a foot tournament was usually held as well. These events were highly regulated with exact indications on how often and with which weapons one could strike, thus making this kind of tournament compatible with the maintenance of good health among the participants.<sup>6</sup>

These new events of courtly sociability required specific infrastructure. In the previous chapter we have seen that it was Duke Christoph who had extended the *Lustgarten* of Stuttgart and Duke Ludwig who added a race track and a 'bird pillar' for shooting contests.<sup>7</sup> In 1583 Duke Ludwig also began with the construction of a great *Lusthaus* in the Stuttgart gardens. The building took nearly ten years to be

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<sup>3</sup> Horst Nieder, *Ritterspiele, Trionfi, Feuerwerkspantomime: die Kasseler Tauffeierlichkeiten von 1598 Fest und Politik am Hofe des Landgrafen Moritz von Hessen-Kassel* (Marburg, 1999), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Nieder, *Ritterspiele, Trionfi, Feuerwerkspantomime*, p. 66; Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall shews*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Watanabe-O'Kelly, 'The Protestant Union: Festivals, festival books, war and politics', p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Nieder, *Ritterspiele, Trionfi, Feuerwerkspantomime*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, pp. 70–1.

completed and swallowed the enormous sum of 340'000 florins.<sup>8</sup> The result was so magnificent that it inspired similar building enterprises in Stettin and Baden-Durlach.<sup>9</sup> Its design was open towards the gardens with arcaded corridors looping the rectangular building on the first floor level. On each side a large staircase led up to the arcades and formed a centre-piece attracting the eye (see. Fig. 3). The first floor comprised a hall of 1168 m<sup>2</sup>, which far surpassed the largest rooms for festive gatherings in the Stuttgart castle, and its column-free expanse amazed contemporaries (see Fig. 4).<sup>10</sup> The lower floor consisted of another hall that featured three large fountains, and carved pillars in support of an arch that showcased engravings of the coats of arms of all Württemberg departments and cities. The walls were decorated with images of emperors, kings, and princes.<sup>11</sup> The arcaded corridors featured busts of Duke Ludwig, his two wives, and sixty-two of his ancestors.<sup>12</sup> Ludwig just had time to inspect the finished building in August 1593 only days before he died.<sup>13</sup> As a result it was to be Friedrich who had the opportunity to use this new space for courtly sociability in the first instance. It is evident that this building was meant to communicate the continuity and splendour of the Württemberg dynasty. Its open design invited the contemplation of the outdoors and the arcaded corridors were the perfect sheltered and elevated space from which the noblewomen could observe the exploits of the men competing in the tournaments.

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<sup>8</sup> Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 55; Nikolai Ziegler, 'Neues zur Lushausforschung: Einzigartiges Konvolut mit bislang unbekanntem Zeichnungen zum Stuttgarter Lusthaus entdeckt', *Rundbrief württembergischer Geschichts- und Altertumsverein*, 23 (Summer 2017), pp. 34-40, here p. 36f.

<sup>11</sup> Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg*, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

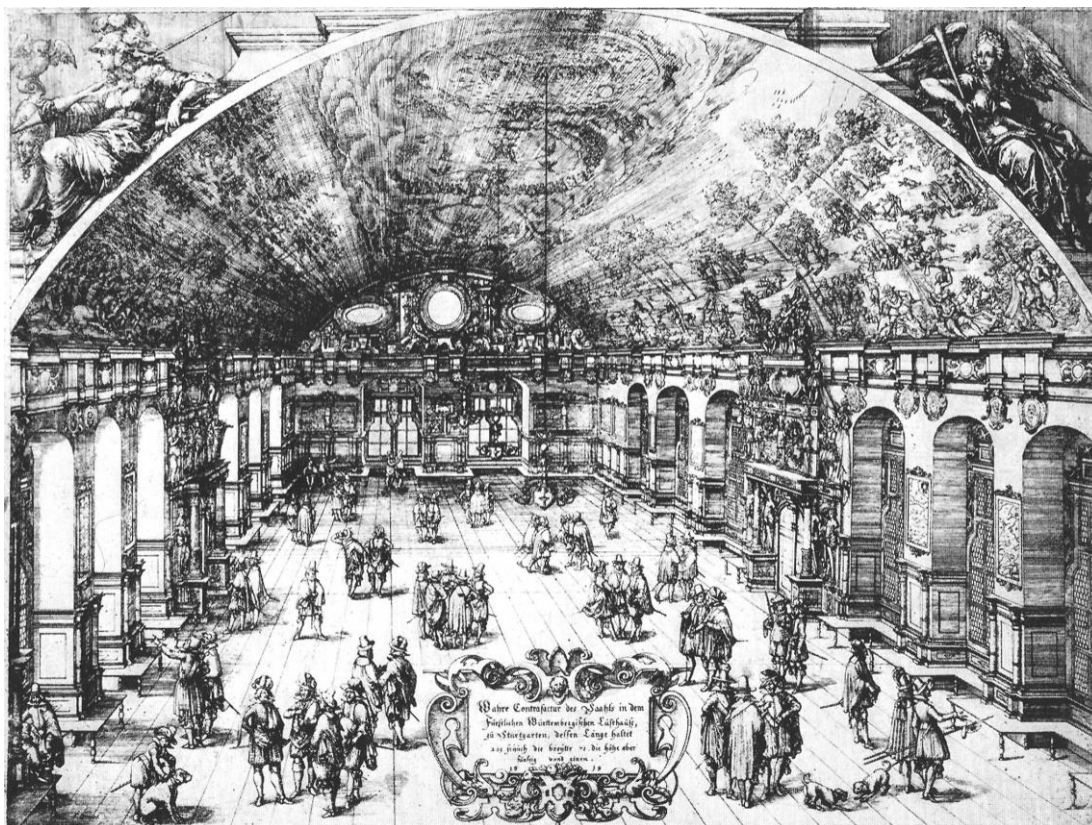


Figure 4: Hall in the Lusthaus. Etching by Friedrich Brentel, 1619, printed in Werner Fleischhauer, *Renaissance im Herzogtum Württemberg* (Stuttgart, 1971), fig. 32.

Whilst the representational aspects of such tournaments were crucial, we cannot dismiss the actual contests as mere power theatre. Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly argues convincingly that the tournament contests were shifting in accordance with techniques of war, and that they were conceptualized in a way that still allowed the military elites to use these occasions as preparation for their duties.<sup>14</sup> Agility and skill on horseback and with several weapons, including pistols, became increasingly important and the Renaissance tournament allowed for the practice of these skills both by individual warriors as well as by teams. The centrality of this combative aspect becomes all the more evident when we remember that the decades of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were deeply marked by confessional tension, and war came to be an increasingly likely prospect. Württemberg came to

<sup>14</sup> See Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Triumphall shews*, p.15.

position itself at the core of an emerging Protestant alliance, which was intended to provide protection and support to its members against the overbearing Catholic house of Habsburg. Watanabe-O’Kelly even defined a series of court festivals between 1596 and 1618 as the ‘Festivals of the Protestant Union’ and within this group the festivals of Stuttgart between 1599 and 1618 take a key position.<sup>15</sup> The series began, however, with the baptism tournament at the court of Landgrave Moritz I of Hesse-Kassel in 1596, where he christened his daughter Elisabeth and whereby Elizabeth I of England stood as godmother by proxy.<sup>16</sup> This event celebrated an outward perspective to the potential protestant ally in England, as well as an inward collaboration with other evangelical princes of the Empire. Meetings of these princes gained in political explosiveness when the conflicts within the Empire became widely visible at the Imperial Diet in Regensburg in 1608. At this time, the Palatine delegation, alongside the representatives from Brandenburg, Baden-Durlach, Hesse-Kassel, Kulmbach, Ansbach, and Württemberg, quit the gathering demonstratively and the Diet came to an early end.<sup>17</sup>

In the following year, Duke Johann Friedrich of Württemberg celebrated his wedding with Barbara Sophia of Brandenburg and the renewed alliance of these two important Protestant strongholds had great significance in this political constellation. The festival for this wedding was accordingly planned with extra care and Watanabe-O’Kelly argues: ‘The Stuttgart wedding is the single most influential festivity of the whole group [referring to the festivals of the Protestant Union], exercising an obvious fascination on most of the other events from this date until the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War, which borrow visual motifs or military forms from it or both.’<sup>18</sup> The event to which she refers was commemorated in an extensive festival

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<sup>15</sup> Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Triumphall shews*, p. 37ff.

<sup>16</sup> Nieder, *Ritterspiele, Trionfi, Feuerwerkspantomime*, p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years’ War* (London, 1987), p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Triumphall shews*, p. 40.

description written by the poet Johann Oettinger, which is the main primary source for this event.<sup>19</sup>

Some years later in 1616 Duke Johann Friedrich held a large tournament festivity for the baptism of his third son. The most prominent guests at this event were the princess Elizabeth Stuart and her husband Friedrich V the Elector Palatine, who was to take the Bohemian crown not long thereafter.<sup>20</sup> The extensive festival description was written by Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, who translated his verses simultaneously in honour of the English princess.<sup>21</sup> The textual description was accompanied by a very large series of engravings, which even today lets us guess at the splendour the attendants would have experienced. The various motifs that were chosen in the festival narrative have already attracted some discussion. Richard Schade argues that the motif of Julius Caesar came to be a kind of trope for the Württemberg dynasty. Duke Ludwig introduced it in 1585 and the character was taken up again in the carnival festivities in 1599, organized by Duke Friedrich who had his son Johann Friedrich take the role of Caesar.<sup>22</sup> Schade reads this continuity as deliberate, since it helped Friedrich stress the legitimacy of his reign. As we have seen, Friedrich descended from side branch of the dynasty and had taken over the duchy only after Duke Ludwig passed away without any heirs of his own. Johann Friedrich also employed the same character in his wedding spectacle of 1599, thus making it very plausible that Caesar was there to provide a link to the festival events organized by his ancestors. Marcus Klinge adds to this reading that the Stuttgart festivals were also attempts to consolidate a specific German proto-national identity.

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<sup>19</sup> See Johannes Oettinger, *Warhafft Historische Beschreibung Der Fürstlichen Hochzeit, vnd deß Hochansehnlichen Beylagers, So ... Johann Friderich Hertzog zu Württemberg vnd Teck ... Mit ... Barbara Sophia Marggrävin zu Brandenburg ... In der Fürstlichen Hauptstatt Stuttgardten, Anno 1609. den 6. Novembris vnd etliche hernach folgende Tag Celebriert vnd gehalten hat* (Stuttgart, 1610).

<sup>20</sup> On his coronation as King of Bohemia in 1619 see Parker, *The Thirty Years' War*, pp. 51–61.

<sup>21</sup> For both the English and the German of this festival description see Georg Rodolf Weckherlin, 'Triumpf newlich bey der F. Kindtauf zu Stutgart gehalten', (Stuttgart, 1616) in Ludwig Krapf and Christian Wagenknecht, eds., *Stuttgarter Hoffeste: Texte und Materialien zur höfischen Repräsentation im frühen 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 1-186.

<sup>22</sup> Richard E. Schade, 'Court festival culture during the reign of Duke Friedrich of Württemberg, 1593 - 1608', *Daphnis*, 32 (2003), pp. 83–118, here esp. 108f.

He sees evidence for this in the motif of Germania that appeared in the festival of 1616, as well as in the English translation of this event. The English narrative is not always absolutely true to the original and on occasion made additions to elaborate on specifically German customs. Klinge argues that these sections could not be meant for the English princess alone, since at this point she had already lived in Germany for several years and would not have needed such basic introductions.<sup>23</sup> To him it is much more plausible that the English narrative was actually intended for a broader English public, in order to inform them about German life and customs and thus render an alliance between their countries more palatable.

It is thus clear that the large court festivals discussed here were very much concerned with the relationships of the court of Stuttgart with its counterparts elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire and beyond. These extraordinary events were, however, not the only occasions for the staging of competition at court. The diary entries of Duke Johann Friedrich from the years 1615 to 1617 reveal that running at the ring events, and shooting competitions using crossbows or muskets were often practiced several times a month.<sup>24</sup> Usually a member of the dynastic family (including the women) or a high court official set a number of valuable items as prizes, and the male courtiers competed for them. Johann Friedrich was meticulous in noting in his diary who won which distinction, probably motivated by the fact that he could often collect the first or second of the prizes offered.<sup>25</sup> These smaller internal competitions appear to have often been held on an *ad hoc* basis, and they did not leave traces in the archive in the same way the larger representational events considered here did. As a result, Johann Friedrich's diary is an important source that demonstrates that the staging of military practices, including the allocation of prizes and the participation of the audience, formed a part of everyday sociability at court.

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<sup>23</sup> Markus Klinge, 'Triumphall Shews: German and English National Identity in Weckherlin's 1616 Stuttgart Triumph', *The Seventeenth Century*, 22 (Autumn 2007), pp. 201–224, here esp. 204, 218.

<sup>24</sup> See Ingrid Hanack, *Die Tagebücher des Herzogs Johann Friedrich von Württemberg aus den Jahren 1615-1617: Edition, Kommentar, Versuch einer Studie* (Göppingen, 1972); The originals are located in the rare books department of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB) under the signature Cod. Hist. 8° a/b. In the following I use the Hanack edition, but the folio numbers given correspond to the original documents.

<sup>25</sup> See for instance Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fols. 128r, 134r, 144v, 153v, 183v, 281r.

This insight lends even greater relevance to a close analysis of the ways in which gender was constructed during such events, as it reveals that the roles of audience members and competitors were frequently re-enacted even outside the occasions of high ceremonial events.

Summing up, the current interpretations of the court festivals of Stuttgart encompass their potential for the consolidation of political alliances, as well as the opportunity to hone military and combative skills at the tournament. Besides this, the desire to express dynastic continuity and foster the development of a proto-national identity has been cited as a function of these events. All of these interpretative approaches do seem plausible to me, but none of them offer an unpacking of the gendered language employed by all the festival descriptions upon which these readings are based. I argue that, in eclipsing this aspect, we miss out on a crucial representational element of the festivals. In the following, I will offer a reading of how gender difference was used as an important resource of power in these festivals, and I argue that such a reading is indispensable for a fuller understanding of these complex representational events.

### ***Gender and Festival Books***

Gendered interaction was a key resource of power and representation of which all court festivals in Stuttgart in my time frame made extensive use. They did this on at least three distinct levels, which shall be discussed here in turn. Firstly, gendered interactions framed the festivals from the very reception of the foreign princes and princesses and other representatives of nobility at the court of Stuttgart. This dynamic then became a leitmotif running through various moments of the festivities and it became particularly pronounced, for instance, in the ceremonial constructed around the wedding of Barbara Sophia of Brandenburg to Duke Johann Friedrich of Württemberg in 1609, and always when prizes were being distributed at the end of tournament festivities. Secondly, gendered interaction often provided the framing narrative utilised by the corresponding festival books in order to give meaning to the

celebratory event. Finally, a playful engagement with constructions of gender is also often crucial for the fictive narratives structuring these events, and some of the meanings attached to this shall be unpacked in the following discussion.

Before embarking on this analysis, it is necessary to spend a brief moment reflecting on the sources for this chapter. The key sources used here are festival books, which were produced to commemorate these extraordinary events in the history of the court at Stuttgart. The contemporary intention of these publications was mainly to serve the dynasty. Authors of the texts used here included Jacob Frischlin and Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, who were accomplished poets attuned to the requirements of working in a courtly environment. The respective dukes of Württemberg commissioned them with the production of such festival books, and thus we have to remain aware throughout our analysis that these texts narrated a version of events favoured by those at the very top of the representational hierarchy. The texts themselves were intended to be distributed after the event, so that neighbouring courts and allies could discover or relive the memorable events.<sup>26</sup> Thus we must not mistake them for naive eyewitness testimonies.<sup>27</sup> Bearing this in mind, this genre of ceremonial texts opens up a range of interesting opportunities for the historian. The ideal version of the festivities presented in these texts allows us to glimpse how the ruling elite of Württemberg at the time imagined the perfect representational event in which to showcase their power, unity and class. The symbols and languages that were chosen to represent the power of the dynasty of Württemberg are significant. Thus, we require a multi-level analysis of these texts in order to fully appreciate what their content reveals about status and gender interaction at this time more generally, and about the goals and hopes of this new Württemberg dynasty in particular.

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<sup>26</sup> On the genre of the festival book see also Thomas Rahn, *Festbeschreibung: Funktion und Topik einer Textsorte am Beispiel der Beschreibung höfischer Hochzeiten (1568 - 1794)* (Tübingen, 2006), esp. pp. 88f., where it is argued that the reader themselves was imagined to recreate the passing of the costumed processions through the act of turning the pages.

<sup>27</sup> Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, ‘The early modern festival book: Function and form’, in J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, and Margaret Shewring, eds., *Europa triumphans: court and civic festivals in early modern Europe*, 2 vols. (London, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 3–17, here esp. pp. 7-13.

### *Framing the Festival*

The court festivals of Stuttgart were communicative events: they acquired meaning through the gaze of others. Thus, the festivals began officially with the arrival of the foreign guests and this first ceremonial event was already structured by interactions of status as well as of gender. Philip Hainhofer was a noble correspondent working for a number of princes in the Holy Roman Empire and in 1616 he attended the lavish festival put on by Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia in order to mark the christening of their third son. Hainhofer recorded his impressions of these festivities in writing for the use of the Elector of the Palatinate Friedrich V, among others. His writing is interesting for us, since it constitutes one of the few sources of information about this event that did not emerge from the court of Stuttgart itself.<sup>28</sup>

Since Hainhofer had noble patrons, he recorded questions of precedence minutely and it is through his account that we glean the importance of gendered interaction alongside status interaction. When the great princes began to draw close to Stuttgart, the Württemberg princes rode out to meet them with their entourage. Duke Johann Friedrich, accompanied by his brother Ludwig Friedrich, went to meet the Elector of the Palatinate himself, whilst his brother Magnus rode towards the Margrave of Baden. Then, ‘once the mounted section was away, low bridges were built in the court yard of the castle for the princesses and the *FrauenZimmer*, and the city *FrauenZimmer* came in considerable numbers to court, to wait on the duchess.’<sup>29</sup> When they heard that the margrave of Durlach was close,

‘the city *FrauenZimmer* went down first and arranged itself in a circle, and after a while the courtly *FrauenZimmer* followed them and stood on the low bridges, then came the duchess with her *Hofmaister* and *Hofmaisterin*, and she was dressed in white and the three ladies in the colour of fire.’<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Philip Hainhofer, ‘Beschreibung seiner Reise nach Stuttgart 1616’ in Ludwig Krapf and Christian Wagenknecht, eds., *Stuttgarter Hoffeste: Texte und Materialien zur höfischen Repräsentation im frühen 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 317-58.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 323, ‘Nach deme die ganze Reuterei hinauß ware, hat man im Schloß hof für die Fürstinin vnd das FrauenZimmer nidere Pruggen gemacht, vnd ist ds StattFrauenZimmer inn zimblicher anzahl gen Hoff kommen, der Fürstin aufzuewarten.’

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, ‘Ist ds StattfrauenZimmer anfangs herunder gegangen, vnd hat sich auf der Rayen herumb gestellt, auf dasselbe über ein weil volgte ds HofFrauenZimmer, ds stellet sich auf die Pruggen, ein

When the Margrave arrived, he dismounted with his three young pages and ‘then gave the princesses their hands, who themselves remained on the bridges, then the Margravine dismounted with her ladies, and then the princesses got off the bridges and walked towards them and received them’.<sup>31</sup> A few minutes later a lesser lord arrived, who did not enjoy the attention of the courtly ladies and was merely received and ‘accompanied to his lodging’.<sup>32</sup> But when the Elector arrived another half an hour later, the *Frauenzimmer* had reappeared to receive him, and Duke Johann Friedrich himself helped the princess Elizabeth to get out of her carriage. She was then welcomed by the princesses ‘among whom now was also the princely widow of Nürtingen’.<sup>33</sup>

This complex choreography of reception, as told to us by Hainhofer, describes a ceremonial situation in which a status hierarchy is produced at the moment of guest reception through the presence or absence of gender groups and multilateral stratification marked by mobility and spatial position.<sup>34</sup> The *Frauenzimmer* added prestige to the reception of a guest. While the Margrave of Baden-Durlach and the Elector were both greeted by a mounted contingent headed by a Württemberg prince, and both were received in the courtyard by the *Frauenzimmer*, Hainhofer was quick to point out that the presence of Ursula of Nürtingen (Duke Ludwig’s widow) appears to have given the Elector the advantage.<sup>35</sup> Also notable is the presence of the ‘city *Frauenzimmer*’, which seems unusual but, in the constellation described, it is clear that this group of women was there to further emphasise the position of the courtly *Frauenzimmer*, who stood

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weil hernach kamen die Fürstinin, mit ihren Hofmaistern, vnnd Hofmaisterinin, die regierend Fürstin weis, vnnd die drei Freulien Feurfarb geklaidt [...].’

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., ‘den Fürstinin die handt heraiht, welliche auf der Pruggen stehn gepliben, darnach ist die Frau Marggräuin, mit iren Freulein abgestigen, denen die Fürstinin ab der pruggen entgegen gangen, sie empfangen, vnnd dann die Fürsten Personen, miteinander hinaufgangen, [...]’.

<sup>32</sup> Hainhofer, ‘Beschreibung seiner Reise nach Stuttgart 1616’, p. 323, ‘den man auch inn sein Losament begleitet’.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., ‘vnder denen auch jez die Frstl: Witwe zue Niertingen war, [...]’.

<sup>34</sup> The presence or absence of actors as an important indicator for status communication at court has recently again been discussed in Rudolf Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, (Konstanz, 2014), here esp. pp. 258-61, though gender groups do not figure in this analysis.

<sup>35</sup> On Ursula of Nürtingen see also chapter 5.

elevated above them on the bridges. It is not innovative to speak of stratification and integration in courtly ceremonial contexts,<sup>36</sup> but we are still lacking an understanding of the additional level of differentiation which was added to markers of status through the gendering of such settings.

This charged representational space between the *Frauenzimmer* and the local male princes and courtiers remained intact throughout the festivities. For the carnival festivities beginning on 22 February 1599, the newly-built pleasure gardens and the pleasure palace were used for a celebration of this scale for the very first time. One of the key features of this newly constructed space, as has been indicated, was the opportunity for the *Frauenzimmer* to oversee the tournament grounds from the elevated comfort of the pleasure palace.<sup>37</sup> When the festivities began on 22 February the noble contestants of the foot tournament arrived first, followed by the judges, ‘then the beautiful *Frauenzimmer* came, they sparkled in princely dress, and went up into the old pleasure palace, where they looked out in a noble manner’.<sup>38</sup> Later when Duke Friedrich entered the fighting, Frischlin noted that he took the time ‘as is the custom in these cases’<sup>39</sup> to bow twice to the *Frauenzimmer* gazing on from the pleasure palace. From there the Duchess Sibylla looked on and ‘besides other princesses stood Duke Ludwig's beloved spouse [...] and she gave off a shimmer’.<sup>40</sup> These references to shimmer and sparkle in relation to the *Frauenzimmer* are not accidental and they are taken up by the fictional narratives of the festivities as well,

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<sup>36</sup> On the mechanics of status interaction in princely entries in the Holy Roman Empire, and the significance of who would ride out to meet whom see Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider: Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reiches* (München, 2008), pp. 101-7.

<sup>37</sup> See Judith Butler, ‘Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory’, *Theatre Journal*, 40 (December 1988), pp. 519–531, here esp. p. 525, who asserts that gender cannot be performed by a lone, individualist actor. The audience is crucial for the constitution of gender in this context.

<sup>38</sup> Jakob Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus, königlichen Aufzugs, heroischen Ingressus vnd Pomp vnd Solennitet: mit welcher, auff gnädige Verordnung desz durchleüchtigen ... Herrn Friderichen, Hertzogen zu Württemberg vnd Teck ... Thurnier vnnnd Ringrennen, gehalten worden* (Franckfurt am Mayn, 1602), p. 8, ‘Darauff das schöne Frauenzimmer / In Fürstlichen Kleydern theten schimmern / Vnd ging hinauff ins alt Lusthaus / Sahe Fürstlich zum Fenster Auß[...]’.

<sup>39</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 12, ‘wie der Brauch ist in solchem Fall’.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘Neben andern Fürstin erkorhrn: Dann Herzog Ludwigs gliebter Gmahl / Vnd hinderlassne Wittib im Saal / Ganz Fürstlich zierlich sah herab / Vnd von sich auch ein Glanze gab.’

as will be further discussed below.<sup>41</sup> For the moment, we notice that the ‘female gaze’ on the action of the courtly tournament is seen as being of crucial importance by Frischlin in these examples, and this emphasis on the female spectators is also felt in all the other festive occasions consulted here. In 1616 Johann Friedrich opened the courtly tournament festivities in his festival role as Priam, and he addressed ‘all those present’,<sup>42</sup> but ‘above all the *Frauenzimmer*, justly honoured by all nations of the wide world, in no tongue ever praised enough, the *Frauenzimmer* ruling over Gods and men’.<sup>43</sup> Equally, the female spectator role is central in festivals beyond Stuttgart and our time frame. Eric Bousmar has commented on a similar staging of female viewership in festivals at the late medieval court of Burgundy. He argues that it was only through the presence of the women that the men were able to activate their masculine valour in combat, which thus rendered female spectatorship anything but ephemeral.<sup>44</sup>

Where court festivals were linked to dynastic events, women always took part in the rituals and processions that marked the respective symbolic actions. For instance, at the wedding of Barbara Sophia and Johann Friedrich in 1609 the procession leading the bride into the chapel of the court was structured minutely in accordance with the categories of rank, age, and marital status, but above all gender.<sup>45</sup> We know from Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger’s seminal studies that ‘all order

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<sup>41</sup> See p. 119-20.

<sup>42</sup> Weckherlin, ‘Triumpf’, p. 39, ‘an alle und jede Anwesende’, in the German version we see that he expressly addresses both genders.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, ‘zuvorderst deß bey allen Nationen der weiten Welt schuldiglich hochgeehrten / und mit keinen Zungen niemahlen gnugsamb gelobten / vber alle Götter und Menschen regierenden Frawenzimmers [...]’, interestingly in Weckherlin’s English translation of this introduction the role of the *Frauenzimmer* is less central., See the corresponding passage p. 38, ‘sendeth greeting to all those never-enough-praised and inviolable Ladies, and the vnvanquishable Knights assembled at this court.’.

<sup>44</sup> Eric Bousmar, ‘La place des hommes et des femmes dans les fêtes de cour bourguignonnes (Philippe Le Bon - Charles Le Hardi)’, in Jean-Marie Cauchies, ed., *A la Cour de Bourgogne. Le Duc, son Entourage, son Train* (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 11–32.

<sup>45</sup> For the detailed description of the procession see Oettinger, *Warhaffte Historische Beschreibung der Fürstlichen Hochzeit*, pp. 77-80.

in space was interpreted as a ranking' on such occasions.<sup>46</sup> The first six sections leading the procession consisted almost entirely of unmarried male princes, who were aligned according to age. The thirteen-year-old Rudolf Maximilian of Saxony took the lead and behind him the sections fell in line all the way onwards to the twenty-six-year-old Joachim Ernst Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach. The sole exception in these sections was Sophie the widow of the Elector of Saxony in the fifth section, whose status appears to have been considered weighty enough to trump orders of gender and age in this instance. In the seventh section, at the centre of the princely ranking, followed the bridegroom accompanied by Christian the Margrave of Brandenburg-Bayreuth (twenty-eight years of age), his uncle Christian von Anhalt (forty-one years of age), both of whom were married at this point, which must have made up for their divergence in age. The eighth section consisted of the bride, Barbara Sophia of Brandenburg, who was accompanied by Count Palatine Friedrich Casimir of Zweibrücken-Landsberg (twenty-four years of age), and Ludwig Friedrich of Württemberg (twenty-three years of age), her future brother-in-law. The following seven sections were made up of three women each, beginning with two sections of dowager princesses, among whom were Sibylla of Württemberg, Eleonora of Württemberg, the former's stepmother, and the dowager princess of Hesse-Darmstadt. The rear was brought up by five sections consisting of three unmarried princesses each, who represented most of the noble dynasties attending the festivities.<sup>47</sup> It may not appear surprising to see the dominance of age and title in the determination of the position of an individual in a ranked procession, but the fact that the married estate ranked above widowhood and certainly above celibacy, is far less present in the current historiographical view of such events.<sup>48</sup> As of now, the

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<sup>46</sup> See Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider: Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reiches*, p. 38, 'Die Ordnung im Raum wurde immer als Rangfolge gelesen', my translation in text.

<sup>47</sup> Oettinger, *Warhaffte Historische Beschreibung*, p.79.

<sup>48</sup> This is of course also linked to the fact that the importance of questions of precedence has only been identified as an important subject of political history in recent years and for the Holy Roman Empire little exists by way of comparative studies. Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The courts of Europe's dynastic rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2003), has a chapter on 'Ceremony and order at court: an undending pursuit', pp. 181-222, and must be credited with attracting scholarly attention to

significance of gender difference for the structure of such processions remains largely unexplored.<sup>49</sup> Yet in the instance discussed, it has emerged as highly influential. Bearing in mind that sections seven and eight were the representational focal point, it is clear that a hierarchy between men and women was indicated, with the men walking in front and the women bringing up the rear. But what seems even more central, is the differentiation according to gender in the first place, which would have crucially affected the optics of such a procession.

Similar principles of gender segregation were adhered to during Württemberg funerary rituals. Johann Friedrich's brother Magnus fell in the Thirty Years' War in May 1622, and on the occasion of his funeral the body was preceded by sixteen sections of three men each, consisting of high-ranking court servants and estate officials. The body itself was accompanied by trumpet players and was carried by twenty-eight male nobles who walked in rows of four 'so in the case of necessity one could replace the other'.<sup>50</sup> After the body walked Johann Friedrich with his brothers and other male members of the Württemberg family with the noble chamber servants, before the ducal *Frauenzimmer* followed. The procession details that the

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this crucial topic. Duindam found that Vienna appointed significantly less man-power to the coordination of its ceremonies than the court of France, and it produced fewer written directives speaking to ceremonial procedure. Nevertheless, ceremony and debates regarding its specific forms were crucial at both courts. Further see Giora Sternberg, *Status interaction during the reign of Louis XIV* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 30-5, who describes in detail the orders of precedence during the wedding of Marie-Louise of Orléans to Charles II of Spain. In the French context the agnatic distance from the king appears to be more crucial than age or marital status. The *enfants de France* were issue of a king of France, whilst the *petits-enfants de France* had a *fils de France* as their father. Gender was less significant as a determining factor of precedence than in the Württemberg context, with the *petites-filles de France* standing before the *princes du sang*.; In Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider*, questions of gender do not rise to the surface of discussion, since the text discusses Reichstage, which were attended in the first instance by male princes.

<sup>49</sup> This goes for the German context. For the French court Fanny Cosandey, 'Honneur aux dames. Préséances au féminin et prééminence sociale dans la monarchie d'Ancien Régime (XVIe- XVIIe siècles)', in Guilia Calvi and Isabelle Chabot, eds., *Moving elites: women and cultural transfers in the European court system - EUI HEC Working Papers* (Florence, 2010), pp. 65–75, here pp. 72f., offers interesting first insights. Wives and daughters walk after their husbands or fathers, in order to clarify that whilst they share the position of their relatives in reciprocity, they do not interfere with his superiority. Women thus have a special status in the order of precedence that enhances the position of their husbands and fathers.

<sup>50</sup> HStAS J 67 Bü 3, 'Vmbständliche Beschreibung der Procession und Ordnung wie es [...] Magnus [...] Leichbegräbnuß/ auff Freytag den 24. May/ diß wehrenden 1622 Jahres gehalten worden', p.61, 'damit im fall der noth einer den andern entsetzen könne.'

duchess, the princesses of Württemberg, as well as a couple of Palatinate princesses were each lead by one or two male courtiers. After them walked the unmarried noblewomen of the *Frauenzimmer*. They were followed by the ‘Statt-*Frauenzimmer*’, on whose heels walked the female non-noble court servants. The courtly councillors and chancellors, the representatives of the estates, and the mayors and bailiffs of the different districts of Württemberg followed. The wives of the court officials followed them, and the remaining wives of the officials employed away from court finished the procession.<sup>51</sup> This complex structure of a funerary procession was not always recorded in such detail, but other sources also mention that the *Frauenzimmer* marched separately.<sup>52</sup>

If we view the court as an entity in which hierarchical social orders are being reproduced on a small scale, then we must also pay attention to how hierarchies of social rank and gender interacted on such occasions. It is apparent that in such instances gender could trump status, for otherwise it could not be explained that the duchess of Württemberg and daughter of the Elector of Brandenburg walked further away from the body than, for instance, the Count of Eberstein and Sponheim. Nevertheless, I would also hesitate to interpret this state of affairs as another instance of female oppression at court. In fanning out the court and the non-noble urban elite, and splitting them up into homosocial groups ordered according to rank, courtly funerals, as well as marriages, held fast to a binary order of gender, which afforded crucial importance to both men and women in completing the symbolic image of a society in a divinely inspired orderly procession.

As in the beginning of these festive events, the noblewomen of the court also played a very visible role in their conclusion. The tournament always ended with the distribution of prizes or *danckh*, which was always carried out by noblewomen of the hosting court, who were sometimes paired with male courtiers, or acted alone. Who the recipients of these prizes would be, was not a matter of coincidence. As has been

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-70.

<sup>52</sup> For instance HStAS G 64 Bü 4, doc. 4, 4th June 1596, gives a similar impression for the funeral of Friedrich von Liegnitz.

discussed, courtly tournaments were planned and structured to an enormous degree and, unsurprisingly, it was usually the host who was given the first prize at the conclusion of the event. The winner of another coveted prize, however, was chosen by the *Frauenzimmer*: ‘Then who comes to the track / most gracefully before all / the judges well may ask / the *Frauwenzimmer* should say / who was worthy of this prize / should be decided by the *Frauwenzimmer*’.<sup>53</sup> The noble women ‘should be made dutifully aware by the judges, either orally or in writing, that they should pay zealous attention to which of the *Mantenetoren* or *Aduenturiern* enters the most gracefully and they should then give him the prize’.<sup>54</sup> While it is unlikely that this prize was allocated any more spontaneously than the others, it adds to the staging of the female gaze on the proceedings. In 1599 the *Frauwenzimmerdanckh* went to the young Johann Friedrich,<sup>55</sup> in 1609 it was given to Georg Friedrich the Margrave of Baden as well as to August the Count Palatine of Sulzbach,<sup>56</sup> and in 1616 Christof the son of the Margrave of Baden was the fortunate winner.<sup>57</sup> With the exception of Margrave Georg Friedrich, these winners would have been quite young (between 13 and 27 years old) and unmarried at the time of the reception of their prize. It could therefore be argued plausibly that this prize had a nurturing function for the next generation of territorial rulers and warriors, which would stand in accordance with the wider duties of the noblewomen at court. Moreover, a considerable number of unmarried noble ladies-in-waiting would have also taken part in the ‘judging’ for the prize, which at times was also referred to as the *Jungfraw Danckh*, or the ‘Maiden Prize’. To formalise their attention on the younger and eligible participants in the tournament would make sense, since court festivities were important opportunities for the beginning of new marital projects. In either case, to relate the noble women of

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<sup>53</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 5, ‘Darnach welcher kompt auff die Bahn / Am zierlichsten vor jedermann / Da möchten wohl die Richter fragen / Das Frauwenzimmer lassen sagen / Wer desselben Dancks würdig sey / sol stehn dem Frauwenzimmer frei’.

<sup>54</sup> Oettinger, *Warhaffte Historische Beschreibung*, p. 246, ‘Vnd sollen durch die Judicierer / eintweder Mundlich oder Schriftlich / darzu gebührlich ersucht / vnnd gebetten werden / Daß sie fleissig in acht nemen wöllen / welche vnter den Mantenetorn / oder Adventuriern /am zierlichsten auffziehen werden / Vnd alßdann demselbigen den Danck zuerkennen.’

<sup>55</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 134.

<sup>56</sup> Oettinger, *Warhaffte Historische Beschreibung*, p. 250.

<sup>57</sup> Weckherlin, ‘Triumpf’, p. 167.

the court in this manner to the (young) noble warriors symbolised the continuity of the participating dynasties.

Overall then, we find that the tournaments were given structure by fields of tension that were staged between gendered bodies. Whilst the men of the court fought and performed in the festivals discussed here, their actions only gained meaning with the arrival of the observing *Frauenzimmer*. The symbolism of homosocial groups arranged along gendered lines was powerful for the ruling dynasty, since in their unity lay the potential for the perpetuation of the current social order. These images would have been particularly necessary in the years of increasing tension leading up to the Thirty Years' War in which a new Württemberg dynastic line was attempting to consolidate its hold on its territory.<sup>58</sup> In these representational efforts, varied forms of gendered interaction were key alongside the better-studied status interactions. Both gender and rank were staged on these occasions in order to represent the dignity of the dynasty and to help integrate the noble guests and hosts into a celebratory party in accordance with internal courtly hierarchies.

### *Framing the Narrative*

Questions of gender roles and gendered interaction were also popular themes to frame the narratives developed in court festivals. As has already been mentioned, the festivities in 1616 for the christening of Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia's third son were dedicated to the princess Elizabeth Stuart, wife of the Count of the Palatinate, Friedrich V. In his English description of the festival, Weckherlin opened his text with this dedication, though, interestingly, the German version differs here and in it the author addressed his writings to the fertility of Barbara Sophia, since she was 'a central cause for this Christian gathering and the diverting actions springing

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<sup>58</sup> Watanabe-O'Kelly proposes that rulers were particularly likely to put on grand festivals when their dynasty was young and their hold on power was not yet assured. See 'The early modern festival book: Function and form', pp. 3–17, here p. 5.

from it through the fortunate birth (with which the almighty blessed her and the whole land) the beatifying rebirth'.<sup>59</sup> In both the English and German versions, a poem follows, which pays homage to the respective noble women. The verses for Elizabeth focused on the alleged transformative powers of her presence: 'For as your name doth fill the eares with pleasure, So your faire eyes fill souls with Vertues treasure',<sup>60</sup> alongside the imagined union between England and Germany: 'That Germanie may England like bee found, And with one hart and tongue your praise resound.'<sup>61</sup> The German verses for Barbara Sophia praised her beauty and light, to which Weckherlin ascribed supernatural powers: 'And through your virtuous splendour, men are made equals to Gods.',<sup>62</sup> before closing on her dynastic functions: 'Therefore our great prince / was glad to give his heart to you / so that with him his province / could live in happiness through you'.<sup>63</sup> Both women were framed as enchanting perspectives on the future, one over her important contribution to the local stability of the dynasty, and the other through the provision of a connection to another powerful Protestant nation.

Whilst the writers of these festival books were certainly not unacquainted with flattery and hyperbole, their textual creations still had to relate to societal imaginations in order to resonate with their audience. For the wedding of Barbara Sophia and Johann Friedrich, Johann Oettinger interspersed his narrative of the festivities with reflections on the nature of marriage itself. In his introduction, he stated: 'so we find that all human dealings and businesses / all action and being / all *Policey* and order / all community and the entire life of the citizenry rests on two

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<sup>59</sup> Weckherlin, 'Triumpf', p. 7, 'durch die glückliche geburt (damit sie der Allmächtige / und mit ihr ihr ganzes land gesegnet) der seeligmachenden widergeburt / vnd also diser Christlichen versammlung / vnd zumahl deren darauß entsprungenen zihmlichen kurzweilen einige vrsach gewest.'

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 9 'Vnd durch ewerer tugent pracht die menschen wie göter gemacht.'

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 11, 'Darumb dan vnser grosse Prinz / Sein herz euch gern vnder-gegeben / Auf das mit ihm seine provinz könnte durch euch glückseelig leben'.

main pillars, namely on the nobility and on matrimony'.<sup>64</sup> He extended considerably his thoughts on these two anchors of society:

If one would reflect somewhat on this issue and would consider with more zeal: So one will see that the nobility could exist and remain as little without matrimony as matrimony without nobility [...]. For when a prince spends his life outside of matrimony or otherwise dies without heirs from his body and thus God turns a *Landschafft* into a widow and its subjects into orphans, help us dear God what terrible and gruesome changes then often follow?<sup>65</sup>

The word *Landschafft* is ambiguous here; it might refer to the estates or the territory as an entity. Contemporary political thought hinged on metaphors such as this. The image of the ruler as the spouse of the estates is one used by Jean Bodin in the *Six livres de la République*,<sup>66</sup> which Friedrich had had printed in its first German edition whilst he was still Count of Mömpelgard.<sup>67</sup> In Bodin's imagination of the state, marriage and family were key metaphors, but there was little room for women, except as negative examples of wives corrupting their husbands with undue influence.<sup>68</sup> Oettinger's usage of this metaphor in a festival description suggests the broad appeal of such images, which define the role of the prince over the social role of the husband. In Oettinger's praise of the state of matrimony, Protestant ideas shone through quite clearly: 'those who hold this holy state [of matrimony] in contempt [...] and remove themselves from it without cause [must not] be human but

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<sup>64</sup> Oettinger, *Warhaffte Historische Beschreibung*, fol. 7r (of unpaginated 'Vorrede'), 'so befinden wir / das alle Menschliche Händel vnnnd Geschäfte / alles Thun vnd Wesen / alle Polickey vnnnd Ordnungen / alle Gemeinschaft vnd das ganz Burgerlich Leben fürnemlich auff zweyen hauptständen beruhen nemlich auff dem Stand der Oberkeit vnd auff dem Stand der Ehe'.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 9v (of unpaginated 'Vorrede'), 'Wenn man aber die Sach ein wenig hinderdencken vnnnd etwas fleissigers erwegen will: So wird man befinden das die Oberkeit so wenig ohne die Ehe als der Ehestand ohne die Oberkeit [...] sein vnnnd bleiben könne. Dann wenn ein Landsfürst ausserhalb der Ehe sein Leben zubringet oder sonsten ohne ehliche Leibserben abstirbt vnd also Gott der herr eine eine Landschafft zur Wittib vnnnd die Vnderthonen zu Waisen macht hilff lieber Gott was folgen offtermal für schreckliche vnnnd grewliche Verenderungen darauff?'.

<sup>66</sup> See on this point Opitz-Belakhal, *Das Universum des Jean Bodin*, p. 46f., Opitz argues that Bodin uses a deeply patriarchal image of the family as an analogy to the state in order to emphasise the need for one strong male head of household.

<sup>67</sup> Juliane Krinninger-Babel, 'Friedrich I. von Württemberg als Regent der Grafschaft Mömpelgard (1581-1593) - Forschungsstand und Perspektiven', in Sönke Lorenz, Peter Rückert, Universität Tübingen, Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, and Württembergischer Geschichts- und Altertumsverein, eds., *Württemberg und Mömpelgard: 600 Jahre Begegnung: Beiträge zur wissenschaftlichen Tagung vom 17. bis 19. September 1997 im Hauptstaatsarchiv = Montbéliard-Wurtemberg: 600 ans de relations* (Leinfelden-Echterdingen, 1999), pp. 251–284, here p. 275.

<sup>68</sup> Opitz-Belakhal, *Das Universum des Jean Bodin Staatsbildung*, p. 55f.



Klinge's argument that Duke Johann Friedrich, in particular, sought to revive an imagined German spirit,<sup>75</sup> though I would add that the discourse used order to do so functioned over gendered terms. This is an interesting example, as it underlines the flexibility of languages of gender. This festival narrative could, on the one hand, not praise women enough, and yet it was perfectly coherent to speak very negatively of 'female vices', which demonstrates the malleable nature of this language in which lay certainly one of its biggest attractions for political commentators.

Finally, we also note that despite the iconographic sophistication of the 1609 festivities, not everyone agreed on the message that had been conveyed. A few months after the event, the estates put it to Johann Friedrich that they felt that the splendour of his court did not represent accurately the 'old German Württemberg mind-set', which was based on bravery, manliness, and devotion to the right religion.<sup>76</sup> They thus asked him to scale back his representational spending, which he took as an affront to his ducal authority.<sup>77</sup>

### ***Gender Games***

In the absence of a dynastic event, such as a marriage or a baptism, to justify the organisation of a great courtly festival in February 1599, Johann Frischlin resorted to using a double-sided framing narrative for his festival description. In his introduction he stated, certainly not inaccurately, that Duke Friedrich had decided to host a festival for carnival since the territorial diet was currently residing in Stuttgart and he wanted to make sure the representatives did not suffer any boredom. Frischlin goes on to describe the tournament fought on foot: 'several thousand people / arranged in the animal park / who were there to see the manly game / which I will now describe. / Our Duke Friedrich / in Württemberg let himself be seen [so] / heroic / valiant /

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<sup>75</sup> Klinge, 'Triumphall Shews: German and English national identity in Weckherlin's 1616 Stuttgart triumph'.

<sup>76</sup> As cited in Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, p. 279, 'alteutsche, württembergische gemüt'.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

brave / alert / that it was a many-sided wonder.<sup>78</sup> After Friedrich walked away from this tournament with two prizes, Frischlin introduced the next layer of the narrative, with the introduction of the fictional character of Queen America. She stated that she had heard of the gathering of noble people in Stuttgart and the accompanying games and that she had taken this as an occasion to finish her travels elsewhere in Europe and hasten to Stuttgart in order to arrive just in time for the running at the ring.<sup>79</sup>

America's sisters Asia, Africa and Europa added to this later that they were particularly intrigued by the festivities, not only because of the unusual clothing that could be seen there, but also as the games would be a special pleasure,

for the highly-praised, noble *Frauenzimmer*, which shimmers nobly ornamented / and likes to see something new and strange / which happens rarely in the land / and especially since a woman should be / knightly brave and [...] will replace and take the place of the *Mantenidors* [...].<sup>80</sup>

This argument in the fictional framing narrative is soon revealed to be somewhat circular, since America herself takes up the position of *Mantenidor*. The attention thus drawn to her gender becomes all the more urgent when it is subsequently revealed that Duke Friedrich himself is playing this central role.

These festivities around carnival in 1599 have already been the subject of historiographical discussion, mostly because of their use of extraordinary objects and clothing from the *Kunstammer* in Stuttgart, in order to stage the entry of Queen America in a spectacular way (see Fig. 5 below).<sup>81</sup> The elaborately crafted costumes and wagons of the procession have been interpreted as a demonstration of knowledge about the New World, which informed an act of courtly culture that arranged its

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<sup>78</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 16, 'Dann etlich tausent Menschen waren / Im Thiergarten damal vnfahren / Welche sahen das Mannlich Spiel / Das ich jezundt erzehlen wil. / Nun vnser Herzog Friderich / In württemberg liess sehen sich / heroisch/ wacker / tapffer / munder / Dass er war männiglich ein Wunder'.

<sup>79</sup> See Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 25.

<sup>80</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 27f., 'Dem höchlöblichen Frauenzimmer/ Welchs Fürstlich gzieret her thut schimrn/ Vnd gern was news vnd selzams sicht / Welchs selten in den Landen gschicht/ Vnd sonderlich das ein Weib sol/ Ganz Rittermässig dapffr vnd [...] die Stell *Mantenidors* [...] Vertretten vnd versehen können'.

<sup>81</sup> See on this Sabine Hesse, 'Die neue Welt in Stuttgart. Die Kunstammer Herzog Friedrichs I. und der Aufzug zum Ringrennen am 25. Februar 1599', in Joachim Kremer, Sönke Lorenz, and Peter Rückert, eds., *Hofkultur um 1600 : die Hofmusik Herzog Friedrichs I. von Württemberg und ihr kulturelles Umfeld = Culture de cour vers 1600* (Ostfildern, 2010), pp. 139–167.

representational splendour so as to focus attention squarely on the regent.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, it would be difficult to argue with this assessment, but I would suggest that the unusual play with gender in these festivities needs to be introduced to the discussion, in order to grasp the breadth of this representational effort staged by Duke Friedrich. The question of gender has so far been omitted. Scholars refer to the fact that men often played female roles in festivities at the time and that, on this level, nothing unusual was taking place.<sup>83</sup> I will challenge this assumption in the following, but before entering into this discussion, it is necessary to briefly explain the political context of the carnival court festival of 1599.

When the festivities began in February, it had only been a few weeks since Friedrich and his diplomatic advisors had reached a major break-through in negotiations with Rudolf II, the Holy Roman Emperor seated in Prague.<sup>84</sup> The Habsburg Emperor had agreed to give up his right to inherit the territory of Württemberg should the male dynastic line die out, in return for a payment of 400,000fl. This was an enormous sum, but it gave Württemberg the chance to acquire more independence from the crown of the empire, which was an attractive prospect for Friedrich's dynasty as well as for the estates. Although the Württemberg Diet thus favoured the principle of this legal transaction, the pragmatic details of finding the money to pay the Emperor proved to be more of a point of contention.<sup>85</sup> Although Friedrich had said on occasion that the diet consisted 'in the greater part of idiots',<sup>86</sup> he was in no position to raise this sum on his own, and he thus depended on their cooperation when he called for a gathering of the estates in Stuttgart on 4

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<sup>82</sup> As is the argument in Christadler, Maike, 'Indigenous Skin: Indian Costumes at the Court of Württemberg', in Karsten Fitz, ed., *Visual representations of native Americans* (Heidelberg, 2012), pp. 13–28.

<sup>83</sup> See for instance Claudia Schnitzer, *Höfische Maskeraden: Funktion und Ausstattung von Verkleidungsdivertissements an deutschen Höfen der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1999), pp. 190-3, who states that this practice protected the modesty of noblewomen who could not be seen exhibiting themselves like actresses and prostitutes. This is certainly correct, but I argue that it is not the full story, as the practice of cross-dressing always had implications for constructions of gender, even when it took place within an accepted framework such as a tournament festival.

<sup>84</sup> See Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, p. 261.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260f: 'der merer teil idiotten'.

February. The assembly was a tense affair with the estates insisting that they would not agree to a payment of this scale without receiving at least some concessions in return. For instance, they were displeased that the Duke had forbidden the access of patrician children to the *Collegium Illustre* and they were uncertain of the Duke's plans for the future. They wanted him to assure them in writing that he would not touch upon the contract of Tübingen.<sup>87</sup> Friedrich did not respond well to what he saw as insolent behaviour, and he insisted that the contract of Tübingen had not been the reason why they had all met at this time in the first place. When the *Landtag* finally ended after six weeks on 16 March, Friedrich had prevailed, but the atmosphere was highly charged and the usual protocol of feasting the estates before their departure was not observed.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, raising the sum for the Emperor and thus ending his claims to suzerainty over Württemberg, was Friedrich's greatest success in foreign policy.

It was during this crucially important assembly of the estates that the court tournament with Queen America took place. We must remember that it was a time when there was much at stake for Friedrich and, therefore, we have to take his choices in the design of this event quite seriously. I now want to come back to the relevance (or lack thereof) that we should attribute to Friedrich's choice of female costume. Frischlin described his entry as follows:

The queen was dressed / as I will describe to you as best as possible / on her head was a crown / made from feathers / as I understood / of a parrot / blue green and red / [...] like a beautiful woman even the body [...] was like that of a naked person / flesh coloured with beautiful golden pieces tied / as if it was printed / and smoothly glued to the body / it seemed pretty from afar / as one saw the breasts of the queen hang / so she would make a graceful figure.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, p. 262.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263

<sup>89</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 50, 'Die Königin war also bekleydt / wie ich vngeföhrllich dich bescheidt auff ihrem haupt hatt sie ein Cron / Auss Feder gmacht / wie ich verstoht / Von Papengay / Blaw / grün vnf rot / [...] eim schönen Weibsbildt ähnlich gar darnach der Leib [...] Wie eins nackenden Menschen stath / Leibfarb mit schönen gülden Stucken verschnürt war / als wer es trucken / Und glatt an Leib hinan geleimt / Hat hüpsch von weitem her gescheint / Die Brüst der Königin sah man hangn / Damit sie zierlich thete prangen.'

This description differs from the way costumes were usually rendered in these texts. While it was perfectly normal to refer to the colours and fabric worn and the beautiful effects they created, they did not normally refer to the material body of the wearer to this degree. To evoke the image of leather glued upon bare skin brings the imagination very close to the body of the ruler, which was not without its risks, since it might appear to the reader as too ‘normal’ to carry the burden of governance. While it is important to Frischlin to emphasise the ‘beautiful’ effect of the costume, his explanation of the techniques involved also reinforces the fact that it is just that: a costume, a temporary way of changing one's outward appearance rather than a far-reaching transformation. I read this as a strategy to mitigate the risks taken in this daring display.

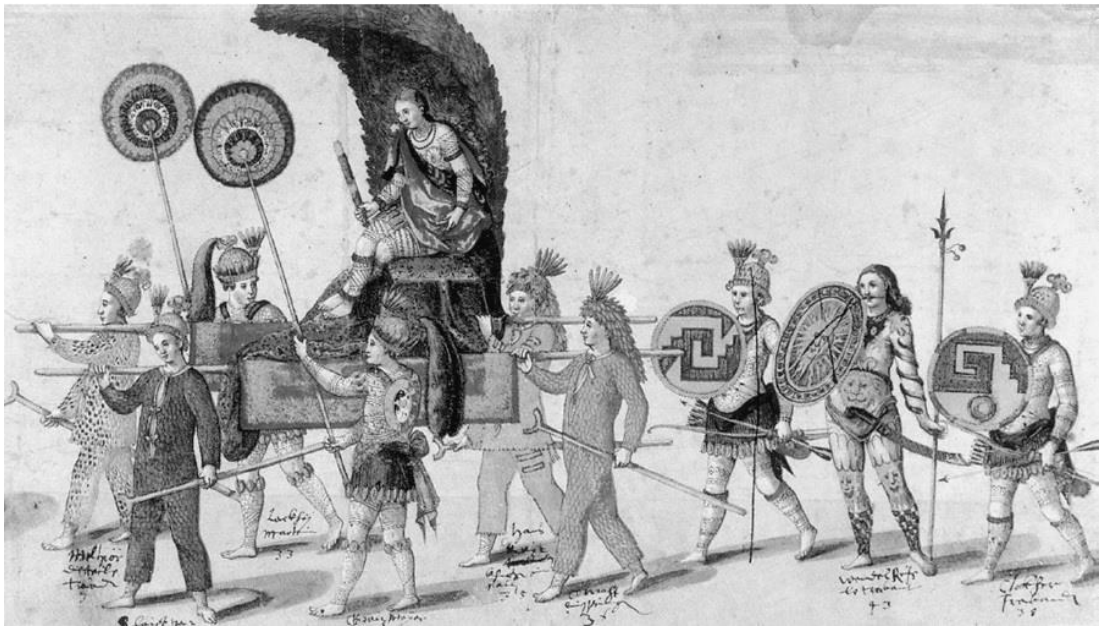


Figure 5: ‘Queen America’, coloured miniature, Graphische Sammlungen der Stiftung Weimarer Klassik, Weimar, printed in Elke Bujok, *Neue Welten in europäischen Sammlungen. Africana und Americana in Kunstkammern bis 1670* (Berlin 2004), fig. 1/6.<sup>90</sup>

For if we compare Friedrich’s America to other instances of men playing female roles in this series of court festivals, some differences are striking. In 1616 Georg

<sup>90</sup> Note that this miniature was probably created in the course of the preparations for the festivities (See on this Bujok, *Neue Welten in europäischen Sammlungen*, pp. 150f.). It was not drawn by an eye-witness and was not included in Frischlin’s printed account of the event.

Friedrich the Margrave of Baden played Germania<sup>91</sup> in part of the festivities and his appearance was described as follows: ‘Her bodie was covered most stately with a gowne of carnation satin embrodered all over with silver: she had upon her head a golden crowne, in her right hand an imperiall scepter [...]’.<sup>92</sup> The fully-clothed figure was accompanied by a number of nymphs on horseback, which represented different virtues. Friedrich's America, on the other hand, was accompanied by other Indian figures, some of which were clearly warriors, and none of which were other mythical figures. Furthermore, the litter upon which he entered was hung with melons, oranges and figs, and some of the accompanying figures carried bags of money ‘for this queen is rich’.<sup>93</sup> I read these attributes as symbols of fertility, which once again underlines the gender of the queen depicted. Furthermore, the foodstuffs, the money, and the accompanying warriors root America closer to material reality, as opposed to the comparable entry of Germania. The time of carnival may have added to the fact that the duke could allow himself a performance that stretched the limits of the acceptable in a world which was, at least temporarily, turned upside down. But even so, we must ask why he would have chosen a symbol of such ambivalence, which could stand for both fortune and innovation, but also for savagery and untamed sexuality.

Furthermore, the festival narrative of Frischlin plays with America's gender in ways that cannot be observed in other examples of such festival books. It has already been mentioned that the gender of the *Mantenidoris* was cited as a particular attraction of the tournament. But this was pushed even further when Queen America was mentioned before the start of the running at the ring: ‘as *Mantenidor* and in view of our female sex in this foreign country we want to reserve a weakness for us, so that we could run before and after the *Adventurier*, as it pleases us’.<sup>94</sup> Friedrich used

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<sup>91</sup> It was not Johann Friedrich of Württemberg as is suggested in Watanabe-O’Kelly, ‘The Protestant Union: festivals, festival books, war and politics’, p. 18.

<sup>92</sup> Weckherlin, ‘Triumpf’, pp. 58-60.

<sup>93</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 52, ‘Dann diese Königin ist reich’.

<sup>94</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 36, ‘darbey wir jedoch als *Mantenidor* / in Ansehung dess weiblichen Gechlechts in diesen frembden Landen etas Blödts / vns vorbehalten haben wöllen / nach vnserm guten Gefallen / vor vnd nach dem Aduenturierer zu rennen’.

his fictional gender to justify a rule that favoured him in the games, but strikingly he not only staged the ‘weakness’ of the female sex, but also what was perceived to be a great female source of power: sexual attractiveness.<sup>95</sup>

The last entry of the running at the ring was centred on Joachim Carl of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, the *Domprobst* of Strasbourg. In Frischlin's narrative, he stated:

I met a beautiful maiden / AMERICA was her name / and although this place was unknown to me / her beauty and her wise composure and humility / showed me clearly / that she had to be high born.<sup>96</sup>

He then plucked up his courage and spoke to the beautiful maiden, who told him that she was on her way to Stuttgart for a great gathering of lords and ladies. Joachim Carl fell in love with her and accompanied her to Stuttgart:

So that my hot lust / should not be in vain / and that my beloved / would once release me from my terrible pain / as I trust / and next to God I only count on her / because without her love at this time / no one can help me anymore / and this is why I enter this track.<sup>97</sup>

The idea that noblewomen could move the hearts of men with their appearance and comportment is celebrated widely in the court tournaments. It is a trope that has its origins in medieval courtly love narratives that still appear at times alongside the late Renaissance narratives involving ancient warriors and gods and goddesses.<sup>98</sup> As we have seen, the female presence was staged broadly in the framing of the tournaments

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<sup>95</sup> My findings here are broadly similar to those put forward by Jean E. Howard in relation to plays performed on stage in London in the early modern period. See Howard's ‘Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39 (1988), pp. 418-40, esp. p. 429, where it is argued that the plays that make internal references to cross-dressing were the ones that were ‘intensely preoccupied with threats to, disruptions of, the sex-gender system’; as well as p. 443, where it is stated that the subversive dangers of explicit cross-dressing were contained where the cross-dressing character did not challenge accepted gender roles, i.e. when a man dressed as a woman overplays female weakness the performance actually serves to prop up the gender hierarchy and is thus not experienced as subversive.

<sup>96</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung deß Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 129, ‘Begegnet mir ein schön Jungfraw / AMERICA war sie genandt / Wiewol diß Orts mir vnbekant / Aber ihr schön holdtseligkeit / Ihr weyß geberd vnd Bscheidenheit / Dieselbig zeigt mir gwißlich recht / Daß sie muß seyn von hohem Gschlecht’.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. p. 131, ‘Daß solche meine heysse Brunst / Nicht soll noch werde sein umbsonst / Vnd daSS die allerliebste mein / Mich einmal aus der schweren Pein / Erlösen werd / wie ich vertraw / Vnd nächst Gott allein auf sie bawe / Dann ohn ihr Lieb zu dieser Frist / Mir nimmermehr zu helfen ist. Derwegen komm ich auff die Bahn’.

<sup>98</sup> See for example the story of knight Janusch in Weckherlin, ‘Triumpf’, pp. 102-8.

at receptions and with the female gaze extending over all of the events. A crucial term that was used to describe the impact of noblewomen on these gatherings is ‘schimmer’ or ‘shine’ that emanates from them and their clothes. Ulinka Rublack has shown that reflective objects were highly sought after, since their play with light was believed to provide a link to the divine.<sup>99</sup> It is notable that this reflective and luminous quality is so emphasized here for the women, but never mentioned in reference to men. For Timothy McCall shows that in fifteenth century Italy, the wearing of shimmering and reflective clothing was practiced as much by men as by women, to the extent that he interprets it as a way to mark noble status, rather than gender.<sup>100</sup> Yet, here in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the capability to add *schimmer* to a representational event in this way is consistently ascribed to noblewomen. Their beautiful, luminous faces and bodies were at times even associated with near-divine transformative powers, as we have seen in the address of the 1616 festival to princess Elizabeth Stuart and Duchess Barbara Sophia. Beauty in this context is not an accidental quality, since ideals of beauty could often be an affirmation of the status hierarchy on which the early modern court relied so deeply.<sup>101</sup> Visible and shining signs of high birth and the potential to rule, however, were also crucial for the staging of the monarch or ruler, though not in relation to sartorial contexts in the sources examined here. Oettinger, in his introduction to the 1609 wedding festivities, stated: ‘It is nothing other than the power of God and the shine of the true divine majesty / which can be much more seen in examples than understood in its essence.’<sup>102</sup> He then went on to list some examples of this power at work: ‘Alexander Magnus, although only a youth of 20 years, so followed him a

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<sup>99</sup> Ulinka Rublack, ‘Renaissance dress, cultures of making, and the period eye’, *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 23 (March 2016), pp. 6–34, here esp. pp. 8f.

<sup>100</sup> Timothy McCall, ‘Brilliant bodies: Material culture and the adornment of men in north Italy’s Quattrocento courts’, *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 16 (Fall 2013), pp. 445–490, here esp. pp. 450f.

<sup>101</sup> On beauty and class see David Turner M., ‘The body beautiful’, in Carole Reeves, ed., *A cultural history of the human body in the Enlightenment* (London, 2012), pp. 113–131.

<sup>102</sup> Oettinger, *Warhaffte Historische Beschreibung*, fol. 8r (of unpaginated ‘Vorrede’), ‘Es ist nichts anders als die Krafft Gottes vnd Glanz von der wahren Göttlichen Majestet / welchen man viel mehr an Exempeln sehen / als dem Wesen nach verstehen kann.’

great and powerful people and army, which would not have happened for another lord. Julius Caesar had such an appearance, that he alone in his person could stop an entire army'. After listing several more such famous men, Oettinger remembered that another great example could be found much closer to home: 'Duke Friedrich [...] was also ornamented with a high majestic appearance so that his enemies feared him and cowered before him, although he never insulted them'.<sup>103</sup> This text then elaborates on how the visible manifestation of rulership could only come to pass in rulers who were the rightful heirs of their dynasty,<sup>104</sup> and here the author was undoubtedly attempting to prove Duke Friedrich's family against any reproach, since they took over the reign of Württemberg as a dynastic side line, after the death of Duke Ludwig without offspring.

The visible manifestation of nobility is a phenomenon that touched on both genders in the contemporary political imagination. Nevertheless, the effects of this 'shine' were gendered. Oettinger's examples suggest that a majestic appearance in male rulers could inspire great fear and devotion. The latter could certainly also be inspired by the beauty and 'schimmer' ascribed to noblewomen, which was consistently described as moving and transforming the hearts of men. This quality, while described as highly positive in the court festivals, had, of course, a counterpart that was viewed as a great threat to the order of society across the social spectrum: namely illicit seduction. Tempresses and 'profligate women' were shunned in south German villages and at worst even accused of witchcraft,<sup>105</sup> whilst an elaborate political discourse warned of the dangers of sexually attractive women monopolising the favours of the ruler. The female appearance could inspire deep love, as well as fear. It was viewed as ambivalent because such great power attached to the weaker sex, increasingly delegitimised from occupying leading roles in households, to say nothing of territories, was inherently subversive.

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., fol. 8v, 'Herzog Friderichen [...] auch mit einem hohen Majestetischem Ansehen gezieret gewesen / also das ihn seine Feind / vnangesehen er dieselben nie beleidiget / gefürchtet vnd sich vor ihme etlicher massen entsetzet.'

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., fol. 8r-10v (of unpaginated 'Vorrede').

<sup>105</sup> Rublack, *The crimes of women*, pp. 158-62.

It is thus unsurprising that the fantasy of a man harnessing the powers of feminine allure was appealing to a broad audience and, indeed, this was played with in different ways in the festivities of 1616.<sup>106</sup> One of the cartels to compete on this occasion consisted of ‘three English ladies’ who were there to make strong claims about their sex, proclaiming ‘Womankind doe excell mankind as farre as heaven excelleth earth’.<sup>107</sup> In the tournament, they made good on their promises: ‘And verely the three English Ladies (that by this time have, like Zelmane, transformed their womanhood into manhood, the first bearing the name of Lewis Frederic, the second Magnus both Dukes of Württemberg, and the third Craft Earle of Hohenlohe) did prove by their behaviour [...] they would by their owne vertue crowne their heads with bay.’<sup>108</sup> Zelmane is a character in the prose work ‘The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia’ by Philip Sidney, which was written in the late sixteenth century.<sup>109</sup> It acquired a large readership, and evidently it was known to the anglophile Weckherlin.<sup>110</sup> Zelmane is the name that prince Pyrocles took when he disguised himself as a female Amazon warrior in order to be able to get close to his beloved Philoclea, kept away from society by her father Basilius who feared an ill-boding prophecy. Pyrocles was very successful in his disguise, not only attracting the affection of Philoclea, but also of Basilius, who completely fell for his feminine appearance. During an accident with a wild lion, Pyrocles/Zelmane was forced to show her physical strength and when she slayed the animal, Basilius’ wife Gynecia recognized her for a man and immediately fell in love with her as well, thus making a square out of the love triangle. In this literary trope of men dressing up as combative women, the almost supernatural combination of fighting skill and seductive powers made for evocative fantasies.

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<sup>106</sup> See on this Herrup, ‘The king’s two genders’, esp. p. 498, where Herrup argues that according to contemporary advice literature for rulers: ‘To rule well required traits associated with both the masculine and the feminine: kings had to be both unyielding and tender, both economical and bountiful with words and goods, and both courageous and peace loving.’

<sup>107</sup> Weckherlin, ‘Triumpf’, p. 96.

<sup>108</sup> Weckherlin, ‘Triumpf’, pp. 128.

<sup>109</sup> See Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (London, 1590).

<sup>110</sup> Weckherlin later even took up a post at the English court as Minister of the Foreign Tongue. See on this Klinge, ‘Triumphall Shews: German and English national identity in Weckherlin’s 1616 Stuttgart Triumph’, p. 204.

The theme of the Amazons was frequently reproduced in court festivals, and it is important to note that they were imagined as part of an ancient Germanic past, rather than representatives of even more distant Greek mythology.<sup>111</sup> Amazons made an appearance in the tournament of 1616. Magnus, a younger brother of Johann Friedrich, took the role of Myrina Queen of the Amazons, and issued a challenge to the knights gathered in Stuttgart.<sup>112</sup> She wanted to be given the same arms as the local men used, so that she and her group of warrior women could meet them in fair combat and teach them a lesson about the superiority of womankind. The Amazon queen added: ‘They could easely bee constrained by our bewtie to adore vs, but we have hidden it vnder our armours’,<sup>113</sup> thus assuring the local knights that they would not use the advantages of their feminine attributes to win the fight. This kind of play with gendered attributes apparently fascinated men, for whom the combination of military skill and alluring beauty represented an unattainable ideal.<sup>114</sup> But while men dressing up as women appeared to entertain the festival crowds attending, no women pretending to assume masculine attributes were recorded at these events.<sup>115</sup>

In order to return to Friedrich's display of America, I would like to summarise the reasons why his effort is of a different quality to the play with gender described by Weckherlin in reference to the festivities of 1616. Firstly, Friedrich was the local ruling duke when he took this role and presented himself in front of fellow noblemen and the gathered estates of Württemberg. In 1616, gender transgressive roles were

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<sup>111</sup> See Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Beauty or beast?: the woman warrior in the German imagination from the Renaissance to the present* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 42-9.

<sup>112</sup> Weckherlin, ‘Triumpf’, pp. 150-154.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>114</sup> This reading differs markedly from the one put forward by Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Beauty or beast?*, p. 52, where she comments the following on the same 1616 event: ‘When Queen Myrina and her Amazons appear in Stuttgart in 1616 at a tournament to celebrate the christening of one of the duke's sons, the fact that she and her followers are all played by men only emphasizes the distance between manly deeds of the mythical Amazons, the pretend Amazons in the tournament, and the real women looking on.’

<sup>115</sup> Although Johann Friedrich notes in his *Tagebücher* on the 29 February 1616 that ‘in the evening three young ladies dressed in men’s clothing, and they challenged a young man, and they had a scrap with him’ (fol. 99v, ‘Abents haben sich Drey Jungfrauen in manß Kleydern angethan, Vndt einen Jungen gesellen heraußgefordert, Vndt Sich mit Ime gepalget.//’). This would suggest that female cross-dressing also had its place in courtly sociability in Württemberg, although it may have been reserved for moments in time which were connoted with inversions, such as leap day.

given to men other than the current ruler, and they thus did not claim the same attention over the course of the tournament. Friedrich's character, on the other hand, is a leitmotif that runs through the 1599 festivities and, as a frame for the fictional narrative, a princely competitor, and even a love interest for a prince attending the tournament, America took centre stage not despite her complex gender characteristics, but because of them. The 1616 festivities did not draw attention to the gendering of its characters in the same manner, contenting themselves with brief references to the clothing and appearance of the characters, but never making use of the attributes of their assumed gender beyond the staging of appealing visuals for the benefit of the audience.

Frischlin's narrative, on the other hand, made America's gender an issue of discussion for her fellow fictional characters and thus it was not incidental. At this point in his political career, Friedrich dared to show an extraordinary self-image, which did not hark back to ancient Germanic tradition, but looked forward into an innovative future, reflecting the manner in which Friedrich wanted to shape his relationship with the estates. It is certain that he took a risk in doing so. Not only did he use the symbolic wealth of the New World - hopefully without also attracting associations of Paganism and savagery - but he also portrayed his person as flexibly gendered, so that he could show himself as manly and brave in the foot tournament and at the same time his character represented fertile continuity and abundance. This latter function would usually be attributed to the ruler's consort, but here Friedrich presented his estates with a persona capable of representing both parties of the ruling working couple at once. This powerful claim was combined with a huge representational effort utilising much of the wealth the *Kunstammer* in Stuttgart had to offer, as well as with the introduction of the usage of the newly built *Lustgarten* for this unprecedented kind of festival, and it could not have failed to impress. Friedrich achieved his immediate goal of convincing the estates to agree to the payment of 400,000 fl. and I would suggest this courtly tournament helped him to convince them that business with him would not be business as usual. The estates may have been impressed or cowed by such an innovative and unabashed staging of

the Württemberg duke's ruling persona, but they did not give up resistance to the attacks on their right to co-determination of the duchy's fortune. Later in the same year they admonished Duke Friedrich to reduce his spending on his courtly household.<sup>116</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter laid out the key function of gender difference in the court festivals of Stuttgart. The organization of different homosocial groups framed the arrival of the noble guests and marked the beginning of all festivities. The dynamics of such receptions have been recognized for some time as crucial moments of status interaction and reveal a lot about the intricate power structures in motion at court. Here I have proposed to include in such analyses a consideration of gendered interaction, as this appears to have influenced the physical structuring of representational events to a similar degree. The female gaze staged over the tournament validated the accomplishments of the male participants and it completed the symbolic two-part structure of this court society in celebration. Furthermore, it has emerged that discussions of femininity and masculinity were popular themes for framing and legitimizing these festival events in their narrative form. Tournaments were often dedicated to the courtly ladies, all the while insisting on the transformative powers of the female presence. On the other hand, tournaments could also be advocated as a necessary measure in order to prevent the increasing effeminacy of the male members of courtly society. Gender difference was a popular way to stage the narratives of courtly tournaments, and Oettinger's comments on the co-dependency of marriage and nobility reminded us that the continuous renegotiation of the relational roles of gendered persons was a matter of state power at the ducal court.

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<sup>116</sup> Hesse, 'Die neue Welt in Stuttgart. Die Kunstkammer Herzog Friedrichs I. und der Aufzug zum Ringrennen am 25. Februar 1599', p. 164.

Finally, I have investigated the play with gender roles within the creative narratives imposed on the tournament festivities. Here it was shown that a trope existed in which men temporarily assumed female attributes in order to become supernatural warriors symbolizing an ideal combination of physical strength and attractiveness. While it is unsurprising that this kind of fantasy was interesting for rulers who wished to consolidate ruling power in them, it was certainly also a risky endeavour to openly rely on female attributes, whatever the context. Duke Friedrich was alone in doing just that to an extraordinary extent, and in this case his gamble appears to have paid off, since he achieved his immediate political goals in the negotiations with the estates directly following the tournament. In the following chapter we will move away from the macro-perspective on courtly spaces and festivities, and focus our attention on Duke Friedrich, Duchess Sibylla, and the trajectory of their marriage.

### **Chapter 3: The Institutional History of a Marriage. Sibylla von Anhalt and Friedrich of Württemberg (m. 1581-1608)**

This chapter will focus on the relationship between marital and political orders in early modern dynastic centres. I will begin by offering a synthesising perspective on how the institutional organisation of reproduction shaped dynastic polities in a variety of regions including Safavid Iran, England, and France. Then a more detailed analysis of the institution of marriage in German Lutheran territories will follow in order to set up the background for the consideration of the marital union of Duchess Sibylla and Duke Friedrich of Württemberg. Since the marriage of the princely couple was regarded as a blueprint of order - particularly in Protestant areas of the Holy Roman Empire - we must study its specific developments and interpretations with the same attention which we accord other stately institutions. In the following it will emerge that such a perspective on the marriage of a ruling couple can reveal previously hidden types of labour performed in service of the marriage, which must consequently be read as integral parts of the practice of power. It will emerge further that it is disproportionately female labour that has been previously neglected in this manner.

#### ***Monogamy, Polygamy, and Regional Variations***

Reproduction is at the heart of dynasty, and is equally an opportunity and a complication. All constructions of dynasty build on the fiction of continuity, which supports the ruling family's claim to power. The question of heirs and succession is thus crucial in any polity governed according to dynastic principles, and as a result sex, gender, and reproduction are important considerations of the practice of power. Jeroen Duindam's comparative perspective on reproduction has vividly shown just how varied the responses of global dynasties were in answer to these problems.

Outside of Europe, polygamy was the rule in dynastic reproduction, but the specific conditions of this system varied extensively.<sup>1</sup> The Mughal Emperor, Akbar (r. 1556-1605), faced some pushback from clerics over marrying more than four women, as was stipulated as the maximum number by the Muslim faith,<sup>2</sup> whilst the West African Asante kings had up to 3333 wives.<sup>3</sup> A majority of dynasties traced the descent of their heirs through the male line, and yet matrilineal arrangements were also widespread from West Africa, Madagascar, Southeast Asia and West India.<sup>4</sup> When we consider specific polities in detail, it emerges that the organisation of reproduction and succession had very clear reflections on how governance was understood and practised. Such orders of reproduction were invariably gendered and deeply intertwined with the dynamics of the practice of power. Studying these orders of reproduction and what they made of gender difference is thus a crucial topic of political history.

This is apparent in Kathryn Babayan's account of the period between 1590 and the mid-seventeenth century at the Safavid court, which she describes as the 'Isfahani era of Absolutism'.<sup>5</sup> The narrative of how Shah 'Abbas and his successors centralised power in their hands feels familiar to students of European courtly power politics. 'Abbas began to style himself as the earthly representative of the hidden Imam of Shi'ism, and his dynasty as the only organisation powerful enough to enforce shari'ah law.<sup>6</sup> He furthermore aggressively undercut the power of the Turco-Mongol military elite named the Qizilbash, and instead fostered the aspirations of a new slave elite loyal only to him and his own.<sup>7</sup> 'Abbas moved the Safavid capital to Isfahan and built an astounding palace complex, as well as mosques and markets to

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<sup>1</sup> See on this Duindam, *Dynasties*, ch. 2 'Dynasty: reproduction and succession', pp. 87-155.

<sup>2</sup> O'Hanlon, 'Kingdom, Household and Body History', p. 912.

<sup>3</sup> Duindam, *Dynasties*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> See Babayan, *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs*, ch. 10, 'The Isfahani era of absolutism: 1590-1666', pp. 349-402.

<sup>6</sup> See Rudi Matthee, *Persia in crisis. Safavid decline and the fall of Isfahan* (London, 2012), pp. 15-6; Babayan, *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs*, p. 370.

<sup>7</sup> Matthee, *Persia in crisis*, pp. 27-35.

form a representational physical centre for his practice of power.<sup>8</sup> Alongside these changes he also restructured the dynastic household, building a large harem with separate gateways into his palace complex. From now on, the princes born in the harem grew up with their mothers, which constituted a break from sending young princelings into the provinces to learn the craft of rulership under the tutelage of Qizilbash governors.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the harem became the centre of succession politics. In 1632 ‘Abbas’s successor, Safi, ordered a massacre in the women’s quarters, for he was certain that one of the women in the harem had attempted to poison him in order to make way for the ascension of the throne of her own son.<sup>10</sup> The divine charisma required in order to govern the Safavid Empire was at this point in time believed to run in the blood of both male and female members of the dynasty, which is why women were as likely to be blinded in order to be eliminated from the ranks of succession as their brothers, fathers, and sons.<sup>11</sup> This began to change, however, and, alongside the increasing marital connections between the Safavids and religious notables, dynastic succession was increasingly defined along a single patrilineal line of succession. Female ruling authority began to be viewed as increasingly improbable.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, king mothers, in particular, retained key influence over courtly politics.

When we consider European forms of dynastic reproduction, it is striking that European dynasties appear to differ significantly from those of other continents in that they mostly pursued monogamous household structures. Yet, although all European courts officially subscribed to the Christian demand for monogamy, a closer look reveals that we are here faced with only superficial similarities. The different European dynastic centres interpreted the reproductive and gender orders based on monogamy very diversely, and as a result the impact of gender on these polities is far from uniform. In France, Salic Law precluded women from inheriting

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<sup>8</sup> On this see Sussan Babaie, *Isfahan and its palaces: statecraft, Shi’ism and the architecture of conviviality in early modern Iran* (Edinburgh, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Babayan, *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs*, pp. 370–5.

<sup>10</sup> On this see Sussan Babaie, *Slaves of the Shah: new elites of Safavid Iran* (London, 2004), v. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Babayan, *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs*, pp. 371–2.

<sup>12</sup> Babayan, *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs*, p. 382.

the right to rule from the Middle Ages onwards, and the view that female rulership was a grave danger to the state was widely accepted by the seventeenth-century.<sup>13</sup> Abby Zanger has pointed out that, as a result, royal marriages were occasions fraught with difficulty for dynastic representation. Weddings were of course needed for reproductive purposes, as well as for the making and maintaining of political alliances, but to incorporate a foreign wife into the French state was inherently disruptive.<sup>14</sup> Since French fictions of kingship focused on the king as husband of his realm, it was not obvious how one could incorporate the queen into this construction without deflecting attention away from the king.<sup>15</sup> In a landmark study Fanny Cosandey found accordingly that the queen's ceremonial role declined significantly in the seventeenth-century. Marie de Medici (1575-1642) was the last queen to be anointed in 1610, and, from around this time onwards, French queens no longer had the right to make grand ceremonial entries into cities on their own.<sup>16</sup> Their ceremonial roles were relegated to constituting a mere reflection of the splendour of their husbands. Nevertheless, women continued to play important roles at the French court, and some of the most influential among them were royal mistresses. Henri IV (1553-1610) showered his mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées, with offices and titles, and in 1596 he even made her a member of the royal council. The couple was keen to portray their relationship as similar in character to a legitimate marriage, and thus far removed from fleeting, lustful affection.<sup>17</sup> Louis XIV felt fully entitled to his relationship with Madame de Montespan, despite committing double adultery in the

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<sup>13</sup> See on the perceived dangers of female executive power in the French context Opitz-Belakhal, *Das Universum des Jean Bodin Staatsbildung*, esp. pp. 40ff; On Salic Law see Hanley, 'The monarchic state in early modern France', pp. 107-10.

<sup>14</sup> See specifically Zanger, *Scenes from the marriage of Louis XIV*.

<sup>15</sup> See on this Zanger, *Scenes from the marriage of Louis XIV*, pp. 3-5; Hanley, 'The monarchic state in early modern France'.

<sup>16</sup> Fanny Cosandey, *La reine de France: symbole et pouvoir XVe - XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 2000), on the differences between the anointment ceremonies for kings and queens of France see pp. 131-9, also see pp. 196-205 where Cosandey argues that as the monarch's image and the ceremonial surrounding his person became more rigid and increasingly emphasised his exaltation, rather than his relationship with his subjects, the queen's role (which had previously consisted of creating an approachable link between the king and the subjects through her maternal qualities) was marginalised, as was her participation in royal entries.

<sup>17</sup> On this relationship see Wellman, *Queens and mistresses of Renaissance France*, ch. 7 'Gabrielle d'Estrées: Nearly a queen', pp. 323-355, here esp. pp. 341-5.

process. Montespan was considered to be the most beautiful woman of her time, and, in his view, it was suitable that she became his mistress.<sup>18</sup> Since he subsequently made an attempt to incorporate his sons by her into the line of succession as legitimised heirs,<sup>19</sup> we must ask to what extent the French dynastic reproductive system can really be viewed as a variation of monogamy.<sup>20</sup>

In England, too, extramarital relations were no rarity among kings and the high aristocracy, and even suggestions of legitimising sons conceived outside of marriage were not completely off-limits in this context.<sup>21</sup> A marked difference to the French system, however, was the fact that women were legally allowed to rule in their own right, if the male dynastic line had failed. This created a variety of complexities between monarchs and their consorts, be they male or female. These dynamics have only recently come to be an object of study,<sup>22</sup> but nevertheless, we can surmise that gendered perspectives on royal bodies had important political repercussions. In order for Elizabeth I to rule, her jurists developed a dualistic vision of the royal body, in which the eternal body of the monarch could make up for the deficiencies of her natural female body.<sup>23</sup> Schulte argues that it was this duality of the royal body that made it possible for the physical body of King Charles I to be

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<sup>18</sup> Christine Adams, “‘Belle comme le jour’; beauty, power and the king’s mistress’, *French History*, 29 (June 2015), pp. 161–181.

<sup>19</sup> On Louis XIV’s ultimately futile attempt to integrate his illegitimate sons into the line of succession see Matthew Gerber, *Bastards: politics, family, and law in early modern France* (Oxford and New York, 2012), ch. 3 ‘Royal bastardy and dynastic crisis’, pp. 72–92.

<sup>20</sup> For the Italian context see also Helen S. Ettinger, ‘Visibilis et Invisibilis: The mistress in Italian Renaissance court society’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 47 (Winter 1994), pp. 770–92, here esp. 786, where it is argued that the fathering of bastards was not a transgression for Italian noblemen of the fifteenth century, but that ‘it was the system’ (original emphasis). The illegitimate children of extramarital unions were often raised to high social rank regardless, and, in the absence of legitimate offspring, they were regularly legitimised by papal accord.

<sup>21</sup> For instance, when it emerged that Catherine of Braganza had great difficulty in producing an heir for King Charles II, the English parliament favoured, among other solutions, the legitimisation of one of his Protestant, extramarital sons. See on this Clarissa Campbell Orr, ‘Introduction: court studies, gender and women’s history, 1660–1837’, in Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Queenship in Britain, 1660–1837: Royal patronage, court culture, and dynastic politics* (Manchester, 2002), pp. 1–52, here esp. pp. 17–9.

<sup>22</sup> See Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Queenship in Britain, 1660–1837: Royal patronage, court culture, and dynastic politics*, (Manchester, 2002); Watanabe-O’Kelly and Morton, eds., *Queens consort, cultural transfer and European politics, c. 1500–1800*.

<sup>23</sup> See on this Schulte, ‘Introduction. Conceptual approaches to the queen’s body’, pp. 1–3.

executed, while parliament could still claim to respect the political body and continuity of the monarch.<sup>24</sup> As a result, it appears that in the English case the gender of the monarch came to be understood as less binary than in France, where only men could lay claim to the body politic.<sup>25</sup> In any case, Queen Elizabeth's success in inspiring reverence in her subjects as a great and powerful monarch was not in spite of, but also because of, her status as an unmarried, celibate woman, further confirming this greater flexibility in the construction of gendered practices of power. After the Restoration, the English parliament made its influence felt more strongly, and in the following two centuries the militaristic aspect of the English monarch lost in importance. Whilst Elizabeth had framed herself as a queen capable of leading an army,<sup>26</sup> by the time of Victoria, this was neither necessary nor desired.<sup>27</sup> In the emerging constitutional and cosmopolitan monarchy that constituted the British Crown, royal couples increasingly had to find ways to reconcile varied political stances by way of symbolic languages and practices that were often rooted in semi-openly led, idealistic domestic lives.<sup>28</sup> Consorts had a great cultural impact in this development of constitutional monarchy, and it seems likely that the plasticity of

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> This point is made by Weil, 'Royal flesh, gender and the construction of monarchy', pp. 89f.

<sup>26</sup> See Carole Levin, *The heart and stomach of a king: Elizabeth I and the politics of sex and power* (Philadelphia, 1994), p. 140, where Levin argues as follows: 'As war with Spain became more and more likely in the later 1580's, Elizabeth's rhetoric also became more powerful and subtle as she attempted through language to imbue herself with the psychological advantage of a brave king on the battlefield. In 1587 she said "that although she was a woman and her profession was to try to preserve peace with neighboring princes, yet if they attacked her they would find that in war she could be better than a man."'', Levin commented on this point that Elizabeth's conception of her own gender was flexible and could 'expand'.

<sup>27</sup> See Orr, 'Introduction: court studies, gender and women's history, 1660-1837', pp. 3f., on the transition from a 'masculinised monarchy' to a constitutional model within which qualities, such as care-giving, which were often attributed to women, came to be more central.

<sup>28</sup> Orr, 'Introduction: court studies, gender and women's history, 1660-1837', pp. 37-42; also see Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Politicizing domesticity from Henrietta Maria to Milton's Eve* (Cambridge, 2011), ch. 2 "'Deare heart": framing the royal couple in *The Kings Cabinet Opened*', pp. 42-63, where Knoppers argues that the parliament publication in 1945 of a number of captured letters between Charles and Henrietta Maria were carefully selected and edited in order to give an impression of a king who was overly dependent on his assertive wife, and which failed to print letters bearing witness to ordered domesticity, as these might have evoked goodwill for the royal couple in the readers.

the gendered reproductive regime in England contributed to the longevity of this monarchy, even though its parameters changed so significantly.

To consider monogamous, royal marriage in the European context is not unlike the pursuit of a comparative perspective of other institutions of the fledgling state, such as, for instance, parliaments or assemblies of the estates. The system of reproductive monogamy is recognisably the same in the cases considered so far, but its specific interpretations varied significantly between geographical and temporal locations. This is only to be expected at a time when dynasties ruled on personal terms, but it serves to remind us that marriage, monogamy, and polygamy have shifting histories, which we will have to consider in more detail in order to understand with more clarity and depth their relationship with different characteristics of dynastic rule. In this chapter I will offer a contribution to this endeavour by analysing in detail the conditions of the gendered reproductive regime in Lutheran territories of the Holy Roman Empire, and then moving on to a discussion of the specifics of the marriage of Sibylla von Anhalt and Friedrich of Württemberg. The consideration of the French and English reproductive regimes will gain further relevance in the second part of the discussion. For it must be kept in mind that Duke Friedrich spent time at the French court in 1586 and at the court of Elizabeth I of England in 1592.<sup>29</sup> He thus had a chance to become personally acquainted with these alternative models of the gendering of marriage and reproduction, and in the following it will emerge that, in particular, the French context may have left an impression on him.

### ***Landesmutter – Landesvater: The German Case***

It is by now a well-established fact that the Reformation was a key catalyst in the redefinition of marriage in the German-speaking territories of the Holy Roman

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<sup>29</sup> Krininger-Babel, 'Friedrich I von Württemberg als Regent der Grafschaft Mömpelgard (1581-1593)', p. 277; Jakob Rathgeb and Erhard Cellius, *Warhaffte Beschreibung Zweyer Reisen* (Tübingen, 1604).

Empire.<sup>30</sup> Luther's argument that sexuality was part of human nature, and should not be repressed but channelled into legitimate form, was of fundamental appeal, since it offered a clear alternative to Catholic thinking. The institution of marriage thus received a boost in status, and came to be seen in the sixteenth century as the backbone of a moral society.<sup>31</sup> Whilst this development was particularly pronounced initially in areas that espoused Protestantism early on (as did Württemberg in 1534), recent research suggests that the differences between Catholic and Protestant territories in terms of marital orders should not be overstated.<sup>32</sup> Counter-Reformation measures stimulated a more positive view of the married state even in Catholic areas, and both faiths shared the view that good marriages in which gender roles were respected were the only acceptable place in which to raise children and thus perpetuate the Christian community.

The symbiotic relationship between territorial rulers and marital order was, however, particularly pronounced in the Lutheran territories. Here rulers tasted previously unknown decision-making powers over their subjects' personal lives when they annexed jurisdiction over marriage matters from the ecclesiastical courts. In Stuttgart the court chancellery had begun hosting the territorial marital court in 1541, and it remained in action until the dissolution of the Empire in 1806. Here varied issues, such as broken promises of marriage, wilful abandonment, and adultery were considered, after they had failed to be settled in the smaller courts of the different *Ämter*. Five judges sat on the marital court. Three came from noble or burgher backgrounds, and two represented the Lutheran clergy, but the Duke reserved any decisions over potential divorce cases for himself.<sup>33</sup> In this sense, Johann Oettinger's reflection on the occasion of Johann Friedrich's wedding in 1609 that 'the nobility could exist and remain as little without matrimony as matrimony

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<sup>30</sup> These shifts in the cultural institution of marriage are discussed, for instance, in Roper, *The holy household: women and morals, in Reformation Augsburg*, for the Protestant context; and in Strasser, *State of virginity*, for the Counter-Reformation context, here esp. ch. 1 'Which public matters most? Rites of marriage formation', pp. 27-56.

<sup>31</sup> See for instance Wunder, 'Marriage in the Holy Roman Empire', pp. 68f.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*; as well as Harrington, 'Hausvater and Landesvater', p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg und ihre Beamten 1520 - 1629*, p. 22.

without nobility', which was considered in the previous chapter, gains in pragmatic applicability.<sup>34</sup> The administration of popular marriage by the territorial government assisted state-building, but it also brought far-reaching moral responsibilities to bear on the ruler. For instance, when Johann Friedrich took over his father's rule in 1608, he addressed an ordinance to the bailiffs and pastors in all the towns and villages of Württemberg in order to inform them that he intended to crack down on 'the unspeakably shameful fornication, the whoring and the adultery, which have [...] become all too common'.<sup>35</sup> He deemed this urgent:

Since the almighty God has punished our fatherland with various plights and indeed sent every year a different plight to us, [...] from which we are feeling his justified anger, brought on by severe sins and vices, so that now it can be our only pursuit to try and abate his anger and so avoid the well-deserved punishments [...].<sup>36</sup>

The connection between sexuality ordered within marriage and the welfare of the territory was thus understood to be immediate and urgent, and this must be kept in mind as we consider the marriage of the ruling duke and duchess. Some of the functions of their union overlapped with those of the matrimony of territorial subjects, whilst some others were unique to the ruling marriage. This is where the potency of the institution of the ruling marriage lies. Claudia Opitz points to some of its dynamics in an article on the history of early modern women, where she shows that a certain degree of rulership was normally assigned to the *Hausmutter* whose household administration was really a microcosm of the *Landesmutter*'s courtly household and her leadership within the territory.<sup>37</sup> Heide Wunder's concept of the 'working couple' proved influential and useful to interpret the married life and

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<sup>34</sup> Oettinger, *Warhaffte Historische Beschreibung*, fol. 7r (of unpaginated 'Vorrede'); Also see chapter 2, pp. 109-12.

<sup>35</sup> HStAS A 238a, Bd. 3, p. 106, 'Sonderlich aber die ohnsägliche schandliche ohnzucht, huererey vnd Ehebruch, vnd nachdem solche große sinden, vnd erschröckliche laster [...] alle zur gemein werden wöllen'.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103, 'nachdem der allmächtige Gott vnser geliebtes Vatterlandt bißhero mit al=lerley straffen gnädig heimbgesucht, [...] darauß dann sein billicher ohnverträglicher zorn, wegen allerhandt fürlauffender schwerer sinden, vnd laster genugsam zuespühren, vnd nunmehr allein dahin zutrachten sein will, welcher maßen mit Gott dem herrn wir versünt sein billicher Zorn gemilttert, vnd die wahl verdienter straffen, [...] abgewendet werde'.

<sup>37</sup> Opitz, 'Hausmutter und Landesfürstin', pp. 367-61.

economic production of popular, as well as of dynastic, couples. As was discussed briefly in the introduction to this dissertation, Wunder argues that, in the early modern period, the economic production of the household was increasingly viewed as a collaborative effort of husband and wife.<sup>38</sup> Married women particularly in urban environments were now expected to contribute labour to the running of workshops and businesses that went well beyond tasks of domesticity such as the raising of children and the preparation of meals. They worked under their husband's leadership, but were recognised as crucial elements of the household economy. Wunder has since suggested that, similarly, territorial rulership was invested in the ruling couple, rather than in the male prince alone. She has called for investigations of dynasties as 'gendered organisations' which were dependent on the labour of women and men in order to perpetuate legitimate claims to leadership.<sup>39</sup>

The importance of the duality of the ruling couple has already emerged in the initial chapters of this dissertation, where the gendering of the ducal lodgings was discussed, as well as the sharing of representational labour in the context of courtly tournaments, where noblemen performing courageous deeds were validated by the gaze of the *Frauenzimmer* in attendance. In the following, the task sharing between the ducal couple will be discussed in more detail, in order to find out more about how gender affected this division of labour, and what this meant for dynastic rulership. In this endeavour, the present enquiry can build on an already substantial body of research that has investigated dynastic marriages in early modern Germany. Heide Wunder's work was instrumental in this context for fostering an awareness of the political dimension of aristocratic marital orders. As a result, strategies of marriage making are now quite well understood as tools for the building and the maintenance of political alliances. This is one of the key qualities that differentiate them from the

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<sup>38</sup> Heide Wunder, "*Er ist die Sonn', sie ist der Mond*": *Frauen in der frühen Neuzeit* (München, 1992), pp. 96–109.

<sup>39</sup> She uses the term 'Geschlechterverband'. See Wunder, 'Einleitung: Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung: Geschlechter und Geschlecht'; Wunder, 'Geschlechterverhältnisse und dynastische Herrschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit', p. 17f.

marriages of the lower social orders.<sup>40</sup> Some of this research, however, has, in my view, a tendency to emphasise excessively the lack of personal agency of the ‘objects’ of aristocratic marriage making. At times then, the preliminary stages of a marriage are reduced too far to an institutionalised political mechanism that treated particularly the women at its centre like ‘gifts’ to be shoved across a playing field. This may not be incorrect, but it is certainly incomplete, since it omits the more stimulating question of what the gendering of marriage in these terms contributed to the continuation of the dynasty.<sup>41</sup> In order to understand fully the importance of marriage as an institution of governance, we must learn more about the actual practices that situated it in the political order of the early modern territory. This is why the current chapter will focus on the lived reality of the marriage between Sibylla von Anhalt and Friedrich of Württemberg once the vows had been spoken and the marriage was consummated. This is still an understudied perspective.<sup>42</sup>

So while Wunder’s point about the importance of the duality of the ruling couple is taken up and applied in this dissertation, it is important to point to further features of Lutheran marriage which in principle applied to all couples, irrespective of their social status. Susan Karant-Nunn has observed that an important shift brought about by the Reformation was the fact that all church-going Lutherans were now regularly treated to reflections on exactly how gender roles within marriage should ideally be designed on every occasion when a pastor performed a wedding

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<sup>40</sup> Annette Baumann, ‘Eheanbahnung und Partnerwahl’, in Siegrid Westphal, Inken Schmidt-Voges, and Annette Baumann, eds., *Venus und Vulcanus: Ehen und ihre Konflikte in der Frühen Neuzeit* (München, 2011), pp. 25–87, here pp. 35–40; also see Schönplüg, *Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern*, p. 32, where the author introduces marriage as a key political tool for the maintenance and expansion of a territorial state.; and Stephanie Marra, *Allianzen des Adels: dynastisches Handeln im Grafenhaus Bentheim im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Köln, 2007), ch. 3 ‘Elemente adeliger Heiratspolitik: Eheliches Allianzverhalten im Grafenhaus Bentheim’, pp. 48–74.

<sup>41</sup> This point will be taken up again in chapter 5 of this dissertation with reference to the marriage making between Johann Friedrich of Württemberg and Barbara Sophia of Brandenburg.

<sup>42</sup> One exception is the excellent ch. 5 ‘Problematische Paarbeziehungen: Konflikte und Krisen im adeligen Eheleben’ in Marra, *Allianzen des Adels*, pp. 105–68, which focuses on aristocratic married life, and analyses some of the major causes of conflict in such relationships, such as power imbalances between the couple and extramarital sexual relations.

ceremony.<sup>43</sup> Conversely to Wunder, her findings based on marital sermons place more emphasis on male dominance, than on constructive collaboration.<sup>44</sup> Women's key duties, as propagated by the Lutheran pastors, were the bearing of children and subordination to their husbands. Whilst passionate marital love comes to be a more central ideal in the seventeenth century, the message remained that the key to a functioning marriage was a woman's good character. This is borne out by the text of Justus Menius' *Oeconomia Christiana*, where advice is offered on Lutheran married life. Menius emphasised the importance of a husband's love for his wife, but thereafter he focused intensively on how this love should be used to keep his wife 'honest' and how to 'handle her carefully and with patience'.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, Menius stressed that wives would attain the grace of God mainly through the bearing of children, but their obedience trumps all other qualities. Obedience was, however, not described as mere compliance. As an illustration, Menius cited the case of Abigail whose 'kindness stilled the wrath of David'.<sup>46</sup> For Menius, it follows that 'wise women fortify the house', but on the other hand 'a single disobedient, wilful, and moody woman can [...] create so much disorder that a whole house, alas, a whole city and country would have to pay for it'.<sup>47</sup> We note then that the system of Lutheran marriage hinged on female obedience, though this was not understood in passive terms, as it might be today. Any disharmony was either caused by a wife's failure to appease her husband, or by his failure to keep her in check, though the ultimate fault lay with the descendants of Eve. There is a paradoxical premise in this prescription, which at once accords women great power and responsibility, and yet places the ultimate burden of definition of what makes a good or a bad marriage with the husband. In practice, this complex contest between the power of obedience and

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<sup>43</sup> Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "'Fragrant wedding roses': Lutheran wedding sermons and gender definition in early modern Germany", *German History*, 17 (January 1999), pp. 25-40, here pp. 37-9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>45</sup> Justus Menius, 'Oeconomia Christiana' (Wittenberg, 1529) in *Ehe und Familie im Geist des Luthertums*, eds. Ute Gause and Stephanie Scholz (Leipzig, 2012).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86, 'sie den grym Davids mit yhrer freundligkeit stillet'.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 'Durch weise weiber wird das haus erbawet.', 'vnartige, eigensynnige vnd rhumorische weiber sind / der selbigen eine / kan [...] so viel vnrats stifften / das ein gantzes haus / ia / ein gantze stad vnd land entgelten mus'.

the power of definition opens up a considerable range for what could pass as a successful Lutheran marriage. Recent historiography has been particularly attentive to ruling marriages that exhibited specifically collaborative traits.

Katrin Keller's exemplary portrait of Anna of Saxony (1532-1585) goes some way towards identifying the requirements a Lutheran woman might have to fulfil in order to become the model of a German *Landesmutter*.<sup>48</sup> In the first place, Anna fulfilled the most important obligation of any dynastic woman by providing heirs. She drew legitimacy from her motherhood and from her deep piety, but went far beyond these functions and built up an extensive network of correspondence with noblewomen of other courts of the Empire, which she used with skill to arrange marriages and to share and expand her medical knowledge.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, she acted as a patron for artists and scientists, and thus played a crucial part in making Dresden one of the most glamorous courts of the Holy Roman Empire in the late sixteenth century.<sup>50</sup> Most recently, Judith Aikin has been instructive in approaching the problem of labour division in the ruling couple via a consideration of both prince and consort, using the 'working couple' concept on the marriage of Aemilia Juliane and Albert Anton of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt. Aikin was able to show how Aemilia Juliane was very much a 'partner in a state marriage'.<sup>51</sup> She complemented her husband's governance, through the deployment of her faith, which contemporaries read as an active 'weapon', through the financing of several new stately proto-industrial enterprises, as well as through the particular care she gave to pregnant women in her territory, whom she supported by fostering the education of midwives, as well as by writing specific prayer and song books.<sup>52</sup>

My own investigation into the marital collaboration between Friedrich and Sibylla is set to yield new results because – other than the couples in the studies just

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<sup>48</sup> Keller, *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532-1585)*.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73-7.

<sup>50</sup> See for instance *ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>51</sup> See Aikin, *A ruler's consort in early modern Germany*, esp. ch. 4 'Partner in a state marriage', pp. 104-36.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 103, 129; but also see: Judith P. Aikin, 'The Welfare of Pregnant and Birthing Women as a Concern for Male and Female Rulers: A Case Study', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, (2004), pp. 9-41.

mentioned – this marriage was a far cry from an example of a harmonious and supportive relationship. The conflicts and crises of this marriage allow us to ask previously neglected questions. How could an internally disruptive marriage continue to function as a ruling marriage? In what ways was a consort's room for manoeuvre affected by a husband who resented her participation in the practice of governance?

### ***The Marriage of Duke Friedrich I. and Duchess Sibylla***

Friedrich I (r.1593-1608) and his wife Sibylla von Anhalt (1564-1614) were married in Stuttgart in 1581, about one year after Friedrich had met the sixteen-year old Sibylla at the court of Dessau and was immediately attracted to her. His guardian and cousin Duke Ludwig of Württemberg approved of the match, but this remained an unusual union in the sense that it was arranged on the basis of personal preference rather than on the initiative of the parents or guardians of the couple.<sup>53</sup> The marriage was an important dynastic turning point in Friedrich's life. In June 1581, a month after the wedding celebrations, he was declared of age at twenty-three, and he was given the territory of Mömpelgard on the left side of the Rhine to rule with his spouse. As far as we can tell from the correspondence between the couple, the first decade of their marital life appears to have been quite cordial, and, even more importantly, incredibly fertile. Sibylla bore Friedrich fifteen children in as many years, and this was an important point in making him an attractive candidate for the succession to the dukedom when Ludwig died in 1593 without leaving any male heirs of his own. On her arrival in Stuttgart as Duchess of Württemberg, Sibylla was well placed to fulfil the role of a *Landesmutter* in similar ways to Anna of Saxony. She was deeply pious and administered the court pharmacy skilfully, thus positioning herself in the role of caregiver for the entire territory of Württemberg. Yet, her relationship with Friedrich became increasingly strained. The duke intensified his

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<sup>53</sup> Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 57–64.

long-standing habit of keeping mistresses, and began developing strong feelings of disdain for his spouse.<sup>54</sup>

Insight into this marriage is facilitated by the survival of a remarkable correspondence between the partners of this ruling marriage. Studies of such correspondence are exceedingly rare for a variety of reasons. Firstly, there are problems of availability for such sources, since married couples often did not have much need to write to each other, since they enjoyed each other's continuous company.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the usage of aristocratic letters as sources can present us with significant problems because the strict adherence to ceremonial protocol often complicates the analysis.<sup>56</sup> Finally, as has already been stated above, the lived experience of aristocratic marriage has not yet attracted the same scholarly attention as the strategic considerations that went into the making of such marriages, which is once more down to the perceived disconnect between such topics and the practice of power. For the case of Friedrich and Sibylla, we can draw on a corpus of over

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<sup>54</sup> Friedrich's biographer also briefly discusses this difficult relationship. See Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 164-74.

<sup>55</sup> See for instance Keller, *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532-1585)*, p. 27.

<sup>56</sup> On the complex prescriptions for French aristocratic letters see Giora Sternberg, 'Epistolary ceremonial: Corresponding status at the time of Louis XIV', *Past & Present*, 204 (August 2009), pp. 33-88; Ruppel, *Verbündete Rivalen: Geschwisterbeziehungen im Hochadel des 17. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 31-56, bemoans the absence of solid studies on aristocratic letters before 1750 in the German context. Yet she postulates that it is certainly untrue that no 'private' letters existed before the eighteenth century, but that instead we should view the emergence of the 'private letter' as a genre as a narrowing of functions for specific letters, as previously letters intertwined different subject matters. She is also instructive on the point of emotionally charged expressions within aristocratic letters of the seventeenth century, which are prevalent, and which, as she argues, always have to be assessed comparatively within specific correspondences.; Mareike Böth, *Erzählweisen des Selbst: Körperpraktiken in den Briefen Liselottes von der Pfalz (1652-1722)* (Köln, 2015), pp. 70-3 acknowledges that her body of sources consisting of the letters of the Princess Palatine is extraordinary in terms of how seemingly relaxed the author operated with matters of style, but that it also appears that in the second half of the seventeenth century the areas of the German-speaking empire influenced by French customs began to cultivate more entertaining styles of correspondence.; See also the very recent publication Monika Schneikart, 'Briefe pommerscher Fürstinnen zwischen 1600 und 1633. Privatbriefe oder "geringe Haußbrieflein"?' in Monika Schneikart and Dirk Schleinert, eds., *Zwischen Thronsaal und Frawenzimmer: Handlungsfelder pommerscher Fürstinnen um 1600* (Köln, 2017), pp. 235-50, which made the extraordinary discovery of a set of letters by an aristocratic author divulging the sad news of an infant's premature death to relatives, of which two were written in stringent chancellery style, and a third letter in the author's own hand, which treated the same subject matter with more attention to personal detail, including, for instance, the exact time of day and place of the infant's burial. Schneikart also emphasises that writing in one's own hand was interpreted as an act of special personal attention for the addressee, see p. 243.

seventy letters, which span the entirety of their marriage from 1581 to 1607. The letters cluster around Friedrich's prolonged absences from Mömpelgard and Stuttgart respectively, in 1586, 1592, 1604, and 1607, though a good number of them also fall in between these dates, when shorter trips led Friedrich away from court. The majority of the letters that have survived were written by Sibylla. This is only partially due to gaps in surviving records, for Sibylla's writing reveals that Friedrich often only answered with great delays, if he did at all. When he did write, his letters were usually short and often written in the margins or on the back of Sibylla's original letters. It is this lack of adherence to epistolary protocol that makes Sibylla's and Friedrich's letters especially interesting, as well as challenging.<sup>57</sup> All of them were written in their author's own concept hand, which often poses significant palaeographical difficulty. Furthermore, a good percentage of letters were left undated. At times their contents can be used to situate them approximately, but this is not always possible. All of this points to the fact that these letters were most likely not intended to be circulated and read more widely, as was often the case with princely letters.<sup>58</sup> The fact that they show aspects of marital strife, and other topics that were often silenced in official documentation, must be a direct result of this.

### *Beginning with the End: Funeral Sermons and the Gender Roles of Sibylla and Friedrich*

Before beginning the analysis of the challenges faced by this princely marriage, it seems useful to reflect on how it passed contemporary scrutiny and how it was

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<sup>57</sup> Extracts of this correspondence are also used in these titles: Gerhard Hertel, 'Die Reise nach London begann in Peterstal: Die "Badenfahrt" Herzog Friedrichs in 1592', *Freudenstädter Beiträge zur geschichtlichen Landeskunde - Herzog Friedrichs Freudenstadt im ersten Jahrhundert seiner Geschichte*, 6 (1987), pp. 65–71; Gerhard Hertel, 'Zarte Bande Herzog Friedrichs zu Freudenstadt: Der Gründer Freudenstadts "höchst privat"', *Freudenstädter Beiträge zur geschichtlichen Landeskunde - Herzog Friedrichs Freudenstadt im ersten Jahrhundert seiner Geschichte*, 6 (1987), pp. 79–82; Peter Rückert, *Württemberg und Mömpelgard - 600 Jahre Begegnung: Katalog zur Ausstellung des Hauptstaatsarchivs Stuttgart* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 39–40; Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557–1608*, pp. 164–74; yet a full transcription and analysis of this body of letters has not been undertaken until now.

<sup>58</sup> Böth, *Erzählweisen des Selbst: Körperpraktiken in den Briefen Liselottes von der Pfalz (1652–1722)*, p. 72.

remembered. This will be addressed by way of a consideration of the funeral sermons that were written for Sibylla and Friedrich respectively. This source type is chosen here because such sermons aimed to present idealised biographies of their subjects that could serve as pious inspirations for the audience.<sup>59</sup> As a result, they are helpful sources to gain a sense of what normative expectations contemporaries held of the ruling couple, and which of their respective deeds they were particularly interested in praising. Research into these documents has also established that, while they clearly focused on the positive qualities of their subjects, they nevertheless could not afford to present versions that were too far divorced from what the audience knew to be the reality of a biography.<sup>60</sup> There was room for covert and careful criticism, even where members of the high nobility were concerned. Temporal weaknesses, such as overindulgence in food, drink, and courtly entertainment were not passed over.<sup>61</sup> Duke Ulrich of Württemberg's funeral sermon even criticised him quite openly for his conversion to Catholicism.<sup>62</sup> We thus approach these documents written for our protagonists bearing in mind that the respective clerics will have done their best to present their subjects in a favourable light, but would have stopped short at leaving out overt transgressions in favour of hagiographical narrative. The authors searched for evidence of well-organised, pious lives, and here I will argue that it was key for the legacy of the ruling couple to maintain a functioning 'working couple' marriage. As we shall see, such a marriage did not necessarily entail the reciprocal affective emotions that we would associate with a successful marriage today, but other types of labour could make up for a lack of personal understanding between spouses and uphold the essential features of a ruling marriage.

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<sup>59</sup> See on this Heike Talkenberger, 'Konstruktion von Männerrollen in württembergischen Leichenpredigten des 16.-18. Jahrhunderts', in Martin Dingels, ed., *Hausväter, Priester, Kastraten: zur Konstruktion von Männlichkeit in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1998), pp. 29-74, here p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Heike Talkenberger has studied sixty funeral sermons from Württemberg with a view to the gendered roles presented within them. Her source sample included sermons written for people of high and low nobility, as well as for burghers. She found that women's careers and contributions to the community were only discussed in terms of their role within marriage, except in the rare cases where a duchess had acted as a regent for a son of minor years.<sup>63</sup> For Sibylla's funeral sermons, we can accept this assessment only with some qualification. Indeed, the sermons focus their attention on the gendered roles Sibylla took within marriage, but they extended the scope of these functions far beyond her immediate family, and discussed them with a view to the entirety of the territory. Her piety and devotion to reading scripture and to hearing the word of God were underlined by pastors in the court chapel of Stuttgart, as well as in Mömpelgard, upon her death; she was termed a veritable 'wet-nurse of the church'.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, she was remembered for having given birth to fifteen children, nine of whom outlived her, and 'through them the highly praised house of Württemberg which had a dire lack in male heirs was richly edified'.<sup>65</sup> But beyond her own children the preachers emphasised Sibylla's function as a mother figure for the entire territory: 'a faithful *Landtsmutter* who carried the land and the people equally under her heart'.<sup>66</sup> She was praised for all the help she extended to the poor and the sick, and the pastor in Mömpelgard wrote that he had heard that when Sibylla left his constituency to take up the reign of the duchy alongside her husband, 'many did not feel less affected in their hearts than if they had had to witness the death of their own mothers'.<sup>67</sup> The images used to describe her appear at times odd

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<sup>63</sup> Talkenberger, 'Konstruktion von Männerrollen in württembergischen Leichenpredigten', p. 45.

<sup>64</sup> HStAS J 67 Bü 3, Bernhard Ludwig Löhern, *Leichenpredigt*, December 1608, held in the chapel at the court of Stuttgart, fol. 210v, 'Säugamme der Kirchen'.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 230v, 'dardurch das hochlöblich hauß Würtemberg deme es an Mannlichen Erben schier gebrechen wolte / reichlich erbawet'.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 211r, 'ein getrewe Landtsmutter / welche Land vnnd Leut gleichsam vndter dem Herzen getragen', 'unter dem Herzen tragen' is a phrase that was at the time used commonly to indicate a pregnancy.

<sup>67</sup> Georg Müller, *Jacobs Burg das ist. Ein Christliche Leichpredigt, von der seeligen Kinder Gottes bestendigen vnd vnverwindlichen Vestung: Dohin sie zu dißer trübseeligen zeit in allen vnvermeidenlichen Nothständen ir gewisse zuflucht haben: vnnd was für hayl daselbsten zugewarden seye: Der Weilund ... Frawen Sibylla, Hertzogin zu Wurte[m]berg vnd Teckh ... Gebornn Fürstin zu*

to modern eyes, for instance, when the pastor compared all Württembergers to babies ‘weaned from the milk’ which had previously flowed ‘from the breasts of the *Landtsmutter*’.<sup>68</sup> Yet, strange as this gendered language might seem, it was a powerful tool to strengthen the construction of dynasty in this liminal moment of the death of a duchess. Most striking is the portrayal of piety and patience – qualities that we would read as clearly passive features – as highly active practices. Sibylla was praised for her ‘great patience, in which she was [...] an example’,<sup>69</sup> and it was also said of her that ‘through her faithful, ardent and continuous prayers she turned herself into a wall / and thus opposed many a grave tear / and helped oftentimes to hold back the wrath of God.’<sup>70</sup> Such images of Protestant consorts being described as ‘pillars of prayer’ were not uncommon in early modern Germany, and Jill Bepler has shown that this gendered type of piety was understood by contemporaries as an active and crucial practice of power.<sup>71</sup>

On Friedrich’s death his funeral sermons were also keenly interested in emphasising his commitment to the true religion, though in his case praise was less focused on his personal practice of piety and more on his efforts to facilitate the perpetuation of the Lutheran religion through the building of churches, the education of clerics, and by way of offering shelter to Protestants fleeing persecution elsewhere.<sup>72</sup> As in the sermons for Sibylla, the many children born from their marital union were portrayed as significant achievements, and, in addition, it was mentioned that Friedrich had them educated in the best possible way, so that they would be pious Christians.<sup>73</sup> Topics mentioned solely for Friedrich included his great

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*Anhalt ... welche den 16. tag Wintermonats zu Löwemberg ... entschlaffen, vnd volgends den 15, tag Christmonats zu Stutgart ... bestattet worden* (Mümpelgart, 1614).

<sup>68</sup> Müller, *Ein Christliche Leichpredigt*, p. 3, ‘die entwehneten von der milch’, p. 2, ‘Landts mütterlichen brüsten’.

<sup>69</sup> HStAS, J 67 Bü 3, fol. 213r, ‘Grosse Gedult/ darinnen sie gleichsam ein Exempel gewesen’.

<sup>70</sup> Müller, *Ein Christliche Leichpredigt*, p. 2, ‘Freylich hatt sie sich mit ihrem gleübigen inbrünstigen vnd vnableßigen gebett zur Mauren gemacht / vnnd gestellt wider manchem schweren Riß / vnnd hiemit den Zorn Gottes vil mahlen helffen zuruckh halten.’

<sup>71</sup> Bepler, ‘Die Fürstin als Betsäule - Anleitung und Praxis der Erbauung am Hof’.

<sup>72</sup> HStAS J 67 Bü 2, Erasmus Grüninger, *Die Ander Klag vnd Buß Predigt: Ober der Leich weilund deß Durchleuchtigen hochgebornen Fürsten vnd Herrn / Herrn Friderichen ...*, 25. February 1608, here fols. 22v-23r.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, fol. 21v.

commitment to the administration of government, indeed ‘there will not be many councillors and servants who worked as much in issues of governance as y[our] p[rinclly] g[race]’.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, he was praised for practising a well-measured courtly lifestyle that did not allow for excessive eating and drinking, and for ensuring that Württemberg suffered no famine and enjoyed peace for fifteen years.<sup>75</sup> Friedrich’s ‘brave princely mind, [and] high reason’ was also framed in relation to the gender role he had attained through marriage.<sup>76</sup> He was portrayed as a ‘father of the fatherland’, ‘a prince of peace’, who was educated in his youth in all virtues and skills befitting someone of his rank.<sup>77</sup> Yet, ‘the time came that he should also engage in rulership. Hence, y. p. g. in the year 1581 joined himself in marriage to the serene, highborn princess and young lady Sibylla [...] and settled with her in the very same year in Mömpelgard in marital, Christian, life of peace [...]’.<sup>78</sup> Finally, neither Erasmus Grüninger of the court chapel, nor Johannes Magirus of the Stiftskirche in Stuttgart could write their sermon without at least making reference to some of Friedrich’s less desirable qualities. ‘He was also a sinner and a great sinner at that’,<sup>79</sup> wrote Magirus, but both he and Grüninger insisted that it did no good to dwell on this, for it was well known that the ‘evil spirit’ concentrated his temptations particularly on ‘high persons’, as the examples of David and Solomon would show.<sup>80</sup> For the audience versed in bible narratives, the mention of these two famous adulterers would have left no doubt about which sins the preachers were concerned about, but in this rhetorical construction Friedrich’s failings also distinguished him as an especially ‘high person’. His transgressions were further excused in the sermon by

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., fol. 22r, ‘Vnd werden nicht viel Rhät oder Diener sein / welche I.F. Gn. in Regiments Sachen gleich gearbeitet hetten.’

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., fols. 22r, 23v.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., fol. 21v, ‘dapffern Fürstlichen Gemüt, hohem Verstand’.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., fol. 24r, ‘Vatter deß Vatterlands’, ‘Friedensfürsten’.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., fol. 21v, ‘kam die zeit daß dieselbige nun mehr auch der Regierung sich vnterfangen sollten. *Derentwegen* I.F.G.n. in anno 1581 sich mit der Durchleuchtigen hochgebornen Fürstin vnd Fräwlin / Fräwlin Sibilla [...] ehelichen eingelassen / mit deroselben naher Mümpelgartt noch selbiges Jahr gezogen /vnd im Ehelichen Christlichen Friedenleben daselbsten [...]’, emphasis added.

<sup>79</sup> HStAS J 67 Bü 2, M. Iohannes Magirus, Leichenpredigt, February 1608, fol. 14v, ‘Auch ein Sünder / vnd ein grosser Sünder gewesen’.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., fol. 14v, ‘böß Geist’; fol. 15r, ‘hohen Personen’; also see HStAS J 67 Bü 2, Erasmus Grüninger, *Die Ander Klag vnd Buß Predigt*, fols. 24v-25r, for analogous passage.

a retelling of how, especially in the weeks before his death, Friedrich had prayed intently and attended sermons often, since he was reflecting on death. The pastors asserted no doubt that his repentance redeemed him in the eyes of the church.

The division of labour between ruling spouses as it emerges from these funeral sermons placed administrative, financial, and foreign policy issues in the responsibility of the duke, but his ultimate ability to rule was firmly tied to his marital status and his wife's labour. The conception, birth, and raising of children is viewed in direct connection with the welfare of the territory, and it was clearly perceived as a joint effort of husband and wife. Piety and patience were in particular expected and rewarded in the duchess, but they were active qualities, as shall emerge with further clarity from the analysis below. These pastors imagined rulership in clearly gendered terms with the *Landesmutter* and the *Landesvater* watching over all of the territory's subjects with care. It is important to stress that in early modern Germany the roles of 'father' and 'mother' were just that: societal roles that were by no means the natural destiny of every man and woman.<sup>81</sup> Specific conditions had to be met to ascend to them, and those who did so enjoyed a rise in status. For the ruling couple these issues were magnified, since they did not merely take positions of leadership within their own nuclear families, but within an infinitely larger political system. As a result, a failure to live up to the gendered roles expected of them would have had dire consequences. On the basis of what we know of this marriage, it must be regarded as a significant achievement that it endured and could be presented in this complimentary way in the funeral sermons. The end goal of this dynastic marriage was achieved, but what efforts were needed to arrive at this point and who bore the brunt of them?

### *The Mömpelgard Years and Early Successes*

As has already been mentioned, Friedrich and Sibylla ruled as count and countess of the Mömpelgard territory from 1581 up until the death of Duke Ludwig in 1593.

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<sup>81</sup> See on this Wunder, "*Er ist die Sonn', sie ist der Mond*", pp. 12–16.

Whilst this territory lay at some distance from ‘mainland’ Württemberg, it held key strategic importance, since it was located at the gateway to Burgundy and at an intersection between the Holy Roman Empire, the Swiss Confederacy, and France. Friedrich’s and Sibylla’s rule left important marks on the history of Mömpelgard. Its internal administration was tightened, and Friedrich was eventually successful in having the local patriciate and population accept a common Lutheran confession, which further aided his aims of centralisation.<sup>82</sup> Friedrich and his building master Schickhard left their mark on the town, and Friedrich’s chief scientist Jean Bauhin created a botanical, and a zoological garden, which promoted research into the natural sciences and the experimental breeding of horses and other livestock.<sup>83</sup> Friedrich further opened the first paper and printing factory of this territory, and put the Lyon printer Jacques Foillet in charge. He agreed to adhere to the local religious confession and not to print anything without the approval of the count and his council.<sup>84</sup> As a result, we can be certain that Friedrich knew of, and approved of, the printing and distribution of the first German version of Jean Bodin’s *Six Livres de la République* in 1592, after the work had been translated by the local pastor Johann Oswald.<sup>85</sup>

When they arrived in Mömpelgard in June 1581, Friedrich was twenty-four and Sibylla seventeen years of age. Already on 5 May 1582, Friedrich could joyfully write to his cousin Duke Ludwig, informing him that ‘our [...] beloved spouse was this morning between eight and nine delivered from [...] the feminine burden she carried, and [...] gifted us a young son, and heir of the land and dynasty of a cheerful countenance’.<sup>86</sup> Knowing that Duke Ludwig was of course eager to have an heir of his own, Friedrich added that he hoped he would not begrudge him this news, and

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<sup>82</sup> On this see Krinninger-Babel, ‘Friedrich I. von Württemberg als Regent der Grafschaft Mömpelgard (1581-1593) - Forschungsstand und Perspektiven’, p. 266.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>86</sup> HStAS G 59 Bü 10, Friedrich to Ludwig, 5 May 1582, fol. 1r, ‘vnser [...] liebe Gemahlin, an heutt zwischen achtt vndt neün Uhren vormittag Irer L: getragener weiblichen bürden, mitt gnaden enttbunden vnd [...] vnnd vnß einen jungen sohn, vnnd lanndts auch stammens [...] Erben, fröliches anbluckhs gnedig beschertt [...]’.

asked him to be his son's godfather.<sup>87</sup> This was to become a yearly ritual, for Sibylla continued to bear a child each year, all through their twelve years in Mömpelgard. This abundance of heirs was key to Friedrich being perceived as a viable candidate for the succession of the duchy, as he could offer what Ludwig could not: continuity.<sup>88</sup>

Whilst most of the physical burden of reproduction lay on Sibylla, Friedrich was explicitly involved in her pregnancies and births. The evidence suggests that he was present either in Mömpelgard, and later in Stuttgart, on the dates of all fifteen of Sibylla's births, and it is likely that he arranged his journeys abroad around her due dates.<sup>89</sup> Even when he was abroad, he kept track of Sibylla's pregnancies. In August 1585, she replied to a letter of his: 'y[our] g[race] are also writing to me and wish to know how long it has been since I became heavy, so I let y[our] g[race] know that on the 17 August it will be 17 weeks'.<sup>90</sup> This demonstrates not only Friedrich's involvement, but also the accuracy with which Sibylla's pregnancies were calculated. She gave birth to Ludwig Friedrich exactly 24 weeks after this letter on 29 January 1586 in the forty-first week of her pregnancy. About a month before she gave birth to Friedrich Achilles in 1591, Sibylla wrote to Friedrich to enquire whether he had already sent a wet-nurse from Reichenweier, as she was hoping one would arrive soon.<sup>91</sup> The choice of wet-nurse was as delicate as the lives of the infant heirs of the dynasty,<sup>92</sup> and as a result it is striking, though not surprising, that Friedrich would have considered it to be his task to choose the right woman for the job. Yet, despite

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., fol. 1v.

<sup>88</sup> See also Nolte, 'Gendering princely dynasties', p. 713, who argues that childbearing could ease dynastic women's integration into their husband's family.

<sup>89</sup> See on this the correspondence in HStAS G 60 Bü 9, no letter has survived informing Friedrich of a birth in his absence, his longer journey to France in 1586 began several months after Sibylla had given birth to Ludwig Friedrich on 29 January 1586, and his journey to England started eight weeks after the birth of Agnes on 7 May 1592; on this topic also see chapter 5 where Johann Friedrich's involvement in Barbara Sophia's pregnancies is considered.

<sup>90</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, 15 August 1586, 'mir E.L. auch schreiben vnd begern zu wusen wie lancke es sein das ich sei schwer geweschgen so las ich E.L. wussen das es den 17 august werden 17 wochgen verden'.

<sup>91</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich 9 April 1591, 'wolen mir doch zu wisen dan ob E.L. eine seigamen von reichgen weier besthelt haben den noch keine hir an komen ist'.

<sup>92</sup> See on this Stollberg-Rilinger, *Maria Theresia: die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit*, pp. 313f.

Friedrich's involvement, Sibylla confidently claimed the physical discomfort that she experienced during her pregnancies as her own. In the third trimester of her 1591 pregnancy, she wrote to Friedrich that 'we are of good bodily health, although I am becoming so voluminous that I cannot walk well or lie down which afflicts me heavily'.<sup>93</sup> She developed striking vocabulary in order to highlight her experience. On one occasion she explained to Friedrich 'it is with me as with an old dilapidated house, which always cracks and yet does not fall'.<sup>94</sup> In these statements, it emerges that to Sibylla gestation and reproduction were not passive labours that had to be meekly endured, but challenges that required an active kind of patience and resilience in order to be mastered successfully. When she compared her body to an old, but enduring house, she was in the latter stages of her tenth pregnancy. She was twenty-six years of age, and was to give birth on five more occasions thereafter.

In the initial ten years of their marriage, the couple made an effort to maintain a good marital understanding over distance.<sup>95</sup> For instance, Friedrich would send Sibylla partridges he had shot, smoked salmon, and cheese, and each time she thanked him profusely for his attention.<sup>96</sup> On one occasion she sent Friedrich pork rinds along with her letter, and directed him 'to eat these on my behalf and to be cheerful and in good humour'.<sup>97</sup> It was thus imagined that the bodily and even sensual act of eating and tasting specific foods could affect her spouse's emotions,

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<sup>93</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich 5 April, 'wir noch bei guder leibes gesundt heit sein allein das ich so dick werdte das ich nicht wol gehen odter lichen kan dan es mir gewis lich schwer an kimet'.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 'es ist midt mir nicht anders alles midt ein allten bau felti gen hase [sic] das imer kracht vnd doch nicht ein felt'.

<sup>95</sup> Ute Daniel, 'Zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie der Hofgesellschaft: Zur biographischen Struktur eines Fürstinnenlebens der frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel der Kurfürstin Sophie von Hannover', *L'Homme*, 2 (1997), pp. 208–17, here p. 212, argues that the initial years of a dynastic marriage usually afforded the consort the greatest opportunities for exercising influence over her husband and the court more broadly, since at this time she stood at the centre of the hopes and expectations for a dynastic heir.

<sup>96</sup> See the HStAS G 60 Bü 9, letters by Sibylla to Friedrich, 8 September 1584, 5 April 1591, 12 May 1593.

<sup>97</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, no date but likely from 1585, 'die wollen E.L. von meinen weghen verzeren vnd lustig vnd gudter dinck sein'; Pork rinds appear to have been a popular food to be sent to travellers. Magdalena Paumgartner sends them regularly to her husband Balthasar in the late sixteenth century. See Steven Ozment, ed., *Magdalena & Balthasar: Briefwechsel der Eheleute Paumgartner aus der Lebenswelt des 16. Jahrhunderts. Vorge stellt von Steven Ozment* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), p. 37.

even while he was geographically distant. The most enthusiastic response to a gift, however, was garnered when Friedrich sent Sibylla a live parrot in late summer of 1586. Sibylla wrote:

I thank y[our] g[race] a thousand times for this most lovely bird', and that 'he has shown himself to be very funny and he talked so much as we wanted to hear [...] the bird made me as cheerful as I have been [...] the whole time since y[our] g[race] has been gone, but he is not happy with us that we cannot talk to him and he has scolded us all as rascals.<sup>98</sup>

After this note of humour, Sibylla's letter passed on some news she had had from her stepmother who was advising her that her father's health was deteriorating, and that indeed 'the flesh is threatening to suffocate him'.<sup>99</sup> Sibylla changed tone to discuss the travel arrangements, stating that she would await confirmation from Friedrich before departing, and that she would in any case take the parrot with her as he had advised; all she needed to know was what to feed the creature. The parrot was appointed to serve as a sentient and talkative reminder of Friedrich's presence as Sibylla travelled to bid farewell to her dying father. Friedrich himself was at the court of France at the head of a Protestant legation attempting, and failing, to negotiate with King Henri III.<sup>100</sup> In this first decade of Friedrich and Sibylla's marriage, both partners had thus developed and engaged in pragmatic strategies to evoke specific emotions in the other during times of separation.

A further particularly interesting such strategy was employed by Sibylla on Friedrich's name day. On this occasion, she sent Friedrich a piece of string alongside her letter in which she expressed the wish,

that I will be able to tie y[our] g[race] often to me and I would like nothing better than to be with y[our] g[race] my most beloved lord and then I would

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<sup>98</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, summer 1586, fol. 1r, 'danck E.L. jo zu dausendt mal ver den herz aller liebes den fochgel', 'das er sich jar listich er zeichgen hat vndt het vns so vil geredt alles mir haben heren mechgen [...] der fochgel heite hat lus dichger gemacht alles ich so [...] die gantz zeit iber bin gewesen weil E.L. ist aussern gewesen aber er ist nicht mit vns zu friden das wir nicht mit in redten kinen er hat vns allen vor Rebadten [meaning *Rabauken* von fr. 'ribaud'] geschuldten'.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., fol. 1v, 'die flesch wolen ihn jar erschicken [sic]'.

<sup>100</sup> See on this trip to France Krinninger-Babel, 'Friedrich I. von Württemberg als Regent der Grafschaft Mömpelgard (1581-1593)', p. 277.

bind y[our] g[race] better to me, but because it cannot be at this time my beloved lord would make do with a small string.<sup>101</sup>

This practice appears to have had a wider proliferation in early modern Germany, and it was not restricted to the aristocratic elite. The merchant wife, Magdalena Paumgartner of Nürnberg, sent a similar letter to her husband, who was on a business trip in Italy in December 1582. She advised him that ‘the little string you should wear around your wrist for me so that you will think about me and be kindly tethered to me, meanwhile I hope that this letter will not arrive more than three or four days after the Twelfth Day’.<sup>102</sup> Steven Ozment, who discusses her letter, interpreted this to be a custom that stood in connection with the Twelfth Day to which Magdalena referred, but in light of Sibylla’s letter it would now seem likely that in fact she had sent it to arrive on that particular day, because it was her husband Balthasar’s name day.<sup>103</sup> Sibylla added a further touch to her name day gift, as she finished off her letter with the announcement that ‘the court mistress and my ladies-in-waiting send your grace a small string and they do not want to bind y[our] g[race] at all because y[our] g[race] would know how to help himself’.<sup>104</sup> This passage shows similarities with some of the erotic correspondence exchanged between Anna and Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach, which was analysed by Cordula Nolte. Albrecht often made sexual allusions to his wife’s ladies-in-waiting in his letters, but Nolte argues that we should not read this as typical debauched courtly behaviour, but rather as epistolary entertainment in which the whole *Frauenzimmer* participated as Anna read Albrecht’s letters to them.<sup>105</sup> Unfortunately, we do not have Friedrich’s answer to

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<sup>101</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, 27 February 1585, fol. 1r, ‘das ich E.L. noch oft mech an binden wolt aber ni[chtes] liebes wider das ich bei E.L. alles mein herz aller liebes der herren sein nicht so wolt ich E.L. besser an binden aber weiles so istichger zeit nicht sein kann so will mein herz aller liebes der herr mit ein klein schnirlein vor lieb nehmen’.

<sup>102</sup> Her letter is cited in full in Ozment, *Magdalena & Balthasar*, pp. 32-7.

<sup>103</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 22-3.

<sup>104</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, 27 February 1585, fol. 1v, ‘die hofe meistern so wol meiner jung frauen sicken E.L. hir mit ein schnir lein vnd wollen E.L. gar nit an gebundten haben den sich E.L. dar nach wol werden zu helfen wissen’.

<sup>105</sup> Cordula Nolte, ‘Verbalerotische Kommunikation, gut schwenck oder: Worüber lachte man bei Hofe? Einige Thesen zum Briefwechsel des Kurfürstenpaares Albrecht und Anna von Brandenburg-Ansbach 1474/75’, in Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Das Frauenzimmer: die Frau bei*

Sibylla's letter, but it is likely that here we see a further example of the witty, erotically-tinged exchange to which Nolte referred. Further investigation into this phenomenon would be needed, but in the context of this dissertation it does not appear surprising at all that the gendered relationship between the *Frauenzimmer* and the male head of the courtly household was staged in this charged manner. It reads to me merely as a further confirmation of the wide applicability of the resource of gender difference, as a way to reaffirm the extraordinary position of the ducal couple in a variety of contexts.

### *Control Issues*

Yet despite the evidence that both partners in this marriage at one time shared in practices that aimed at the maintenance of communication and goodwill, moments of disruption in the relationship left even more ample traces in the records. An indicator of a core problem can be found in a letter from 1587. Sibylla was clearly answering an apology issued to her by Friedrich, as she stated

y[our] g[race] is apologising to me as y[our] g[race] has broken open my letter but my dear beloved faithful heart does not need to apologise, for it is y[our] g[race]'s good power [...] to want to read the letters [...] that are written to me.<sup>106</sup>

This brings us back to a key dynamic of a ruling marriage defined by the Lutheran faith: power and obedience. Sibylla here indicated clearly that she was ready to practise the kind of active obedience that Christopher Menius had praised in the biblical figure Abigail, the third wife of David. Friedrich on the other hand, signalled his tendency to strive for absolute control in all aspects of his princely practice of power.

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*Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit : 6. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 449–461, here esp. p. 452f.

<sup>106</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, 12 June 1587, 'sich E.L. gechgen mir endt schiltigen das E.L. mir mein brif haben auff gebrochen so darf mein herz aller liebes des dreis herz der et schiltidigun jar nicht den es E.L. doch jar gude macht haben [...] die brife wole lesen [...] so mir geschriben werden'.

Already in the first chapter, Friedrich's displeasure at what he perceived to be 'disorder' in the *Frauenzimmer* has been cited.<sup>107</sup> In 1606 he was displeased by the fact that several of the ladies-in-waiting helped Sibylla in the court pharmacy, and his condemnation betrayed a heavy temper, as he threatened to 'put those false, lying devil's mouths the head between their legs, or push them into a bag, and treat them in a manner that we will be their earned wage'.<sup>108</sup> Friedrich continuously forced his influence on Sibylla's *Frauenzimmer*, dictating new appointments for ladies-in-waiting and even which fabrics she would be allowed to buy for the women's dresses.<sup>109</sup> At one point Sibylla was obliged to negotiate on this point with Friedrich, pointing out to him in writing that she had asked the *Hofmeisterin* how the ladies-in-waiting had been dressed when the previous duchess was in charge, and that she had learned that their dresses used to be edged with silver and gold. She went on to say that 'the young ladies asked me to speak on their behalf and ask y[our] g[race] very submissively if you would give them this year for their court dress patterned black velvet, they do not even want them edged.'<sup>110</sup> On another occasion, Sibylla wrote to Friedrich detailing an incident in which a servant girl caused a fire in the bedroom of the Württemberg princesses Agnes and Barbara. She wrote that the event gave her 'a shock that cannot be told' and yet she found herself obliged to write to Friedrich: 'what y[our] g[race] orders me to do with her I will do'.<sup>111</sup>

The *Landschreiberei* records for the court of Württemberg confirm that Friedrich's control on spending for the *Frauenzimmer* was tighter than with other

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<sup>107</sup> See chapter 1, pp. 61f.

<sup>108</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Friedrich to unnamed addressee, 28 September 1606, 'dergleichen falsche verlogene Teuffels meuler den kopff zwischen die bein leg, oder in ein sack stosse, vnd dergleichen mit ihnen verfare, das wir ihr verdienter Lohn werden'.

<sup>109</sup> See HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Hanns Conradt von Durlach to Friedrich, 18 July 1604, Durlach here asked Friedrich if his daughter could serve in Sibylla's *Frauenzimmer*. Friedrich left a note in the margin of the letter: 'we order our spouse to take this noble [girl] into the *Frauenzimmer*', ('wir befehlen vnser Gemahlin, diese von adel ins Frawen Zimmer anzunemen').

<sup>110</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, undated letter, 'so haben mich die junck fran an gesbrochgen ich sol doch E.L.von Ihnen wechgen ganz vnder danisch an sbrechgen E.L. wolen inen doch dises jar zur hof kleidung schwarzen gemusir den samdt geben lasen sie begern kein brem'.

<sup>111</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, undated letter, 'ein selgen schrecken ein genomen das nich aus zu sprechen [ist]', 'was mir nun E.L. midt ir befehlen vor zu nehmen vil ich duhen', the incident has also been referred to in chapter 1, pp. 64f.

dukes, as Sibylla implied when she cited the precedent of the etched dresses of previous ladies-in-waiting. For the years of Friedrich's reign from 1593 to 1607, the approximate<sup>112</sup> average amount paid to artisans and craftsmen for objects made for the duchess or her *Frauenzimmer* per year came to only 69 Gulden and 12 Kreuzer.<sup>113</sup> This contrasts sharply with the years from 1610 to 1620, where the average spending amounts to the sum of 1,488 Gulden and 45 Kreuzer. These years fall in the reign of Friedrich's son Johann Friedrich, who greatly increased spending on his courtly household across all areas, a fact that was greatly bemoaned by regional historians seeing in him a typical example of a weak prince addicted to worldly pleasures.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, the documents also suggest that Duchess Barbara Sophia, wife to Johann Friedrich, was more independent in her purchases than Sibylla before her. In 1614 a bookbinder named Großkopff was given 6 Gulden and 30 Kreuzers 'for the Golden Bull and all the imperial recesses, which our P[rincely] G[race] and Lady [etc.] took from him'.<sup>115</sup> In the comparatively rare instances where the records list expenditures for items specifically intended for Sibylla, the wording is passive, as in 'for some golden balls that were given to our P[rincely] G[race] and Lady: 20 Gulden'.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> The calculation for the expenditure of the *Frauenzimmer* has to remain approximate because at times the listings include a single figure where expenses for several court members are referred to. So for instance in HStAS A 256 Bd. 81, 1594/95, fol. 331bv, 'Item 101 Gulden 48 Kreuzer Leonhardt Schleckern Hofkürßnern für Allerley Arbeit, so er von Georgi A[nn]° [15]93, biß Georgi A[nn]° [15]94. Meine[m] g[nädigen] f[ürsten] vnd Herrn, denselben Gemahelin vnd Hertzog Johann Friderichen zu Württemberg verfertigt hatt zalt laut Zettels [101 Gulden 48 Kreuzer]', in these cases the amount was nevertheless counted in full, the final figures will thus be somewhat elevated.

<sup>113</sup> This calculation as well as the figures following below were made on the basis of transcriptions of the *Landschreiberei* documents of the volumes HStAS A 256 Bd. 78-94 and Bd. 97-106, they were made available to me by Dr. Stefan Hanß. He is in the process of editing and translating these documents for publication under the prospective title of 'Crafting Courtly Culture in Early Modern Germany: Critical Online Edition of the Duke of Württemberg's Payments to Craftspeople, Stuttgart, 1592-1629'. I am very grateful to Dr. Hanß for sharing his work with me before publication.

<sup>114</sup> See for instance: Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 306-13; A more even-handed approach to Johann Friedrich's achievements takes Axel Gotthard, *Konfession und Staatsräson: Die Außenpolitik Württembergs unter Herzog Johann Friedrich*.

<sup>115</sup> HStAS A 256 Bd. 101 (Hanß transcription), fol. 380r, 'Andreæ Großkopffen Buchbendern, für die Guldin Bulle, vnd alle Reichs Abschied, So vnser G F vnnd Fraw [etc.] beÿ Jme genom[m]en: 6 Gulden und 30 Kreuzer'.

<sup>116</sup> HStAS A 256 Bd. 85, fol. 377r, 'Für etliche Guldine Böllin so vnnß[er] G F vnnd Frawen vberanddtwurt worden: 20 Gulden', In the volumes A 256 Bd. 78-94, which record the expenditures from 1592-1608, the *Frauenzimmer* and the duchess are mentioned very rarely, they come up in

Another cause of friction in the ducal household was the princely children. The first-born son and heir Johann Friedrich wrote to both his parents separately during his studies at the academy in Tübingen, which he began in 1594 at the age of twelve. His letters to his father retained a formal air, and informed him mostly of his advances in his studies or proposed changes to his entourage consisting of a *Hofmeister* and several pages and other servants.<sup>117</sup> Sibylla also received updates on his studies, as well as the customary greetings for New Year and other holidays. Yet, some of the letters to her betrayed a greater intimacy. For instance, the young prince at one time prepared a letter to his mother decorated with small ink doodles of stars and a face. Furthermore, he would ask her for confectionery, and send a messenger to her in Stuttgart in order to pick up ‘my pharmacy and all else that you have appointed for me’, thus indicating his reliance on Sibylla for the support of his bodily welfare.<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, as late as 1607, when Johann Friedrich was a young man at the age of twenty-four, he committed the faux-pas of sending his father good wishes for his birthday ten days early, thus prompting Friedrich to inform him that ‘our natatis dies does not fall on the 9 but on 19 August’.<sup>119</sup> Some of the differences of opinion between father and son will be discussed in the following chapters, but here it will suffice to point to some of Friedrich’s reactions to what he perceived as contrary behaviour on the part of his children.

In an especially aggressive letter, Friedrich reproached Sibylla: ‘you incited my disobedient daughter so against me that she would not take her leave from me in person [nor] in writing’.<sup>120</sup> The consequence he drew from this behaviour was swift

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between zero and four entries per year. Thereafter, the records for expenditures on behalf of the *Frauenzimmer* and the duchess rise significantly in frequency to several dozen per year.

<sup>117</sup> See HStAS G 66 Bü 3, for instance Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, 19 April 1605, doc. 60; as well as Bü 2 for further letters from Johann Friedrich to Friedrich from 1604-1607.

<sup>118</sup> See the letters in HStAS G 66 Bü 3, the small drawings are found on an undated letter, doc. 12; the request for confectionery, no date, doc. 15; also Johann Friedrich to Sibylla, undated concept letter, ‘das man mir auch bey [dem Boten] mein apoteckh vnd was sy mir weytter verordnet zuschickhe’.

<sup>119</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, 9 August 1607, ‘das vnser Natatis dies nicht vff den 9. Sonder 19. Augusti, gefallen thut’; For further discussion of the correspondence between Johann Friedrich as a young man and his father see chapter 5.

<sup>120</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Friedrich to Sibylla, no date, ‘zu dem aus das du mein vngehorsame dochter so wider mich mich ver hezet hast, das sie, weder mundlich nach schriftlich ihren abschieden genomen [...]’.

and harsh: ‘Should now something adverse happen to your daughter she will have it out herself, for I will not look to her again and will turn my paternal heart away from her’.<sup>121</sup> The phrase ‘your daughter’ comes up on a number of further occasions. At one point Friedrich accused Sibylla: ‘you train your daughters to become liars as well,’<sup>122</sup> When an opportunity for marriage for one of the Württemberg princesses came up, he sent a short untidy note to Sibylla, ordering her to ask ‘your daughter if she wants him’.<sup>123</sup> When Friedrich wrote in such indignant terms, he often did not bother with the addition of a date to the letter, not to mention a greeting or signing off formula. This makes it problematic to date the most intense altercations, but the frictions particularly about Friedrich’s perception that his daughters shunned him appear to stem from the years shortly before his death.

In May 1607 Sibylla had written hopefully to Friedrich stating that their daughter Barbara was now fourteen years old, and expressing the hopeful wish that ‘y[our] g[race] will not be displeased that she would take part in the Eucharist’.<sup>124</sup> Friedrich contented himself with returning Sibylla’s letter with a short note in the margin that stated ‘fourteen is too young’.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, in August 1604, Sibylla was absorbed in the preparations for the wedding of her daughter Sibylla Elisabeth (1586-1606) to Johan Georg of Saxony (a grandson of Anna of Saxony), which was to take place in September of that year. During these weeks she wrote several longer letters to Friedrich negotiating the preparations with him, and from these it emerges that Friedrich took it upon himself to decide every last detail. For instance, Sibylla grudgingly conceded that she would only take five ladies-in-waiting to accompany her and her daughter, although she ‘did not know how that would look’.<sup>126</sup> Friedrich further opposed her suggestions for the number and type of wedding wreaths she

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., ‘Da aber deiner dochter jez was widriges begegnen soltt so habs sie es selbstt, da ich mich mich ihrer ganz vnd gar nich[t] mehr anwenden vil, vnd mein vatterlich herz von ihr genechden’.

<sup>122</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Friedrich to Sibylla, no date, ‘das du deine döchter auch zu ligenen abrichtst’.

<sup>123</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Friedrich to Sibylla, no date, ‘dein dochter frag, ob sie ine haben vill’.

<sup>124</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, 16 May 1607, ‘E.L. werden siches nicht lasen zu wider sein das sie ach zum nacht mal ginge’.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., Friedrich in margin, ‘Fierzehn jhar, ist nach zu jung’.

<sup>126</sup> HStAS, G 60 Bü 9, letter from Sibylla to Friedrich, 15 August 1604.

wanted to commission.<sup>127</sup> Eventually though, she went ahead and commissioned an unspecified gift for the bride and groom, without consulting Friedrich. Since he painstakingly inspected all expenses made on the occasion, he eventually found out about this some months after the wedding, and he was outraged:

we asked the jeweller who let us know [...] that you signed the note yourself, and now we would like to know who gave you the power on this bridal procession to oversee this gift, [...] I only let you come as the bride mother.<sup>128</sup>

Friedrich further stated: ‘we feel like coming upstairs to you and to maul you so that in the future you will no longer be able to oppose our order so rudely’.<sup>129</sup> The written evidence does not bear out with certainty if Friedrich chose to beat Sibylla, but, on the basis of his evident temper, it is unsurprising that Sibylla formulated her requests to him increasingly delicately.

It is important to note that, on the basis of what we know about Duke Friedrich and his style of rule, his behaviour towards his spouse cannot be judged to be completely out of the ordinary. Chapters one and two have shown how Friedrich insisted that all strands of the administration ran through his very own hands, and how he considered the assembly of the estates to consist ‘in the greater part of idiots’.<sup>130</sup> From what we know about the normative prescriptions for Lutheran matrimony, it does appear likely that Friedrich would insist more strongly on his wife’s obedience than on her sharing of rulership. It is unlikely to be a complete coincidence that Friedrich and Sibylla’s marriage appears to have grown much more problematic at roughly the same time as their ascension to the positions of Duke and Duchess of Württemberg in 1593. Matrimony and rulership were closely interconnected. Friedrich now began to develop his vision of rulership, and, in my opinion, his gendered role as husband shifted accordingly. Here was a ruler who had

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<sup>127</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, letter from Sibylla to Friedrich, undated but connected by content.

<sup>128</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, letter from Friedrich to Sibylla, 23 January 1605, ‘auch den jubilliren befragt, der vns auch angezeigt [...] wie du da den zettel selber vnderschriften, nhun wolen wir gern wissen wer dir auf diser heimbhörung gehalt geben, dich diser schenkung vnd verehrung anzunemen [...] ich [...] dich nicht hab anders mit ziehen lassen, als die praut mutter’.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., ‘hett wir lust zu dir hinauf zu gehn vnd dich so zu trackhtiren, das dich zu künfftig dergleichen nicht gelingen solt, weder vnseren befehl dich so gröblich zu verhalten’.

<sup>130</sup> See quote in Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, pp. 260f.

read and absorbed the teachings about sovereignty and the dangers of female rule expounded by Jean Bodin.<sup>131</sup> He now ruled over a relatively large territory, and, as much as he may have been constrained in his sovereignty by his position as a duke of the Holy Roman Empire, he considered himself to be a person of sufficient import to act as a friend and supporter to King Henri IV of France and to ask Queen Elizabeth I of England to honour him with admission to the order of the knights of the garter. Whilst it is certain that his specific character and temper had a significant influence on the course of his marriage, I argue that, if we take seriously the connection between marital orders and dynasty, it becomes evident that some of the problems Friedrich and Sibylla faced also had to do with the tensions that were certain to arise between a ruler who is routinely described as an early absolutist by modern historiography,<sup>132</sup> and the expectation of Lutheran married couples to share in the rulership over household and territory. As in the administration of the court and in the territorial diets, Friedrich was eager to ascertain the dominance of his will in his marriage. He was clearly a very engaged and busy ruler, and on top of his frequent absences from Mömpelgard and Stuttgart, this would have meant that he occupied a rather distant presence in the lives of his children. Although Erasmus Grüninger wrote in his funeral sermon that Friedrich had championed the Christian education of his offspring,<sup>133</sup> the analysis of the correspondence between the spouses reveals that Sibylla was more profoundly involved in their childrens' lives than Friedrich. It is not unlikely that towards the end of his life, the realisation of the complexities of his relationship with his children would have given him pause for thought. He took the labour of reproduction seriously, and according to contemporary medical discourse he would certainly have believed that his flesh and blood would crucially shape his heirs. Yet his sharp words against Sibylla reveal nagging uncertainties. What character traits would really live on in his children? In what ways would the dynasty remain defined by his tireless efforts? Clear answers to this were unattainable, but

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<sup>131</sup> Opitz-Belakhal, *Das Universum des Jean Bodin Staatsbildung*, pp. 37ff.

<sup>132</sup> See for instance Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, p. 299; Holtz, *Bildung und Herrschaft: zur Verwissenschaftlichung politischer Führungsschichten im 17. Jahrhundert*, p. 20.

<sup>133</sup> See pp. 144f. of this chapter.

pragmatic efforts to control even the minor details of the lives of his nuclear family may have offered reassurance. The side effects were serious marital disruption and the undermining of his wife's position in the 'working couple' relationship. This posed a serious risk. In a society in which marital order held such a fundamental position as in early modern Lutheran Württemberg, a key role of the ducal couple was to function as an example of marital harmony in order to assure their subjects that they were in safe hands and that order was assured in the territory. Overt rifts might have led to serious political upheaval, and yet Friedrich and Sibylla avoided that fate. The final pages of this chapter will argue that the fact that the lives of these ducal spouses ultimately could be narrated as key examples of the embodiment of a *Landesvater* and a *Landesmutter* by the Lutheran pastors writing their funeral sermons, is an important political achievement that stemmed in no small part from Sibylla's practice of active obedience and emotional labour.

### *Practising obedience*

Sibylla's active labour to appease Friedrich and to ensure that their relationship remained functional for as long as possible comes to the fore particularly at times when she reacts to Friedrich's irritability. When she felt that he was unhappy with her, her letters inflated greatly in size. Usually she wrote between one and two sides, but at times of altercations with Friedrich her writing could easily take up four and more pages. The longer letters did not necessarily convey significantly more information, but rather Sibylla used the extra room to apologise repeatedly, explain her reasoning, and engage with Friedrich about domestic issues by way of the exchange of news such as the health of their children, her pregnancies, and letters received at court.<sup>134</sup> In May 1591, for instance, Sibylla was lying-in after the birth of

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<sup>134</sup> See for instance HStAS G 60 Bü, Sibylla to Friedrich, 15 August 1586, in this letter Sibylla reacted to Friedrich's 'uhn wille[n]' against her because she had asked him too forcefully when he would return from his journey to France. She stated 'I can well consider that y[our] g[race] cannot move away again before he receives his audience with the king' (fol. 1r, 'kan wol er achten E.L. werdten nicht er kinen widter weck ziehen E.L. bekommen den von den kenchig vor audtigenz [sic]'). Friedrich's failure to secure an audience with the king was most likely the reason for his prickly

her son Friedrich Achilles. Whilst Friedrich had been there for his birth and some of the lying-in period, he suddenly announced that he would leave on another journey. On the morning of 19 May Sibylla had woken up to the news that Friedrich had already departed and merely left her a short note:

I have received y[our] g[race]'s note which y.g. left me and understood thereof not without small pain and a sorrowful heart that y.g. has a great anger towards me, as y.g. says in his note he thought we would take leave of each other, as I would have done y.g. will remember that I asked y.g. the night before y.g. left when he would rise but y.g. did not want to tell me which is why I did not know y.g. would be up so early.<sup>135</sup>

Whilst it seems apparent that Sibylla's transgression here was minimal, she nevertheless did not hesitate to expound at length on how sad she felt at Friedrich's displeasure with her and how well she understood his side of things:

Y.G. also writes that y.g. put great and important business behind me [...] which I certainly believe and recognise and I want to once again thank y.g. for what you did for me and I thought we would be apart from each other in peace and unity which I strongly hoped for.<sup>136</sup>

It is clear from Sibylla's letter that she had a clear sense of her role in this altercation, as she states clearly that she 'did not know' that Friedrich would leave so early, and it is made evident that her sleeping through his departure was an unintended consequence. Yet, she took steps to be empathetic to Friedrich's perspective, in acknowledging that her giving birth and lying-in would have encroached on his normal schedule. Her strategy was thus not merely flat compliance, but a reflected

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behaviour, and in her letter Sibylla apologised repeatedly and furthermore gave him news of her pregnancy, the health of the children and mentioned again how happy she was about her parrot.

<sup>135</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, 19 May 1591, 'ich habe E.L. schreiben wo mir EL. hat hinder lasen endt pfanngen vnd daraus nicht midt gerinchgen schmerzen vnd jar bekimer den herzen verstanden das E.L. jar ein grosen ohn wilen auff mich geworfen haben den E.L. in solgen schreiben vermelten das E.L. wol ver meindt hett mich her ein ander abscheidt von E.L. genommen alles ich gethan habe so werde si E.L. sonders zweifeles noch wol zuerindern wisen das ich E.L. gefrachget habe den abendt zu vor ehr E.L. sein weck gezochgen wan E.L. werden auff sein aber E.L. haben mir es nicht sachgen wolen so habe ich der wechgen nicht gewist das E.L. wider so frue auf sein'.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 'schreiben mir auch in E.L. schreiben E.L. haben in meindt wilen E.L. grose vnd wichtige gescheft alle hin dan dan gesezt [...] iches jar wol er kene vnd du mich auch des wechgen was E.L. in solgen fel gehen mir gehan noch males {gechgen E.L.} bedancken ich hete auch wol vermeindt wir werden in fride vnd einich keidt von ein ander gesch eiden sein wie ich den genz lich ver meindt habe das es geschehen wurde'.

and active attempt to smooth the path for reconciliation with a partner she knew to be of a fragile temper.

This kind of self-discipline in the performance of a Lutheran wife was widely advocated as a key duty for women in marital advice literature, and it appears to have been a recurring subject of exchange between dynastic parents and their daughters.<sup>137</sup> Anna of Saxony, who is well-known for being a politically engaged, active duchess, made the pragmatic difficulty of such actions explicit in a letter advising her daughter on the early stages of married life. She instructed her: ‘(even if it is hard for y[our] g[race] and would hurt) [...]to obey his grace’ in case it was not possible ‘to obtain something from your grace through a friendly request’.<sup>138</sup> Anna’s strong position was dependent on her good relationship with her husband, for otherwise she could not hope to act efficiently as an intermediary opposite him on behalf of her clients. Developing capacities for acting against one’s own inclination was key in order to ‘obey’ as intended.<sup>139</sup> Anna recognised this practice as crucial for her success, and thus impressed its importance on her daughter. In Anna’s case these tactics were very fruitful, and she was able to work her influence on many aspects of

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<sup>137</sup> See Katrin Keller, ‘Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532-1585), von Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer “Landesmutter”’, in Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Das Frauenzimmer: die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit: 6. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 263–285, here p. 265; and also HStAS G 52 Bü 5, letter from Sabina of Württemberg to her father Duke Christoph, 20 February 1566, ‘Y[our] G[race] are writing that when my beloved would at times become angry at me, which God should forbid, then I should be silent for his sake. Y.G. must not worry at all I hope to God the almighty that I will comport myself in a way that my beloved lord and husband will not have any reason to complain’; (‘wie E.L. schreibt das ich seh wan das mein herzt lieber etwan zornig vber mich wirdt das doch vm gott wils nit geschehen sol so solt ich seiner lieb sthil schweigen so darf E.L. gar khein sorg darin haben ich hof zu gott dem allmechtigen ich well mich gegen meinen hertz lieben herrn vnd gemalh halten das sein lieb khein klag sol haben’).

<sup>138</sup> As cited in Keller, ‘Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532-1585)’, p. 266, ‘(ob es auch deiner Liebden gleich schwer sein und wehe thun sollte) [...] und seiner Liebden gehorsame volge leisten’, ‘nicht durch freundliche Bit bey seiner Liebden erhalten’.

<sup>139</sup> This finding resonates with recent studies that argue that in early modern aristocratic marriages societal expectations and personal emotions came to be so closely intertwined that they influenced each other. Aristocratic women and men expected a degree of affectionate love within their marriages. This expectation appears to have been satisfied more often than not, since the positive associations of a legitimate and advantageous marriage were a fruitful basis on which to develop loving emotions. See on this Beatrix Bastl, *Tugend, Liebe, Ehre: die adelige Frau in der frühen Neuzeit* (Wien, 2000), pp. 356-75; Sophie Ruppel, *Verbündete Rivalen*, pp. 121-4; Marra, *Allianzen des Adels*, pp. 105-11; as well as most recently Schönpflug, *Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern*, pp. 70-91, who also comments on this consensus within the literature.

governance in Saxony. Sibylla, on the other hand, was undermined in the exercise of rule by Friedrich's desire to control as much of the practice of power as possible. Nevertheless, her efforts ensured that their marriage never fell apart overtly, and, even as things became increasingly difficult, her long letters helped to keep the channels of communication open between her and Friedrich as she continuously made efforts to improve their understanding. As late as March 1607, when their relationship was seriously disrupted, Sibylla sent Friedrich another piece of string on the occasion of his name day, perhaps in hopes of reminding him of a time when their marriage had been more cordial.<sup>140</sup>

The one area where Sibylla found it particularly difficult to accommodate her husband's character was that of his infidelity. This aspect of their relationship will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, and here only a few words shall be said, which relate it to the themes discussed in this section of this dissertation. Only one letter of the entire correspondence analysed touches on Friedrich's relationships with other women, and even here extramarital sex remains an implicit suggestion.<sup>141</sup> It is clear from its contents, however, that this was a recurring topic, and the lack of letters furnishing us with more information may be down to the explosive potential Friedrich's extramarital transgressions developed after his death. Sibylla and her heirs were most likely not greatly interested in the survival of written evidence of this ambiguous aspect of their history. The letter fragment in question stems from 1589, and it bears witness to a dispute between Sibylla and Friedrich over his relationship with a 'washer woman':

Y[our] g[race] write to inform me that a carriage of beautiful women is following y.g. to Baden and that y.g. intends to take her [sic] as a washer woman to Baden, which is giving me great pause especially because y.g. are writing that it is because I did not want to give y.g. someone to accompany him and now y.g. has to take care of himself but I can understand well that

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<sup>140</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, 5 March 1607.

<sup>141</sup> This is unsurprising. Francisca Loetz, *A new approach to the history of violence: 'sexual assault' and 'sexual abuse' in Europe, 1500-1850* (Leiden, 2015), esp. pp. 127-8, has shown that there was such a great taboo on sexual rhetoric that even in court records dealing with cases of illicit sexuality, the mere mention of the visibility of genitalia had to stand for the suggestion of sexual activity.

if the people are so extraordinarily beautiful then it would be suitable that y.g. will have a small desire for them [...].<sup>142</sup>

The letter continues in this manner without the usage of punctuation and with several grammatical oddities, but it emerges clearly that Sibylla had reached a limit of active obedience when Friedrich had wanted to take a washerwoman from Mömpelgard on a journey with him. She goes on to say that this woman had proclaimed herself to be ‘the most beautiful woman here in Mömpelgart’ and that all other women looked like ‘rough peasants’ beside her.<sup>143</sup> Sibylla did not tolerate her taunts, as she wrote further: ‘we laughed at her when she left and y.g. would not believe the strange dealings she expressed when she left [...]’.<sup>144</sup> Nevertheless, Sibylla did not truly believe that this would be her last encounter with the ‘wescherin’. She further impressed on Friedrich that if he did not send her away ‘we will not remain in agreement the washerwoman and I for I would have to fear all that she would want to drown me’.<sup>145</sup> Sibylla thus focused on the conflict between her and the washerwoman, rather than on a disagreement with Friedrich. I argue that it is important to take Sibylla’s assertion seriously, and to consider that jealousy may not have been the only driving force in her desire to end Friedrich’s relationship with the washerwomen. What she appeared to fear most was to be rendered obsolete by a mistress, which would in turn open her up to physical obliteration. Naturally, a washerwoman would achieve this aim with a medium she knew best. Sibylla’s anxiety makes sense when we refer once more to the duality of the Lutheran ideal of marriage. A steadily present mistress would disturb this configuration, and it was in this context that Sibylla changed tactics from active obedience to carefully measured

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<sup>142</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Sibylla to Friedrich, 1589, ‘Das mir E.L. auch zue meinen zeidtung schreiben das E.L. ein kuschen mit schenen Fraw zimer sei nach gezochgen vnd sie E.L. vor ein wescheren mit gen baden nehmen wollen macht mir gewis lich aller lei nach dencken vor ab weill E.L. schreiben weil ich E.L. niemandes haben wollen mit geben misen sich E.L. selber ver sor gen ich kann aber wol er achten vil die leite so jar iber aus schen sein so michte siches jar wol sicken das E.L. ein list lein zu solgen schen leiden iber keme’.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., ‘die schanste frau all hie zu mumpelgart gerimet’, ‘grogen bauren’.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., ‘wir haben sie mer lich wol aus gelacht wie sie ist wechs gezechgen E.L. kinen nicht gleiben was sie vor seltsame hendel hett vergeben wie sie ist hin weck gezochge’.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., ‘nicht mit ein ander einig bleiben die wescheren vnd ich den ich miste alles ferchten sie wirde mich ver Trincken’.

resistance.<sup>146</sup> Her reaction is thus consistent with her continuous efforts to stabilise the ruling marriage and, by extension, the political regime of the territory of Württemberg.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter it was demonstrated that it can be useful to think of the marriage of the ruler(s) as an institution of the fledgling state. Whilst varying forms of it are recognisable in most dynastic centres all over the world, its specific forms and clout vary significantly in temporal and geographical perspectives. Even in Europe, where dynastic rule in the early modern period adhered to monogamous forms of marriage, there are crucial differences between the specific ways marriage was culturally appropriated and integrated into governance. The European courts shared the reliance on specific interpretations of marriage as a way to imagine the relationship between subjects, the monarch(s), and the state; and yet the characteristics of gender roles within marriage varied so significantly that even the umbrella term of ‘monogamy’ does not always seem appropriate to generalise on similarities. This is one way in which the gendered institution of marriage acted as a resource of power at the early modern court. In the Lutheran territories of the Holy Roman Empire marital order was particularly central to the formation of the state. Both parties in a marital couple were expected to contribute specific types of labour to the household economy, and as a result the territorial ruling couple was imagined to exercise the practice of power collaboratively. A brief analysis of funeral sermons written for Duke Friedrich and Duchess Sibylla has illustrated how gender roles within marriage were closely connected to ideas of dynastic authority and legitimacy. Finally, the marriage of Sibylla and Friedrich was considered here, in order to illustrate that, nevertheless, Protestant style monogamy was no direct route to female emancipation and executive

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<sup>146</sup> Daniel, ‘Zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie der Hofgesellschaft’, p. 214, similarly observes that Sophia of Hannover avoided conflict with her husband, the elector Ernst August, as far as possible and only let herself be drawn into voicing an opinion when she felt that he invested serious attention in a mistress who had the potential to push her aside.

power. The institution of marriage hinged on female obedience, and this element allowed for varying interpretations of its pragmatic realities. As in all other political endeavours, Friedrich strove to focus all decision-making power on himself, and this included decisions concerning the *Frauenzimmer* household and other areas that otherwise might fall into the domain of the prince consort. Sibylla, nevertheless, played an important role in this ruling marriage, for she actively accommodated Friedrich's temper, and made sure that at least a minimum of communication persisted between herself and her spouse. As a result, the marriage of Friedrich and Sibylla could still be made to fit the public image of the ruling couple, which constituted a significant contribution to the stability of the duchy.

## Chapter 4: The Female Favourite. Towards a Gendered View of the Politics of Concubinage at the Early Modern Court

On 14 February 1608 Duke Johann Friedrich of Württemberg received a letter from Michael Koch, the deputy bailiff in Blaubeuren. It contained alarming information about two women, Magdalena Möringer and a certain Catharina Weickhmann:

the bailiff did no longer dwell here, in the three quarters of year just passed, he did not sit for more than three or four days in office, but the old [Möringer] and the young woman [Catharina Weickhmann], took over the official business too much and they let themselves be heard publicly that they were the highest regents installed here, that they had power and influence, if one or another was to act against them they would have him thrown to into the bottom of the tower and feed him on water and bread, which is how they caused great terror and fear in people.<sup>1</sup>

Who were these fearsome women Koch speaks of, and how did they earn such dubious acclaim? Chancellors of the Württemberg court spoke about Möringer in a great number of documents, which were produced in the months and years after Duke Johann Friedrich of Württemberg (1582-1628) succeeded his father, Duke Friedrich I, when the latter died unexpectedly in January 1608. By July 1608, privy councillor Melchior Jäger wrote a long report, which began as follows:

Highborn prince, merciful lord, your princely grace instructed me his secret councillor Melchior Jäger, because of the manifold past mistakes committed by your beloved lord father *ex humana imbecillitate* and further excesses, to advise out of submissive duty what could be done for the satisfaction of the commandments of God and for the distribution of justice, the maintenance of your lord father's princely reputation, and for the common good [...].<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 1, letter by Michael Koch to Duke Johann Friedrich, doc. 6, 14 February 1608, 'vnd ist der Obervogt nimmer anheimisch gewesen, Innmaßen er auch in den drein viertel Jar hero, über drei oder vier ampt tåg mit mir nit besessen, die alt: vnd jung frauw aber, haben sich der ampts sachen nur zuuil angenommen, vnd sich öffentlich vernemen lassen, daß sie zu den obersten Regentinen hiehero gesetzt seyen, macht vnd gewallt haben, einen oder den andern, der wider sie handeln thüe, in Thurm in boden zuuerffen, vnd mit wasser vnd brot abzuspeißen, dahero sie ein großen, schreckh vnd forcht, vnder den Leiten erweckht haben'.

<sup>2</sup> HStAS, G 60 Bü 9, Gutachten, 7 July 1608, fol. 1r, 'Durchleichtiger hochgeborner Fürst, genädiger herr, was E.F.G. durch mich dero geheimen Rhatt Melchior Jäger, ec. wegen bey dero vilgeliebten

The document mentioned Möringer alongside a number of other women as a procuress. She was imprisoned and held for six years, and her prosecution continued for several years thereafter. The court of Stuttgart was eager to punish Möringer for her perceived crimes, yet she could not be charged officially with adultery nor with being a procuress, since in relation to such charges two or three parties had to be named. Duke Johann Friedrich could not implicate his father in such a lawsuit, even posthumously. For Möringer this meant that her belongings were confiscated and that she was imprisoned without clear knowledge of what procedures would follow. During her imprisonment, she wrote letters, supplications, apologies, and prayers whenever she could, although the Stuttgart councillors tried to stop these endeavours. Over many years she insisted that she did not understand why she was held in captivity, and that she had been misled by the woman whose house she inhabited in Urach. She only rarely mentioned her contact with the late duke in her writing, and when she did she insisted: ‘I do not know anything, except that he liked to look at the girls’.<sup>3</sup> The ‘girls’ were three women, who had come to live with Möringer in Urach, and they later claimed she had invited them to live with her.<sup>4</sup> Among them were Catharina Weickhmann (née von Miltitz), as well as Ursula Weickhmann, and one Cordula Ebner.<sup>5</sup> In Magdalena Möringer’s version of the events, she admitted to housing women whom the late duke had visited regularly, although she was clever enough not to portray herself as a procuress.

The activities of these women, which came to light during Möringer’s prosecution after the death of the late duke, and the documents produced in this process will form the basis of this chapter. But what can this protracted tale teach us, except that the Dukes of Württemberg entertained mistresses long before the famous

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herren Vatters hochseligen angedenckhens, *ex humana imbecillitate* vorgelauffner vilfälttiger fehler, vnnd dohero entsprungene weitere excehsen, den subsignirten genädig vorhalten vnd begehren lassen, hierinnen dersselben was zur *Satisfaction* der gebott Gottes, ertheillung der *Justitien*, erhaltung dero herren Vaters fürstliche, *reputation* auch allgemeinen weßen zum besten vnnd dienlichsten vnderthenig pflicht schuldiger weiß rathlich zu sein’, original cursives.

<sup>3</sup> HStAS, A 48/10 Bü 3, ‘Gebetbüchlin’, no date, ‘weis nichts dan das er die metlain hat geren gesehen’, as cited on .

<sup>4</sup> For instance HStAS, A 48/10 Bü 2, doc. 66, 13 September 1608.

<sup>5</sup> There was also a maid named Maria Pirner, but she appears to have been there purely as a help to the older women living in the house.

cases of Wilhelmina von Grävenitz (1685/6-1744) or Franziska von Hohenheim (1748-1811)? I argue that this case invites us to consider extramarital ducal relationships as part of political history. In the following, I want to examine scholarship on male courtly favourites, which provides structural explanations for the increase in male courtly favourites in the seventeenth century. This should prompt us likewise to ask what structural political needs concubinage addressed in this period. In order to answer this question, I will refer back to Heide Wunder's concept of the 'working couple', which was introduced in the previous chapter to analyse the ruling household and the sharing of governmental labour across gendered lines.<sup>6</sup> It will be argued that concubinage was perceived to disturb the equilibrium of the ducal household in a way that is not dissimilar to how male favourites upset the political power balance by monopolizing the ruler's favour and achieving personal benefits from this situation. I will lay out my argument as follows. Firstly, I consider the historiography on male favourites by looking at the case of Matthäus Enzlin, which ran parallel to the Möringer case in Württemberg, but which has received disproportionately more scholarly attention to date. I will next discuss the state of current scholarship on mistresses and female favourites, before discussing Möringer's case in particular. Here the focus will be on Möringer's skills, as well as the interior workings of her female household. The chapter will conclude with a direct comparison of Enzlin and Möringer's positions as favourites and their respective prosecutions and defence strategies. In this way it will be shown how both the male and the female favourite could strengthen the political programme of a ruler in specifically gendered ways, and, conversely, how contemporaries might view them as factors disrupting the God-given political order.

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<sup>6</sup> See "*Er ist die Sonn', sie ist der Mond*", pp. 96-8, where Wunder developed the 'working couple' concept initially, for further discussion of her work see Introduction and chapter 3.

### ***Matthäus Enzlin: A Male Favourite in Württemberg***

Matthäus Enzlin was a professor of law at Tübingen University and simultaneously served as one of Duke Friedrich's most important councillors.<sup>7</sup> Enzlin's legal expertise helped Friedrich to severely curtail the influence exercised by the Württemberg diet, which consisted of the burgher representatives of the departments of the territory (*Amtmänner*), as well as the prelates.<sup>8</sup> The local nobility was excluded from the assembly, since they only submitted to the authority of the emperor.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the diet was a force to be reckoned with since they had been granted extensive rights of co-determination on taxes in the treaty of Tübingen in 1514, and Enzlin's strengthening of ducal power decisively reordered this political configuration.<sup>10</sup> He was replaced in his role as closest advisor almost immediately after Friedrich's death. In May 1608, Enzlin was arrested and charged with corruption and later with treason; in 1613 he was executed.<sup>11</sup> Enzlin came to be imprisoned in the same fortress as Möringer in 1610 and Möringer's letters show that the two prisoners knew of each other and that she attempted to observe the comings and goings in his room.<sup>12</sup>

Duke Friedrich created a dazzling, internationally-minded court that formed the background to proto-scientific research, artistic endeavours, and magnificent festivities, the likes of which had not been seen before in Stuttgart.<sup>13</sup> He subscribed to an explicitly mercantilist policy and laboured to strengthen the mining and textile industries in Württemberg.<sup>14</sup> As we have seen, his dealings with the estates clearly reveal that he felt entitled to more independent authority over financial and political

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<sup>7</sup> Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, p. 251, for a more in-depth discussion of the institutions of governance in Württemberg see the Introduction.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, see pp. 263-73.

<sup>9</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 46-8.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45f.

<sup>11</sup> Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, pp. 276f.

<sup>12</sup> HStAS, A 48/10 Bü 3, letter from Möringer, 19 May 1610.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance Rublack, *The astronomer and the witch*, ch. 2 'A Lutheran court', pp. 45-65; Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 136-45.

<sup>14</sup> Sönke Lorenz, 'Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg (1557-1608): ein Fürst zwischen Ambition und Wirklichkeit. Zur Einführung', in Joachim Kremer, Susanne Borgards, and Ulrich Günther, eds., *Hofkultur um 1600: die Hofmusik Herzog Friedrichs I. von Württemberg und ihr kulturelles Umfeld* (Ostfildern, 2010), pp. 1-24, here p. 15.

decisions than the dukes of Württemberg had previously claimed.<sup>15</sup> About two years after Friedrich took power in 1593, his differences with the estates began to appear in the records. In 1595 he demanded the levying of a second round of *Türkenhilfe* from the estates. When they tried to resist, Friedrich's response was excessively sharp and authoritarian, so much so that the estates were cowed into agreement. Besides intimidation tactics, Friedrich also began slowly to introduce officials who were deeply loyal to him to bailiwicks in his territory and ousted prelates that had previously voted against his propositions. The effect was that the assemblies of the estates were increasingly interspersed with men who supported the ducal government. This helped Friedrich and his favourite Enzlin to push through enormous financial demands and to subdue the estates.<sup>16</sup>

Ronald Asch has analysed Enzlin's career and subsequent fall in an insightful article that identifies him as a relatively typical case of a courtly favourite.<sup>17</sup> Asch emphasised that as a legal scholar Enzlin was perfectly suited to this role, at a time when 'the duke needed somebody who was able to transform his quest for power into legal arguments'.<sup>18</sup> Only by viewing Enzlin against the background of other relationships the duke entertained with court officials does it emerge that his influence was extraordinary for a ducal councillor.<sup>19</sup> For historians, a similar problem

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<sup>15</sup> See for instance chapter 2, pp. 113-5; also see Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, p. 251, explains this through Friederich's provenance from a different 'country', by which he means that Friedrich had learned to govern in the territory of Mömpelgard, which lies on the left side of the Rhine and thus stood under a strong French influence.

<sup>16</sup> The most important example being the 400,000 Gulden they won from the estates to purchase suzerainty from Prague. This was one of the most significant victories won by Friedrich, since it meant that Württemberg would no longer revert to the control of the feudal overlord, the Holy Roman Emperor, should its male line come to an end. Thus the territory gained more independence from the emperor's rule, at the very least in the minds of the subjects. On this see Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag*, pp. 260-4; The second great victory Enzlin helped Friedrich achieve, took place at the Diet of the Estates in 1607, when he had an amendment to the Treaty of Tübingen accepted which gave the duke the freedom to levy money to pay for mercenaries should he see the need for it, without seeking the estates' approval first. See *ibid.* pp. 271-3.

<sup>17</sup> Asch, 'Corruption and punishment? The rise and fall of Matthäus Enzlin', pp. 96-111.

<sup>18</sup> Asch, 'Corruption and punishment? The rise and fall of Matthäus Enzlin', p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-104; also see: Jan Hirschbiegel, 'Zur Theoretischen Konstruktion der Figur des Günstlings', in Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Der Fall des Günstlings: Hofparteien in Europa vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert. 8. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Ostfildern, 2004), pp. 23-40, here p. 38f.; On councillors see Vann, *The making of a State: Württemberg 1593-1793*, p. 39.

as in Möringer's case presents itself, since it was hazardous for Duke Johann Friedrich to state that his father had fallen under the influence of a councillor. Thus, some of the underlying reasons for Enzlin's arrest were never explicitly stated. Instead, Enzlin was accused of financial misdealing and corruption. Asch connects the trial to the wider tendency of seventeenth-century German territories towards the institutionalisation of a practice of governance in which the will of the regent filtered through a bureaucratic system of formal councils and was ordinarily dispensed in collaboration with the estates, but which did not tolerate the informal and personal dealings of a Matthäus Enzlin. In contemporary political debates, such courtly favourites were thought to disrupt the divine order by exercising influence that went beyond their appointed roles.<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere, Asch also emphasises the connection between the phenomenon of courtly favourites and periods of centralisation of government: when bureaucracy became more complex, but did not yet have the executive power to push through political decisions, spaces opened up for political actors with specific skills to assist rulers in the execution of policies.<sup>21</sup> Oliver Auge argues, in an article about Enzlin and other favourites of the Dukes of Württemberg, that rulers were particularly prone to the influence of potential favourites when they came to power from a difficult position, for instance, in cases of dynastic realignments or during times of geopolitical instability.<sup>22</sup>

Historians who discuss male favourites find it crucial to analyse the underlying structural and political reasons that created an environment in which they could develop their careers. Increasingly complex bureaucracy, a drive for centralisation, and a ruler with something to prove have all been identified as

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<sup>20</sup> As goes Asch's argument in: 'Corruption and Punishment? The rise and fall of Matthäus Enzlin', pp. 106–8.

<sup>21</sup> Ronald G. Asch, 'Schlußbetrachtung. Höfische Gunst und höfische Günstlinge zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit. 18 Thesen', in Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Der Fall des Günstlings: Hofparteien in Europa vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert. 8. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Ostfildern, 2004), pp. 515–31, here pp. 522f.

<sup>22</sup> Oliver Auge, 'Holzinger, Enzlin, Oppenheimer. Günstlingsfälle am spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Hof der Württemberger', in Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Der Fall des Günstlings: Hofparteien in Europa vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert. 8. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Ostfildern, 2004), pp. 365–99, here p. 373; Hirschbiegel, 'Zur theoretischen Konstruktion der Figur des Günstlings', p. 31.

political circumstances which might facilitate the rise of a male favourite. All of these were present in the case of Duke Friedrich of Württemberg. The historiographical discussion of mistresses and female favourites, however, has taken a different approach, as shall be discussed in the following.

### *Female Favourites*

Mistresses of noblemen and rulers are typically regarded as ‘symbol[s] of wealth, status, and power’, who:

served an important emotional function for noblemen, providing married men with relationships based on personal choice in a society in which marriages were primarily based on rank and wealth rather than on the personal qualities of the spouse.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, concubinage could relieve some of the inheritance pressure on the family, since any children born from such unions normally could not claim a stake in the dynastic line.<sup>24</sup> It has also been observed that one of the key differences between mistresses and their male counterparts was the female favourites’ greater vulnerability, since they were normally precluded from attaining courtly offices.<sup>25</sup> When we consider Enzlin’s case, however, it becomes clear that even a high courtly office could only provide very limited protection once a favourite lost the favour of the ruler. Whilst these are important observations, I would argue that an excessive focus on the ‘libidinous attachment’ between a nobleman and his mistress has cost

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<sup>23</sup> Judith J. Hurwich, *Noble strategies: marriage and sexuality in the Zimmern Chronicle* (Kirkville, 2006), p. 194.

<sup>24</sup> On older widowers *ibid.*, and Michael Sikora, ‘Eléonore d’Olbreuse - die Herzogin auf Raten’, in Kathleen Biercamp and Juliane Schmieglitz-Otten, eds., *Mächtig verlockend: Frauen der Welfen. Eléonore d’Olbreuse, Herzogin von Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1639 - 1722), Sophie Dorothea, Kurprinzessin von Hannover (1666 - 1726)* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 16–43, here pp. 16–43.

<sup>25</sup> Sybille Oßwald-Bargende, ‘Sonderfall Mätresse? Beobachtungen zum Typus des Favoriten aus geschlechtergeschichtlicher Perspektive am Beispiel der Christina Wilhelmine von Grävenitz’, in Michael Kaiser and Andreas Pečar, eds., *Der zweite Mann im Staat: oberste Amtsträger und Favoriten im Umkreis der Reichsfürsten in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2003), pp. 137–154, here p. 152, the chapter is also instructive in underlining the importance of the mistress’s political savvy. See esp. p. 144.

the discussion analytical acuity.<sup>26</sup> Many of these explanations for the presence and distinctiveness of female favourites were made equally in reference to courtly societies in England, France, and Germany, and, at the same time, to noblemen and rulers. It is, however, essential to acknowledge that the roles of mistresses differed in different polities, and that it meant something very different for rulers and heads of a dynasty to have one or several mistresses than it did for minor noblemen who ruled over little more than their country castles. Kathleen Wellman, for instance, has shown that in the French context royal mistresses regularly took over some of the representational tasks that were usually appointed to the queen.<sup>27</sup> In France this was an accepted function and did not in itself create any scandals. By contrast, Duke Eberhard Ludwig of Württemberg (1676-1733) faced continuous pressure over his relationship with Willhelmina von Grävenitz (1685-1744), even after an arranged marriage had provided an official explanation for her presence at court.<sup>28</sup> The courtly opposition against her accused her of a panoply of severe character flaws ranging from an insatiable hunger for power to the practice of magic, and after protracted resistance the duke was eventually persuaded to abandon her and send her into exile.<sup>29</sup>

These regional differences must be taken seriously and they require explanation. To view the paramount reason why rulers at European courts regularly

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<sup>26</sup> For instance, see Juliane Schmieglitz-Otten, “‘Sie brachte alle Lieblichkeiten ihrer Heimat nach Deutschland’”. Eléonore d’Olbreuse - eine klassische Mätresse oder ein Sonderfall der Geschichte?, in Kathleen Biercamp and Juliane Schmieglitz-Otten, eds., *Mächtig verlockend: Frauen der Welfen. Eléonore d’Olbreuse, Herzogin von Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1639 - 1722), Sophie Dorothea, Kurprinzessin von Hannover (1666 - 1726)* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 106–131, bases her analysis of Eléonore d’Olbreuse on the ‘heartfelt affection’ (p. 114) that was felt by the couple. She gives a stimulating account of Eléonore’s networking activities and her representational role, but remains firmly within the perspective of the mistress, without asking what benefits Georg Wilhelm and his courtly household might have gained from this relationship, apart from emotional and sexual satisfaction.; At worst an overbearing focus on the attraction between ruler and mistress can lead to downright misogynist interpretations, such as in the case of Jürgen Walter, *Lust und Macht: Mätressen an deutschen Höfen* (Mühlacker, 2010), p. 8, ‘It is unsurprising that mistresses were often the more interesting women of the time [than the legitimate wives]; they were likely even the “better” and the more important women, as argues the hypothesis of this book.’ (my own translation).

<sup>27</sup> Wellman, *Queens and mistresses of Renaissance France*, for instance on pp. 36, 113f., 124.

<sup>28</sup> See on this Oßwald-Bargende, *Die Mätresse, der Fürst und die Macht: Christina Wilhelmina von Grävenitz und die höfische Gesellschaft*, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Oßwald-Bargende, *Die Mätresse, der Fürst und die Macht: Christina Wilhelmina von Grävenitz und die höfische Gesellschaft*, pp. 108-10.

broke with monogamy as their need for emotional intimacy and libidinous satisfaction essentialises male lust and precludes a methodologically sound analysis of the functions of rulers' mistresses in varied contexts. An intriguing example of a study that pushed beyond such limitations is Eva Dade's recent book on the Marquise de Pompadour (1721-1764). Here the author is able to show with great precision the political workings of a royal mistress, who filled a niche in Versailles diplomacy as she occupied a position outside official channels but at the centre of personal interaction. She was at the node of the distribution of favour and all important diplomatic dignitaries recognised that a good relationship with her could only be beneficial to them.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, whilst the sexual and emotional appeal of female favourites is certainly important to acknowledge and to include in the analysis, it is crucial to consider the functions of these women within the courtly system not merely in terms of their relationship with the ruler, but in the wider context of the court. The present chapter will take into account the position of the mistress in relation to the gendered sharing of political functions between the ruling couple, which we have discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>31</sup> The severity with which female favourites could be reprimanded when they no longer stood in the current ruler's favour suggests that courtly contemporaries took their roles enormously seriously, and we would do well to do likewise.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Magdalena Möringer: A Female Favourite***

Where in the political configuration of Friedrich and Sibylla's reign are we to place Magdalena Möringer and the women in her care? First of all, I will give a brief outline of Möringer's arrest and imprisonment, to show the extent of the administrative energy invested by the court of Stuttgart in this case. Secondly, I will

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<sup>30</sup> Eva Kathrin Dade, *Madame de Pompadour: die Mätresse und die Diplomatie* (Köln, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Following the approach proposed by Mommertz in, 'Geschlecht als "tracer"', pp. 17–38.

<sup>32</sup> See for instance: Frank Göse, 'Vom Aufstieg und Fall einer Favoritin: Die Gräfin Cosel', in Michael Kaiser and Andreas Pečar, eds., *Der zweite Mann im Staat: oberste Amtsträger und Favoriten im Umkreis der Reichsfürsten in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2003), pp. 101–120, here esp. 119–20.

show what the case documents reveal about Möringer's household in the years leading up to 1608, and how she herself sought to portray her role in relation to the late duke and Duchess Sibylla.

On 30 January 1608, less than a day after Friedrich's passing, around thirteen women were arrested in various locations in Württemberg, and attempts were made to hold them accountable for the adultery they had allegedly committed with the late duke. This was a serious charge to make as Württemberg law punished adultery with execution.<sup>33</sup> Very few records exist from this stage of Johann Friedrich's prosecution, however, it emerges that most of these women were released within a few days of their arrest.<sup>34</sup> Only Magdalena Möringer remained in custody for a long period of time. For her, the early days of the year 1608 marked the beginning of an ordeal that was to stretch over the best part of a decade. While her imprisonment is well documented by legal and administrative records, as well as through an astonishing number of letters written by Möringer herself, it has so far received hardly any attention, except in an article by Ruth Blank in 2006, which described the contents of these sources.<sup>35</sup> At the time of her arrest, Möringer was aged 41. She had lived in Urach, a town not far from Stuttgart, for about six years in the house of Anna Emershöfer, a local widow.<sup>36</sup> Together the two women had amassed a considerable estate that consisted of rich clothing, silver pieces, several servants, a carriage, and two valuable horses.<sup>37</sup> This wealth is surprising since Möringer had originally arrived in Urach as a humble butcher's widow from Saxony. After her arrest, she had to witness the dismantling of her entire estate when Johann Friedrich and his mother Sibylla seized her assets, under the guise of wanting to pay off her creditors. Möringer addressed many letters to them at this time, asking them not to take away

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<sup>33</sup> Though in practice it was difficult to impose the death penalty. See the discussion of court councillor Melchior Jäger on this point: HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, 'Gutachten', doc. 36, 15 August 1610, fol. 2v.

<sup>34</sup> Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, p. 310.

<sup>35</sup> Blank, 'Magdalena Möringer. Eine Gefangene auf der Festung Hohenurach', *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*, 65 (2006), pp. 49–98, here p. 50.

<sup>36</sup> HStAS C 3 2933 I, letter from Wilhelm von Remching (mayor of Urach), 26 March 1605.

<sup>37</sup> HStAS C 3 2933 I, 'Inventarium', doc. 39, 20 March 1615.

all that was hers, to have mercy on her, to let her see her sons, and even to consider releasing her.<sup>38</sup>

Stuttgart did not change course, however, and kept Möringer imprisoned in Urach without officially levelling a charge against her or instigating a lawsuit. She was held in the fortress in Hohenurach for two years. In 1610 it emerged that a charge had been filed at the Supreme Court of the Holy Roman Empire (*Reichskammergericht*) against Duke Johann Friedrich for wrongfully imprisoning Möringer. It is likely that Möringer instigated this lawsuit herself with the help of her *Kriegsvogt* Simplicius Volmar, although she denied this later.<sup>39</sup> In any case, the Supreme Court immediately judged Möringer to be held illegally,<sup>40</sup> and began to petition Johann Friedrich to release her and to return to her at least parts of her estate. As this delicate case reached the highest legal institution in the empire, it began to present a significant difficulty for Duke Johann Friedrich. His key councillor Melchior Jäger wrote another long report: ‘Merciful prince [...] and your beloved lady mother, you have ordered me [...] to consider in what manner Magdalena Möringer imprisoned in Hohenurach could receive her much-deserved punishment’.<sup>41</sup> Jäger advised Johann Friedrich and his mother that it would not be possible to execute Möringer without drawing significant negative attention and he emphasised,

the great dangerous difficulties and inconveniences that could arise out of this for y[our] p[rinclly] g[race] and the entire p[rinclly] house of Württemberg, as well as your princely posterity, land and people (which

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<sup>38</sup> See the letters in HStAS A 48/10 Bü 1-4, for instance, for an apology and the plea for mercy see A 48/10 Bü 3, 19 May 1610, Möringer to Duke Johann Friedrich; in A 48/10 Bü 3, letter by Möringer, 4 September 1610, she states that she had been lead astray by the ‘old woman’, i.e. Anna Emershöfer, her reproaches to Emershöfer are expounded in an undated letter, A 48/10 Bü 2, doc. 86.

<sup>39</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, doc. 4, 9 June 1610.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander Brunotte Weber, Raimund J, *Akten des Reichskammersgerichts im Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart: Inventar des Bestands C3*, (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 526-7.

<sup>41</sup> HStAS A 48 10 Bü 3, ‘Gutachten’ written by Jäger for Johann Friedrich and Sibylla, doc. 36, 15 August 1610, fol. 1r: ‘Gnädig Fürst vnd herr [...] vnd dero geliebter Frauw Mutter, mir, Melchior Jäger, disen tagen befehlen [...] dass ich [...] erwegen solle, welche gestallt mitt deren, auf hohen Vrach verhaftin Magdalena Möringerin, damitt Sie Ihr wohlverdiente Straff empfahe, zuverfahren’.

should not be allowed to happen on behalf of this godless profligate woman).<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, he counselled to threaten Möringer with an interrogation under torture in order to frighten her into dropping the lawsuit at the *Reichskammergericht*, since ‘one feels generally, that at the imperial court, as at the *Kammergericht*, one is amused over y[our] p[rince]’s lord father’s imbecility’.<sup>43</sup> The records do not show whether Möringer was really threatened with torture and death, but she refused to abandon her lawsuit. The duke and his advisors at this point spoke of Möringer’s transgressions largely in financial terms. It was argued that her wealth had been confiscated in order to repay creditors whom Möringer had wronged, and soon charges against her revolved around how she had obtained certain silver pieces and precious fabrics, rather than any direct references to her alleged immoral behaviour. In 1614 Johann Friedrich and his mother decided to move Möringer to a hospice (*Spital*) in Gröningen, where she was meant to serve for the remainder of her life.<sup>44</sup> Once Möringer arrived in the hospice, however, she fled the territory of Württemberg within weeks of her arrival. She escaped to Speyer where the Supreme Court was located, and continued for a number of years with her petition to regain some of her belongings. In this she was unsuccessful and her trace is lost in 1618. By this time she would have been over 50 years of age, and it might be that she either moved elsewhere, or died after the prolonged imprisonment under the difficult conditions that she had suffered.

In the following I would like to focus on two aspects of Möringer’s life, which the documents allow us to glimpse. Firstly, I will review some of the evidence of Möringer’s extraordinary persuasiveness. The documents relating to the practical details of her imprisonment reveal that she regularly managed to convince her

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., fol. 5r, ‘die grosse gefährliche difficultäten vnd beschwehrlichaitten, so e.f.g. vnd dem ganzen f hauss Wirttemberg, auch dero firstlichen Posterität, Land vnd Leitten hierauss entstehen khendte (.dahin mans von dises gottlosen leichtfertigen weibs wegen nit kommen lassen solle.)’.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., fol. 2r, ‘hatt mann allberaitt verspihrt, dass mann sich, sowohl im kay. hofe, als bey dem Camergerichtt mitt obhochseeliggedachts e.f.g. herrn Vatters Imbecilität zimblich küzelt [...]’.

<sup>44</sup> See HStAS A 41 Bü 429, Kielmann and Broll et al. to Johann Friedrich, ‘Anbringen vnd Bedencken / der Möringerin Tranßlation, von hohenvrach in Spitaal zu Gröningen: Vnd ihr vnderhaltung daselbsten betreffend’, 17 June 1614.

captors to give her special privileges, such as the writing of letters and the receiving of visitors, against direct ducal orders. The case shows her to have possessed a great aptitude for making informal arrangements and I will argue that it is this quality that made her an ideal collaborator of Duke Friedrich's. Secondly, I will focus on what the sources reveal about the dynamics in Möringer's household while Friedrich was still alive, and pay particular attention to how Möringer positioned herself in relation to the ducal couple in the letters and supplications she wrote to defend herself.

The shifting conditions of Möringer's imprisonment can be gleaned even from the material quality of her letters. A few days after her arrest on 4 February, she addressed a longer letter to the 'illustrious, high-born, merciful prince and the princely lady dowager', which was written neatly by a scribe on solid paper, leaving ample room after the address and before the signature.<sup>45</sup> The letter discussed Möringer's anxiety about being imprisoned 'without any indication of the cause'.<sup>46</sup> Confidently, she asked that she be released on the pledge of worthy guarantors and against the value of her 'entire fortune'. Failing this she would like to have access to a 'doctor or an advocate' in order to prove her innocence.<sup>47</sup> Möringer was transferred to the fortress of Hohenurach only days after writing these lines, and from there onwards she was forced to write her letters in her own hand, with ink of much lesser quality. As the years wore on, her writing became increasingly desperate. It seems that she was experiencing difficulties finding enough paper to write on, and thus she was forced to pack her writing very tightly on the page, which at times left her documents very hard to decipher. What is most astonishing, however, is that Möringer was able to write and receive letters during the years of her captivity in the first place. For, in response to Möringer's letter from February 1608, Johann Friedrich addressed an order to Urban Stierlin, the warden of the fortress of Hohenurach, to prepare a room for Möringer, where she was to be held quietly 'but

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<sup>45</sup> On the importance of line breaks and spaces in official letters see Sternberg, 'Epistolary Ceremonial', pp. 66-74; HStAS A 48/10 Bü 4, letter from Möringer to Johann Friedrich and Sibylla, 4 February 1608, fol. 1r, 'Durchleuchtige hochgeborne, Gnedige Fürsten, auch Fürstliche Fraw Wittib'.

<sup>46</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 4, letter from Möringer to Johann Friedrich and Sibylla, 4 February 1608, fol. 1r, 'ohne vermeldung einicher Vrsach'.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., fol. 1v, 'gantzen meinen vermögens leibs vnnd guts', 2r, 'doctor oder aduocaten'.

with special attention that no letters would be brought to her and that no access to her was granted'.<sup>48</sup> Despite these clear instructions from the duke, the reality of Möringer's imprisonment in Hohenurach was to look quite different.

Möringer produced an abundance of letters during her six years in the fortress, many of which are preserved in the archive. In these she often showed a remarkable grasp of what was happening outside her prison walls. In a supplication to Duke Johann Friedrich from October 1608, for instance, she said that she had been made aware of the fact that Ursula Weickhmann had removed an entire wagonload of household items, jewellery and clothing from her estate.<sup>49</sup> Weickhmann had permission to go back to Möringer's house to collect her own belongings, but apparently she had gone far beyond this and had taken among many other items Möringer's 'best bed linen'.<sup>50</sup> Möringer wrote accusingly that Weickhmann had not told Doctor Hormoldt or Johann Schindelin, who were both councillors in the duke's service, of her intentions.<sup>51</sup> Möringer, on the other hand, appears to have had a personal relationship with Hormoldt, to whom she wrote directly on occasion. In 1612, whilst Enzlin was kept in Hohenurach, she wrote an extensive report to Hormoldt about the state of affairs in the fortress. She mentioned that the warden 'had done wrong things with enzel [Enzlin] and enzel wanted to report them but he [the warden] begged him with upraised hands and so enzel gave in'.<sup>52</sup> She stated that from this moment onwards Enzlin gained power over the warden and he received special treatment, which included servants coming and going from Enzlin's chambers at will. Möringer mentioned that she had received parts of this knowledge

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<sup>48</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 4, Johann Friedrich to the 'hauptman vff hohen Vrach', 4 February 1608, 'sonderlich aber dahin achtung haben, das Iro keine brieff von aussen zugebracht oder anderer Zuan von Ihren gestattet werden'.

<sup>49</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 2, Möringer to Johann Friedrich, doc. 78, 31 [illegible] 1608.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., fol. 1r, 'bestes betgewant'.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> HStAS A 41 Bü 429, Möringer to 'heren dodkter hormmelt [sic]', doc. 73, November 1612, fols. 3rv, 'der hauptman auch vn rechte Sachen mitt den enzel vor nehommen so hats der enzel wolen berichten so hatt er in so hoch gebetten mitt auf gehebten handten so hatt der enzel kleinbey lassen vnd hatt den bericht zurissen [...]'.  
[...]

from the servants, revealing that she had built up good networks during her four years in the fortress.<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, the warden wrote to Duke Johann Friedrich in December 1612 asking for advice on how to proceed with a young male servant who had been discovered smuggling letters to and from Möringer's chambers, as well as allowing her youngest son to come so close to the enclosure that he could speak to Möringer through her windows. The warden insisted that he had forbidden him 'and others' such behaviour on several occasions.<sup>54</sup> He was correct in presenting this case to the duke with caution, for leniency in Möringer's treatment eventually had serious consequences for him, as it had had for his predecessor. When Möringer came to Hohenurach in 1608, the fortress was governed by Urban Stierlin. Only a few weeks after Möringer's arrival, a servant girl came to see him with a note written by Anna Emershöfer, Möringer's former collaborator. Stierlin was outraged by her message (which he did not repeat) and let the girl know that he thought Emershöfer was just as bad as Möringer and that no harm would be done if both of them were burnt on a pyre.<sup>55</sup> The girl left to report his message to her mistress and the very next morning, he found his newly acquired cattle dead in their stable. Stierlin was in no doubt that 'sorcery and evil means' had been involved and he petitioned Johann Friedrich to remove Möringer to another prison.<sup>56</sup> He lent weight to his arguments by reminding the duke that he had already served his father and that he now counted thirty years of service for the Württemberg family. Moreover, only a year earlier, he had had a prisoner in his fortress who hung himself, which Stierlin saw as a 'great cross and grieve'.<sup>57</sup> Since he was now elderly, he only wished to live out his days in peace, and he felt that guarding Möringer was incompatible with this desire. He was not granted his wish, however, and two years later he saw himself faced with an inquiry into how

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> HStAS, A 41 Bü 429, *Hauptmann* Johann Schweizer to Duke Johann Friedrich, 22 December 1612, 'ich hab auch wie vnd anderen ettlich mal verboten [...]'].

<sup>55</sup> HStAS, A 48/10 Bü 1, doc. 20b, *Hauptmann* Urban Stierlin to Duke Johann Friedrich, 5 March 1608, fol. 1v.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., fol. 2r, 'durch zeüberei vnnnd böse mittel'.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., fol. 3r, 'ein hohes Creütz vnd bekümmernus'.

and why he had allowed Möringer's correspondences to continue, with a particular view to how she had managed to place her claim at the *Reichskammergericht*. The questioning took place in July and August 1610 and it brought to light that Stierlin had allowed Möringer to write to her sons, though he insisted he had read her letters before they were sent.<sup>58</sup> However, it further emerged that he had allowed his daughter Ursula to serve Möringer as a maid and apparently she had acted as a messenger on Möringer's behalf on many occasions.<sup>59</sup> On top of this, the *Fohlenknecht*, a horse-groom employed at a stud near the fortress, had allowed Möringer's sons to stay in his house on many occasions and had helped them obtain money for individual pieces of silver that Möringer somehow had managed to keep on her person in captivity.<sup>60</sup> As a result, the horse-groom and his family were sternly admonished, but Ursula Stierlin had to spend three weeks in prison and her father lost his position in Hohenurach after thirty-four years of service. Nevertheless, these consequences pale in comparison to those faced by his successor Johann Schweizer. Evidently, Schweizer was advised at the very beginning of his term as warden that he was 'not to let any writings either to or from her'. Yet, Schweizer did not take the strict stance against Möringer that Johann Friedrich wished for. In the three years of his service he wrote to Stuttgart many times voicing his concerns that Möringer was of ill health and that she 'wailed and clamoured daily that she would have to die in squalor'.<sup>61</sup> Stuttgart did not give permission to relax the conditions of her imprisonment, but Möringer continued to engage in correspondence. It seems that Schweizer was similarly lenient with Enzlin (perhaps because of the information he held on him, as Möringer suggested), and when Stuttgart realised the extent of his

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<sup>58</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, Kielmann 'Vnderthenig Relation / was sich bey Vrban Stierlins, hauptmanns / auff hohen Vrach, vnd seiner Tochter Vrsula / Examination befunden.', doc. 32, 1 August 1610, fols. 1rv.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., fols. 1v-2r.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., fols. 2v-3v.

<sup>61</sup> HStAS A 48/02 Bü 6, Schweizer to Johann Friedrich, doc. 6, 27 August 1612, 'das die verhauffte Möringerin täglich klagt vnd schreit sie miese da elendtlich verderben'.

transgressions he paid for them with his life, as he was executed in Urach in June 1613.<sup>62</sup>

Möringer's talent for evoking benevolence in people was long-standing. At the beginning of her imprisonment, Johann Friedrich wrote to Saxony in order to find out more about her life before she had come to Urach. The Prince of Saxony responded with a report from the council of Lommatzsch where Möringer had lived twenty years previously and where she had married the butcher Fabian Möringer. The council reported that shortly after their marriage the Möringer couple began 'wandering about the country'. During this time it was not clear what their income was 'but she the Magdalena had the people attentive to her and she borrowed a lot of money'. The Lommatzsch council went on to draw a very unfavourable portrait of her, highlighting the social consequences of her perceived betrayals: a shepherd had come into poverty through her, and a couple nearly lost their mill over her bad advice, which rendered the miller's wife melancholic (*schwermütig*). She was presented as a significant disruption to the social order, particularly in a case where she misled two women of good standing, one the wife of the local hunting master and the other the wife of a doctor, into giving her their best clothes. The council said that Möringer resorted to a type of *zauberei* during which she threw soapy water on the ground, stating that in this manner she would keep the devil away.

These accusations were made after Möringer fell out of favour at the court of Stuttgart. Therefore, we also have to read them as information offerings from Saxony, which could have been used in the prosecution against her. The charge of sorcery, however, never appeared in any of the Stuttgart chancellery documents produced during her case. Clearly, it was judged to be too hazardous to state that Johann Friedrich's father had fallen under the spell of a potential witch, since such an accusation might have tainted his legacy.<sup>63</sup> The themes of seduction and betrayal,

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<sup>62</sup> See Pfeilsticker, *Neues württembergisches Dienerbuch*, vol. 2, § 2947, who records that Schweizer was executed because he delivered letters to Enzlin.

<sup>63</sup> Though in Saxony in the case of Sibylla Neitschütz, who was the mistress of the prince elector, Johann Georg, the charge of sorcery was made posthumously. Sorcery and adultery easily combined,

however, came to be tropes of the prosecution which were being used in both their financial and social inflections.<sup>64</sup> Despite the evident bias in the writings from Saxony, Möringer's success at gaining privileges, even during her imprisonment, corroborates the image of a highly resourceful woman, capable of making a great variety of social relationships work in her favour. This ability, at once attractive and potentially threatening, prompts a comparison with the transformative powers ascribed to noblewomen in the festival descriptions discussed in chapter two of this thesis. Friedrich's association with such a woman was no coincidence. Rather, it constituted a means to benefit from her gendered talents. It remains unclear if Möringer came from a noble family, and she never became part of the courtly household in Stuttgart. But she was the ideal person to establish a quasi-noble female household, which was fit to serve the duke's representational purposes, and to persuade the people of Urach that all she did had its legitimacy. The function of the female favourite at this time did not require a formal education, nor did it convey an official office, as was the case for male favourites.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, it required a broader set of skills than those which sexual attractiveness alone could have bestowed.

The conditions of Möringer's household during Friedrich's reign are highly relevant for an understanding of its functions. The sources present some problems of interpretation, since all references to Möringer and the women she lived with date from after her abrupt fall from grace, and thus must be read in connection with the

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since both constituted a severe upset of divinely inspired order. On the Neitschütz case see for instance, Wunder, "*Er ist die Sonn', sie ist der Mond*", pp. 192f.

<sup>64</sup> These charges were commonly levelled against women in the Germanic lands of the early modern period. See Wunder, "*Er ist die Sonn', sie ist der Mond*", p. 199 who argues that early modern women were particularly associated with the care of adults, children, and interpersonal relationships. As a consequence, they more often stood at the centre of interpersonal conflicts and strife, which could in turn lead to allegations of witchcraft.; Roper, *Oedipus and the devil*, for instance p. 41f., argues that the Reformation redefined all unmarried women as potentially dishonourable. Möringer's status as a widow would thus have made her more susceptible to the charges mentioned.

<sup>65</sup> Obwald-Bargende views this as a key difference to male favourites, since it meant that the position of female favourites was inherently volatile. See, 'Sonderfall Mätresse? Beobachtungen zum Typus des Favoriten aus geschlechtergeschichtlicher Perspektive am Beispiel der Christina Wilhelmine von Grävenitz', p. 152, However, the case of Enzlin shows that male favourites, too, could fall from grace with comparable suddenness, see above.

prosecution she faced at this time. In general, Möringer was very careful to avoid the subject of her contact with the late duke as far as possible, and she disavowed her relationships with the other women, often in the strongest terms. Nevertheless, it is possible to gain a glimpse of the dynamics of this female household.

Firstly, it is relevant to consider Urach as the location of the female household headed by Möringer. Urach was located about forty kilometres away from the court of Stuttgart. Although this was a considerable distance in seventeenth century terms, Duke Friedrich had a variety of reasons to gravitate towards this location. Urach had symbolic meanings: when Württemberg was divided between two brothers in 1441, it served as the second capital and residence beside Stuttgart.<sup>66</sup> Secondly, Friedrich had heavily invested in manufacturing on a large scale in the town since 1598, in order to turn it into a centre of damask and linen weaving.<sup>67</sup> It is most likely at the height of his involvement with the town of Urach in 1602 that Möringer arrived there from her hometown of Meißen. While the two events may not be related, this does explain why Friedrich might have been alert to women of interest at this time, in this particular town which was integral to his aim of stimulating the export of manufactured goods from the duchy.<sup>68</sup>

In the years 1606 and 1607 the baptismal records for Urach show that Möringer had stood as a godparent for a large number of new-born children at this time.<sup>69</sup> This indicated that, although she was a widow of foreign origins, she had ascended to a position of trust and respect in this community in the years following her arrival. In this she was aided significantly by Duke Friedrich. In 1605 he decreed privileges for her, which meant that she was exempt from taxes and was granted the right to remain in Urach indefinitely alongside her two young sons.<sup>70</sup> The ‘noble,

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<sup>66</sup> See also chapter 1, pp. 54-5; Fleck, *Die württembergischen Herzogsschlösser der Renaissance*, p. 44.

<sup>67</sup> Johann Daniel Georg von Memminger, *Beschreibung des Oberamts Urach* (Stuttgart und Tübingen, 1831), pp. 107-108.

<sup>68</sup> See Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 222f., for the privileges afforded to the Weaver's Guild in Urach in 1602, also *ibid.* pp. 203-33 for an overview of Friedrich's mercantilist policies.

<sup>69</sup> Blank, ‘Magdalena Möringer’, p. 49.

<sup>70</sup> HStAS C 3 2933 I, ‘Freisitzprivileg’ for Möringer, signed by Duke Friedrich, doc. 2, 11 May 1605.

honourable and virtuous lady Magdalena Möringer' further received several ducal letters of free passage that would aid and protect her on several journeys back to her home country of Saxony.<sup>71</sup> Möringer identified with her adopted home and appears to have been as eager as the duke to promote its interests. In a letter to her former maid, written during her captivity, she recounted that she had cried for joy as Friedrich told her that he would come to Urach after Christmas in 1607, in order to organise a courtly dance to which he would bring his wife.<sup>72</sup> The privileges she was awarded were extraordinary for a foreign widow of simple birth and means, and even though we cannot compare them to the elevation of a male favourite to high courtly office, they certainly comprise a tangible manifestation of the duke's favour, as well as an official reinforcement of Möringer's position.

Furthermore, Möringer profited greatly in financial terms from her relationship with the duke. In an inventory dated 20 March 1615, when Möringer was fighting for the return of her goods from Speyer, she listed more than 300 items under 'Silver pieces and gold', among which were many varieties of cups, a salt cellar, cutlery, and also rings, gems, and other jewellery. Her *Kleider* included many other items: coats made from costly black velvet; a brown fur with golden edgings worth more than 48 fl.; pairs of sleeves of damask and taffeta in silver, blue, and black; and three bejewelled hats of black velvet, one stitched with pearls, a second with pearls and golden ornament, and a third with black pearls and gold. After six pages of items of clothing totalling about one hundred items, the inventory turned to household objects. Here the relationship with Friedrich was not lost, since stowed away in Möringer's sewing desk were 'five silver tokens from when the duke was made a knight'<sup>73</sup>. In a separate document from the official inventory, the chancellors Hormoldt and Broll informed Duke Johann Friedrich that among the silver pieces in Möringer's house 'there was a beautiful cup on which were the images and coats of

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<sup>71</sup> HStAS C 3 2933 I, Willhelm von Remchingen attests to Möringer's good character, doc. 3, 26 March 1605, 'Edel. Ehr: vnd Thugentreiche Frauw Magdalena Möringerin'.

<sup>72</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, undated letter to Maria Pirner.

<sup>73</sup> In 1603 Friedrich became a knight of the garter, presumably she speaks of commemorative tokens from this event. All items listed in, HStAS C 3 2933 I, 'Inventarium', doc. 39, 20 March 1615, here fol. 12v, '5. silberne Zeichen, wie der Herzog zu Ritter ist geschlagen worden'.

arms of three reigning Dukes of Württemberg, Duke Ulrich, Duke Christoph, and Duke Eberhardt'.<sup>74</sup> This item was mentioned separately, since the chancellors assumed that the duke would not want to see it pass into the hands of 'licentious people'.<sup>75</sup> Outside the house, Möringer's estate also included two brown horses with saddles for both men and women, as well as three cows and one calf, a large pig, 9 pairs of white pigeons, and a small white dog. Her larder was stocked with preserved fish and meat, lard, eggs, sauerkraut, and 7 *fuder* of grain.<sup>76</sup>

This richly equipped household was thus openly linked to the late Duke Friedrich, and his generosity towards Möringer emerges as particularly disproportionate when viewed alongside his attitude towards his wife Sibylla and her *Frauenzimmer*.<sup>77</sup> As a recipient of such distinguished favour, Möringer was in a position to act as a broker of the regent's favour to others. Besides her function as a godparent of choice for the citizens of Urach, Möringer also distributed favours to the women living in her home. Their petitions and supplications to the duke during Möringer's imprisonment reveal that they were used to being dressed almost as luxuriously as Möringer herself,<sup>78</sup> and she appears to have played a central role in the arrangement of marriages for the young women, once their relationships with the duke had cooled off. In 1607, Catharina von Miltitz married Jost Weickhmann (a cousin of Ursula Weickhmann, who also lived with Möringer). Before this match was made, Möringer's active support was required. One of the most outspoken documents of the entire case was written by Philip Hirter, who acted as advocate for Möringer at the *Reichskammergericht* in Speyer in the latter years of her legal battle.

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<sup>74</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 2, doc. 44,19. July 1608, 'ein schöner Becher vorhanden, darauf drey Regirender herzogen zu Wirtemberg Herzog Vlrich, Herzog Christofs vnd Herzog Eberharts Bildtnuß vnd Wappen', original emphasis.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 'liederichen Leitten nit zuhanden komme'.

<sup>76</sup> HStAS C 3 2933 I, 'Inventarium', doc. 39, 20 March 1615, 1 Fuder corresponds to around 1000 litres.

<sup>77</sup> See the previous chapter.

<sup>78</sup> For instance see HStAS, A 48/10 Bü 1, doc. 49, 9 August 1608, supplication from Ursula Weickhmann to Duke Johann Friedrich asking for two golden chains and a diamond ring that are still being held; as well as A 48/10 Bü 1, doc. 21, 21 March 1608, Ursula Weickhmann's list of belongings she claims for herself, including golden jewellery and accessories, as well as clothes made from silk and taffeta.

He displayed little sympathy for the memory of Duke Friedrich and addressed himself in his supplication directly to the Emperor Matthias in 1617, stating that Möringer had borne the cost of ‘the lying-in [...] of the aforementioned Catharina von Miltitz, and thereafter of the burial of the dead little son in the church of Urach on ducal orders’.<sup>79</sup> Although Hirter’s style is quite terse, there is no suggestion that the child had died of unnatural causes. However, the implication is clear that he spoke of an illegitimate child of Friedrich, as earlier in the document he referred to:

the long dead prince, the lord father of the accused [...] and his p[rincely] g[race]’s aforementioned three women (whom the accusing Möringer had to give accommodation, and board, and maintenance beyond and against her will, in compliance with the command of his P[rincely] G[race] [...]).<sup>80</sup>

This vigorous defence of a non-noble and now non-wealthy woman such as Möringer in front of the Imperial Supreme Court is quite striking. This court was known for being more accommodating to women supplicants than many territorial courts of law, but we must ask whether Duke Johann Friedrich was attacked with particular gusto because of the leading role he played in the Protestant Union.<sup>81</sup> This would have complicated his position among the Imperial Estates at this time of increasing confessional friction. After the birth of her illegitimate child, Catharina von Miltitz married Jost Weickhmann in 1607. Jost was then made bailiff of Blaubeuren, and thus the couple gained at least temporarily a secure position in ducal employment, a fact which may have pacified the noble-born Catharina after her marriage to a man beneath her in rank. Her connection to Möringer, however, did not come to an end after she had moved out of the house in Urach. In a letter in which

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<sup>79</sup> HStAS C 3 2933 II, Philipp Hirter to the Emperor, doc. 81, 31. March, 1617, fol. 8v: ‘Catharina von Miltitz zu donauwerth, [...] gehaltene kindebeth, vnd hernacher zu Vrach, in der Kirch doselbsten, vf ernstlichen fürstlichen befehl angeordneter begrebnuß, erworbenen abgeleitbten Söhnleins’.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., fols. 7v-8r, ‘langst verstorbene fürst, des herrn beclagten herr vatter hochseeliger gedechtnuß, ehe vnnd zuvor seine F.G. solche obgemelten dreyen frawen (. welche clagende Möringerin über vnd wider all iren willen auß ernstlichen befelch hausen vnd herbergen, auch Cost vndt Vnderhallt geben müßen [...])’.

<sup>81</sup> Siegrid Westphal, ‘Frauen vor den höchsten Gerichten des alten Reiches: Eine Einführung’, in Siegrid Westphal, ed., *In eigener Sache: Frauen vor den höchsten Gerichten des Alten Reiches* (Köln, 2005) pp. 1–17, here esp. 12–7, finds that women had relatively good chances to gain a fair hearing before the Supreme Court. She argues that gender became increasingly irrelevant as legal cases moved upwards in the hierarchy of territorial and imperial courts.

Möringer complained during her imprisonment that all the witnesses used against her were biased, she said about a certain Bernhardt Vischess: ‘he is a poor man but [he is] my enemy because he had a girl [who] served with the Madam Bailiff of Blaubeuren whom *I* dismissed’.<sup>82</sup> A handful of letters from Catharina to Möringer before the latter’s arrest also give an impression of intimacy between the women. Catharina addressed Möringer as ‘my dear mother’ and ‘my motherly heart’. In her letters she begged her to send her some money, which she was still owed by Ursula Weickhmann, and she arranged plans for travel to the wedding of Cordula Ebner.<sup>83</sup> Hence, there is clear evidence of a close relationship between these women before the death of Friedrich, and Möringer clearly played an authoritative role. Her mention in passing that she had terminated the employment of one of the maids of the ‘Madam Bailiff’ allows us to suspect that she, too, benefited from Catharina’s new position, and Michael Koch’s outraged words, cited at the beginning of this chapter, begin to look more comprehensible.

Cordula Ebner’s wedding to Adam von Wildnau took place after Möringer was already incarcerated. Still, her involvement in it is clear, since she had advanced the couple the enormous sum of 1800 Gulden for their marriage celebrations, which in the end was never repaid.<sup>84</sup> Adam von Wildnau was a courtier of Duke Friedrich, and he had been registered from 1605 to 1607 in the elevated position of being allowed to keep two horses at court.<sup>85</sup> Wildnau's father had left him and his mother a large amount of debt, and Adam struggled to keep their estate afloat and to maintain his siblings in an appropriate manner.<sup>86</sup> This financial need may have rendered him

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<sup>82</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 2, doc. 84, no date, my emphasis, ‘ist ein armen mann doch mein feindt dan er hat ein Mädlin bey der gewesen Öberu[o]gten zu Blabeüren gedienet die hat sich sehr ibell gehalten da *ich* sie hab abgeschafft ist grosse feindschafft gewesen mit disem dreher’ emphasis added.

<sup>83</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, letters from von Miltitz to Möringer, 10 January 1608, and another letter by the same author without date, ‘hertz liebe muotter’, ‘mein liebs mietterlichs herz’.

<sup>84</sup> HStAS A 41 Bü 429, doc. 51 the borrower’s note signed by Ebner and von Wildnau.

<sup>85</sup> Pfeilsticker, *Neues württembergisches Dienerbuch*, vol.1, § 1499.

<sup>86</sup> HStAS A 18 Bü 5, letters by Adam von Wildnau in relation to his Bestallung at the court of Stuttgart, docs. 16 (29 July 1609), 3 (3 September 1609), 36 (5 October 1612), and from the 6 January 1609. It is interesting that von Wildnau was again given employment at court after the death of Friedrich I, given that Johann Friedrich disapproved so strongly of the household of Magdalena Möringer. Von Wildnau petitioned Johann Friedrich to find him a position at court in 1609, citing his great financial need and the fact that his family had been in receipt of support even in the reign of

open to the marriage propositions of the duke and Möringer, who are likely to have collaborated in the arrangement of this marriage.

Thus, despite Möringer's claims to the contrary, there is clear evidence that she took a very central role in the household she shared with these young women. Her support of them had a two-pronged effect. On the one hand, she clearly helped them to establish themselves in secure positions after their respective relationships with the late duke had been terminated, and during their time in her household she administered their goods and provided them with food and board that contemporaries might have argued were above their station. Möringer's function in this female household shows some clear parallels to the role taken by a ruler's consort at the head of the courtly *Frauenzimmer*.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, her labour certainly helped to contain the risk of allegations of sexual impropriety during Duke Friedrich's lifetime. She acted as a proxy for Duke Friedrich, and thus prevented him from having to get involved in the incriminating business of burying an extramarital son. Through such actions, Möringer was actively helping to manage the sexual reputation of the duke in the sense suggested by Katherine Crawford, who argues that it was crucial for regents to cultivate a sexual reputation that underlined their masculine prowess, while at the same time avoiding the allegation of being excessively dependent on the charms of their mistresses.<sup>88</sup>

Möringer came closest to describing how she viewed her own position in the duke's familial system in a letter to her former maid Maria Pirner.<sup>89</sup> Here Möringer recounted some of her interactions with the duke, and it is remarkable that in all instances she praised the relationship with the duke and the Duchess Sibylla, but simultaneously inserted herself into their connection. She insisted that

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Duke Ludwig, and Friedrich later continued this tradition. He appears to have thought that this was a solid reason why Johann Friedrich would want to support him, and indeed he was given a position at court in September 1609. This did not last very long, however, and in 1612 von Wildnau again found himself petitioning for employment and/or financial support, and this time there is no evidence that he was successful. Nevertheless, it would appear that Johann Friedrich's approach to settling and silencing the issue of his father's indiscretions was not without subtlety.

<sup>87</sup> See chapter 1 for the discussion of the organisation of labour within the *Frauenzimmer*, pp. 60-70.

<sup>88</sup> See Katherine Crawford, *The Sexual culture of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 195-7, 230-3.

<sup>89</sup> HStAS, A 48/10 Bü 3, no date.

I can [...] understand that he loved his spouse heartily and I am willing to swear at the risk of forfeiting my salvation that he never in his life mentioned his spouse to me in negative terms, which is as true as it is that God lives in Heaven.<sup>90</sup>

When the ‘ambassadors from England were there’,<sup>91</sup> Möringer narrates that she was present in the church in the city,<sup>92</sup> but her narrative focuses on her fascination with the duchess:

when the duchess with other men and women came to the church and she walked as upright as a girl of eighteen years [...] and no one would have thought that the lords and carriages were there for her God himself knows this is true, when the celebration was over the lord [Friedrich] asked me how I had liked everything and I told him that his wife had the most beautiful hands that I had ever seen on a woman and he laughed very loud and said that it was true by God [...].<sup>93</sup>

In this curious narration of the festivities, Möringer's experience of the day is closely associated with Duchess Sibylla's extraordinary appearance, which she both praises (‘walked upright’, ‘beautiful hands’) and subtly critiques, since she makes it appear as if no one associated her with her noble attendants and carriages. Möringer understood that her position as a female favourite of the duke placed her in tension with the role of the duchess. She was about the same age as Sibylla in this memory from 1603, namely in her late thirties, but, whereas she described Sibylla as extraordinarily youthful looking, she often signed her supplications for the mercy of Duke Johann Friedrich and the dowager duchess with ‘Magdalena Möringer, poor, old widow’.

I have argued that Möringer was a highly resourceful woman, who exhibited great talents in brokering informal arrangements and developing strong social

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., fol. 2r, ‘kan von in ver stehen das Er sein gemal herzlich gelibt hat viel auch so hoch sch[werden] das ich nicht selig werd wan Er sein dag gegen mir ein mal hett sein gemal in vn gutten het er wenet so war also gott im himel leb’.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., She is referring to the festivities for Friedrich's ascension to being a knight of the garter to King James in 1603, which were attended by Lord Spencer.

<sup>92</sup> The *Stiftskirche* in Stuttgart

<sup>93</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, undated letter to Maria Pirner, 2v, ‘als so ist die herzigin mit ander ferstlichen gemal vnd frauen zimer auch in die kirg gangen da ist sie so auf gricht gangen als ein metlein von achze jaren vnd hatt kein mensch gedacht das die heren vnd furle wer en ihr gewesen das wes gott im himelda das fest ist aus gewest so hat mich der her befragt wie mir als gefallen hat so hab ichs gesacht von sein gemal vnd so schen hend als ich mien dag an ein weis bilt hab ni geschen ist aber warlich war gewest so lacht er iberlaut sacht es ist war bey gott [...]’.

networks. She ran a female household of representational value in Urach and fostered good relationships with the town's inhabitants while Duke Friedrich was still alive. She also provided accommodation and care for the three younger women with whom he entertained extramarital relationships. Apart from the very final point, her role mirrored that of the princely consort at the head of the *Frauenzimmer* in some detail. Of course, Möringer's house and its female inhabitants were not located at court, but, in the politically and economically relevant city of Urach, it is plausible to read their community as a kind of alternative version of the ducal *Frauenzimmer*, albeit one skewed by the late duke's desires.<sup>94</sup> The chastity of the young women in the courtly women's quarters had a key value for the representational function of this institution, but at the same time it was common to arrange good marriages for the ladies-in-waiting, during or in order to end their tenure in the princely women's quarters. The already mentioned Catharina Weickmann was born a von Miltitz, and thus belonged to a noble family in the Saxon city of Meißen,<sup>95</sup> which was Möringer's hometown, and which she visited on a number of occasions between 1602 and 1608. In fact, during the proceedings against Möringer, Catharina von Miltitz's mother wrote to Duke Johann Friedrich saying that she was shocked at the proceedings, since she had assumed that Möringer had collected her daughter from her in order to bring her into the *Frauenzimmer* at the court of Stuttgart.<sup>96</sup>

Möringer herself was aware of the destabilising effect her influence had on the relationship between the duke and the duchess. That is why, in her supplications for mercy after her arrest, she defended herself with memories of instances where she felt she had actually made attempts to foster a more efficient relationship between the couple. In her letter to Maria Pirner she recalled how on one occasion she told the duke that she thought it was 'a great adornment' when the ducal consort and her

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<sup>94</sup> Britta Kägler argues that institutionalised mistresses pushed the consort aside to an extent, even if they did not live at court in *Frauen am Münchener Hof*, see. p. 293.

<sup>95</sup> See Christian Heinker, s.v. 'Miltitz' (zu Batzdorf, Robschütz, Siebeneichen, Korbitz), Moritz Heinrich Freiherr von, in, eds., 'Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde' and Martina Schattkowsky, *Sächsische Biografie*, <<http://www.isgv.de/saebi/>> , last accessed 03/08/17.

<sup>96</sup> Blank, 'Magdalena Möringer', p. 62.

*Frauenzimmer* went hunting alongside the prince.<sup>97</sup> She wondered why Friedrich did not do this, since the *Kurfürst* of Heidelberg himself adhered to this practice. Möringer reported that Friedrich agreed immediately and said that henceforth he would take the women, and that indeed he was sure his wife would be strong enough to shoot a deer herself. Whether Sibylla did so we cannot tell, but Möringer recalled that in a later letter Friedrich wrote to tell her that he had shot a huge deer in the company of his wife.<sup>98</sup> Since she wrote this during her imprisonment, we must read her words not merely as a private memory, but also as a defence strategy. In emphasising that she had actively attempted to reinforce the ducal marital relationship, she also reacted to the unspoken reproach that she had in fact done the opposite. Of course it is not up to the historian to discover the exact measure of truth or untruth in Möringer's statements. We should note that from Möringer's perspective it was not objectionable that the duke 'liked to look at the girls' in her house in Urach. However, she showed unease when it came to the diminished visibility of the ducal couple on representational occasions.<sup>99</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, the political order of the territory was deeply intertwined with the hierarchical but complementary roles of husband and wife. Any visible hindrance to the embodiment of these roles was most certainly a cause for concern.

But it has also been shown that Duke Friedrich aspired to be an unconventional ruler who broke with tradition and focused power on his own person. For a duke of his ambition a collaborative state marriage was perhaps not entirely desirable, since this configuration would deflect political attention away from him and onto his spouse. Evidence of Friedrich's meddling in what were normally the tasks of the ruler's consort has been reviewed and it underlines that he strove for a more absolute practice of power than the role of a German *Landesvater* would have allowed for.<sup>100</sup> Thus, I would argue that, besides the need for Enzlin, a male favourite

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<sup>97</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, letter to Maria Pirner, fol. 3r, 'gewaltiges grose ziret'.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, 'Gebetbüchlin', no date, 'weis nichts dan das er die metlain hat geren gesehen', as cited on p. 167.

<sup>100</sup> See chapter 3.

versed in legal arguments to help him push through his executive decisions, Duke Friedrich also needed a female favourite like Magdalena Möringer in order to realign his symbolic role as father to his territory. In devolving certain gendered tasks of rulership to a female favourite, rather than to his wife alone, such as the running of a representational household in a key locality, as well as the management of his sexual reputation, he emphasised his primary position in the configuration of political rule.

### ***Magdalena Möringer and Matthäus Enzlin***

Möringer and Enzlin were both favourites of a duke who was intent on establishing a new, more authoritative approach to governance. Enzlin's legal expertise and political acumen assisted Friedrich in pushing back the influence of the local estates. Möringer and the women in her care helped the duke to foster the image of a great and exceptional leader, who was not restricted to the sharing of governmental labour with his wife, but who indeed ascribed tasks traditionally appointed to the consort to other women with representational qualities. While Enzlin's influence was institutional and far-reaching, Möringer's visibility was largely limited to Urach, although the documents suggest that she was on occasion present in Stuttgart for representational events. Nevertheless, once Möringer's case reached the *Reichskammergericht* the ducal councillors estimated that the consequences of it could be very serious for the reign of Johann Friedrich. Thus, we face incongruence between what traditional historiography would call political influence, and what the contemporaries perceived to be a political risk. The potency of gender roles really comes into focus at this time of increasing confessional strife where Württemberg as a leader among the Protestant territories of the Empire stood in tension with the Catholic emperor. Friedrich's bold attempt to invest his role as *Landesvater* with more symbolic capital and institutional power had a great impact on the first decade of Johann Friedrich's reign, where he tried to create a new consensus with the estates

and when he signalled that he would be pursuing a more traditional form of governance.<sup>101</sup>

Whilst the careers of Möringer and Enzlin played out in very different settings, their prosecution and defence show some remarkable similarities. Both defendants pleaded for mercy in very emotional tones. In a petition to Dowager Duchess Sibylla, Möringer stated that the conditions of her imprisonment were now so desperate ‘that a stone would feel pity and who hears it and sees it he cries bitterly [...] no consolation helps now oh I would gladly die’.<sup>102</sup> She referred to herself often as a ‘poor abandoned’ or ‘aggrieved’ widow.<sup>103</sup> Enzlin, too, used very emotional images in his appeals to the duke: ‘I hope very submissively that y[our] p[rincely] g[race] will show me and my wife and children consoling princely mercy, for which I beg and plead once more with weeping eyes’. He signed his appeal with ‘Matthaeus Enzlin highly aggrieved’, thus absorbing his grief into his very personhood.<sup>104</sup> Pleading for mercy with the ruler was a well-established legal strategy in the early modern period.<sup>105</sup>

Both defendants also made references to the crucial roles they played within their respective families, in order to show the wide-reaching consequences that mercy for them and their families would entail.<sup>106</sup> Möringer wrote ‘because I have

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<sup>101</sup> See Asch, ‘Corruption and punishment? The rise and fall of Matthäus Enzlin’, p. 105, who argues that in this specific case the ‘discourse of corruption’ was used to build a consensus between the duke and the estates during the prosecution of Enzlin.

<sup>102</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, letter to Sibylla, undated, ‘das ein stein mecht er barmen vnd wehr es hord vnd sieht der weinet bitterlich [...]wil kein trost mehr helfen ach ich wolte geren streben [sic]’.

<sup>103</sup> For instance see HStAS A 48/10 Bü 2, letter from Möringer to Johann Friedrich, doc. 85, no date, ‘betriebte wittwen’; also HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, letter from Möringer to Johann Friedrich, 19 May 1610, ‘arme verlassen wittib’.

<sup>104</sup> HStAS A 48/02 Bü 3, ‘Actis D. Matthaeum Entzlin betrff’, doc. 109, no date, fol. 12r, ‘Gantz vnderthöniges verhoffen, daß E.F.G. mir, meinem weib vnd kündern vertröste F: gnaden erzaigen werden: darumb dieselben ich nochmals mit weinenden augen, bitten vnd flehen thue. Matthaeus Entzlin hoch=/betrübter./’.

<sup>105</sup> In the early modern period the ruler came to be the unique practitioner of clemency. In the medieval period, however, clemency had been exerted by a wider variety of actors, such as in the practice of ‘Losbitten’ where a person intercedes for a condemned individual moments before their execution. See Birgit Rehse, *Die Supplikations- und Gnadenpraxis in Brandenburg-Preußen: eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der Kurmark unter Friedrich Wilhelm II. (1786 - 1797)* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 76f.

<sup>106</sup> This, too, was a common strategy for defendants, since it was advantageous to show that their sentences impacted other innocent people negatively (i.e. their families). See Ulrike Ludwig, *Das*

become such a miserable woman, y[our] p[rinclly] g[race] and the highly praised councillors would make an end to it [her imprisonment] so my poor uneducated orphans will not fall into the most extreme ruin.’<sup>107</sup> Enzlin had the advantage of a highly active wife who wrote many supplications on his behalf.<sup>108</sup> Sabina Enzlin begged Johann Friedrich ‘to let our dear spouse and father come to us again out of mercy, for this vexed captivity and pitiful separation of a husband and a wife and a father and his children does not help y[our] g[race]’.<sup>109</sup> She reminded the duke that God had installed the highest ‘potentates’ exactly because they would show mercy to ‘poor, beleaguered and abandoned people’, and that she hoped that said people could be refreshed by the ‘princely joy’ Johann Friedrich was experiencing because ‘the merciful God blessed Y[our] P[rinclly] G[race] once again with a princely and male heir in a fatherly manner (For which we wish Y[our] P[rinclly] G[race] and your beloved wife [...] happy condition and a long life, I am begging God [...] very zealously for it)’.<sup>110</sup> She referred to the birth of Friedrich of Württemberg, who was born in March 1612 but who was to die only a few months later. Her formulations reveal the very intimate association of the ‘merciful God’ and the ruler in the early modern mental landscape. Ulrike Ludwig shows incisively how the practice of mercy could mark out rulers as beings invested with power from God, while at the same

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*Herz der Justitia: Gestaltungspotentiale territorialer Herrschaft in der Strafrechts- und Gnadenpraxis am Beispiel Kursachsens 1548 - 1648* (Konstanz, 2008), pp. 205–8.

<sup>107</sup> HStAS A 48/10 Bü 3, letter from Möringer to Johann Friedrich, 19 May 1610, ‘die weil ich so ein armselig weib bin word[en], so wollten E.F.G. sampt die hochlöblichen Rätt ein gnedig End dran machen damit meine arme vnerzogne waisen nicht gar ins Eüsserste verderben geratten’.

<sup>108</sup> Women were very well represented among all social groups of supplicants. See Andreas Bauer, *Das Gnadenbitten in der Strafrechtspflege des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts ; dargestellt unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Quellen der Vorarlberger Gerichtsbezirke Feldkirch und des Hinteren Bregenzerwaldes* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), pp. 142-8.

<sup>109</sup> HStAS A 48/02 Bü 6, Sabina Enzlin to Johann Friedrich, 8 April 1612, ‘vnnsern lieben Ehewürth vnd Vatter aus gnaden wider zu vnns khomen lassen wöllen Es ist Ihr E.F.G. mit diser so hochleidigen captiuitet vnnd erbärmlichen Separation dess mans von weib, vnnd vatters von seinen kindern nicht geholffen’, original cursives.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., ‘barmherzige Gott E.F.G. aber mals mit einem vnnd zwar fürstlichen manlichen leibserben (. Für welches wir auch E.F.G. dero gelibeter gemahlin vnnd ganzes hochlöblich fürstliches hauss glücklichen zustand vnnd langwiriges gesundes leben, den lieben Gott Ich neben den meinigen ganz eyfferig anruffen thue.) Vatterlich gesegnet [hat]’.

time they themselves depended on that same divine mercy;<sup>111</sup> a fact to which Sabina referred in her offer to pray for the long life of the ducal family. It could be added that, in this thought system, the family unit and its gendered roles provided a connective device, which established a connection between all three parties: subjects, ruler and God. The fatherly Lord bestowed a male heir to the *Landesvater*, who might in turn be persuaded to show mercy to another husband and father whom he held in his control. Constructions of gender and family roles offered a shared language to subjects and rulers, all the while maintaining their fundamental differences in rank. Religion and prayer further lent agency to someone of Sabina Enzlin's rank not merely to refer to the ducal family but to have an active influence on them, and thus to lend urgency to her claim that the duke do the same for her own family.

Finally, there is decisive evidence that contemporaries viewed Möringer's transgression in much the same way as they judged the crimes of the male favourite Matthäus Enzlin. For Möringer's persecution shows striking similarities to the contemporary case of Enzlin. He came to be imprisoned in the same fortress as Möringer in 1610 and Möringer's letters show that the two prisoners knew of each other.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, the legal strategies in the prosecution of Enzlin and Möringer were similar in content, as well as in form. Both had their charges reframed in several phases with the persecution eventually settling on a narrative of financial misconduct. In an attempt to frighten them into cooperation, both were threatened with torture and even execution. In order to assure their silence, both defendants were forced to swear oaths (*Urfehden*) that they would comply with the crippling conditions set for their release.<sup>113</sup> Möringer agreed to work' indefinitely in the

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<sup>111</sup> Ludwig, *Das Herz der Justitia*, pp. 175-7 on mercy as an innate quality of a divinely ordained ruler; and pp. 211-2 on the relationship of dependency between rulers and divine mercy.

<sup>112</sup> HStAS, A 48/10 Bü 3, letter from Möringer, 19 May 1610.

<sup>113</sup> Asch, 'The rise and fall of Matthäus Enzlin (1556-1613)', p. 103; Möringer's *Urfehde*: HStAS A 41 Bü 429, doc. 81; On the practice of *Urfehden* swearing see Bauer, *Die Gandenbitten in der Strafrechtspflege*, pp. 97-103, anyone released from prison had to swear an *Urfehde* in order to guarantee that he or she would not seek revenge against those that had brought the charge against him or her. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries *Urfehden* expanded and began to include further conditions for the release of the prisoner, such as in the case of Möringer.

Gröningen hospice (*Spital*), and Enzlin accepted an indefinite period of imprisonment for his crimes. Both prisoners at some point sought help from the Supreme Court of the Holy Roman Empire, which in turn was held against them. Their stories had different endings, as Enzlin was executed for treason after having broken his *Urfehde* in 1613, and Möringer managed to escape from Gröningen one year later. Yet, in his instructions Johann Friedrich made it clear that he did not want Möringer to speak to anyone at her appointed post in Gröningen and he even had a special private cell built for her, in order to prevent any contact with the other workers at this facility.<sup>114</sup> The staff in the hospice were also given copies of her *Urfehde* and instructed to contact the duke and his advisors Broll or Kielmann directly should she in any way infringe the oath.<sup>115</sup> These rigid prescriptions for Möringer's conduct suggest that Duke Johann Friedrich may have imagined an outcome to Möringer's situation that was not dissimilar to the developments that had doomed Enzlin. Had she stayed in the hospice, it is more than likely that she would have broken the conditions of her oath, willingly or by accident. This could have furnished Stuttgart with the legal justification to silence Möringer once and for all.

To me the similarity of these prosecutions and defensive strategies suggests that the perceived crimes of Möringer and Enzlin were actually rather similar. Each of them used their specific talents, which were developed in accordance with their gender identity (Enzlin became a legal scholar and Möringer perfected the art of persuasiveness), but ultimately their relationship with the late duke touched upon the same political order, albeit from different angles, and with different effects. This would also explain why Enzlin closed a long document in which he detailed all the instances in which he had committed financial embezzlement with the words 'Finally

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<sup>114</sup> HStAS A 41 Bü 429, concept order by Johann Friedrich, 18 June 1614, doc. 4, fol. 3v.

<sup>115</sup> HStAS A 41 Bü 429, Kielmann and Broll, 'anbringen und Bedencken', 17 June 1614, doc. 3, fol. 3v.

I ask Y[our] G[race] in all submissiveness and with your princely clemency [...] to forgive all of the *fornication* I committed'.<sup>116</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter has attempted to map out a new perspective on the political function of concubinage. I suggest that we should view mistresses, and those who managed them, through the lens of political history, which asks for the underlying structural reasons for the emergence of a certain phenomenon, as well as its political implications. In order to achieve this, I have suggested adapting some of the findings on male favourites and extending them to include the female favourite. This can be done meaningfully, since a female favourite's function and political position was not sharply distinguished from those of male favourites. They, too, could act as brokers of the regent's favour, and potentially help the male regent to adapt to a political landscape that became increasingly complex, both on the level of bureaucratic administration and political representation. At the same time their position was always precarious because their influence usually was incongruent with their official status and position in the hierarchy of the court. Because of this, female as well as male favourites caused anxiety amongst those involved in the political process, since they unbalanced the God-given political order. Female favourites specifically did this by taking over some of the tasks that were usually accorded to the ruler's consort in the German-speaking lands of the Holy Roman Empire. The case study of Magdalena Möringer has revealed how she helped to manage the duke's sexual reputation and distributed his favour to the women in her care, much as the Duchess Sibylla herself did in other contexts. In pluralising the function of the ducal consort, Duke Friedrich not only satisfied personal desires, but also refocused political attention on himself, rather than letting it rest on the relationship with his wife, as religious and cultural ideals would have demanded. His extramarital relationships

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<sup>116</sup> HStAS Bü 48/02 Bü 3, 'Actis D. Matthaem Entzlin betrff', doc. 109, no date, fol. 11v, 'Endtlich bitt euch: F.G. ich in aller vnderthönigkheit [...], mir alle meine begangene *Ohnzucht* auß F: gnaden miltiglich zuer zeyhen', my emphasis.

must be read in the context of his pursuit of a more authoritarian style of rule. There was only one ruler, but there were several women sharing the tasks of the duchess.

## **Chapter 5: A Flexible Resource. Collaborative Dynastic Labour, Guardians, Regents, and Widows**

The final chapter of this dissertation is concerned with the variability of gender as it operated in its many guises in courtly society. In the previous two chapters we have explored how the normative ideal of the task sharing of the *Landesmutter* and the *Landesvater* could be reconfigured in order to symbolically strengthen the ruler opposite his spouse. The example of the difficult marriage of Sibylla and Friedrich of Württemberg has shown that monogamy did not guarantee dynastic women in Stuttgart (and in Europe) direct access to extensive opportunities for political action. The role of the consort symbolised the fertility, continuity, and care taking upon which dynastic rule was contingent. It could be fulfilled without an extensive stake in the pragmatic decisions of governance, if the consort applied herself to the labour inherent in pregnancies and childcare, as well as in maintaining at least an official version of her relationship with the ruler. This chapter will give an indication of the range of models for how the task sharing of the ruling couple could be organised along gendered lines by focusing on the marriage of the next Duke and Duchess of Württemberg: Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia. I will begin by considering the contracting of their marriage as a moment of important dynastic negotiations. For both of these young princely persons, gender mattered to how their life was imagined in dynastic terms. At this stage of their lives, gender was an important resource that enabled particularly Johann Friedrich to assert some of his wishes opposite his father. His rule of Württemberg eventually proved to be a departure from Friedrich's regime in a variety of ways, not least of which was the extent of his collaboration with other members of the Württemberg dynasty during his reign. Most notably, Barbara Sophia was engaged in the practice of power in ways that had previously been closed to Duchess Sibylla. Once Johann Friedrich passed away, she came to occupy a prominent position in the administration of the territory, whilst her eldest son

Eberhard was still in his adolescence. Next, this chapter will consider actors who belonged to the dynastic family, but who no longer stood in the line of inheritance of the duchy's foremost ruling positions. In particular Johann Friedrich's younger brothers, and the Dowager Duchess Ursula of Nürtingen will figure in this analysis. A comparative view of their contributions and roles within the practice of power will reveal that the meanings attached to gender at times ceased to be relevant in specific dynastic situations. I will argue that this potential for flexibility was part of the reason why gender as an ordering principle was so successful at the early modern court. Whilst gender difference remained a latent resource, which was often drawn on in moments of need in order to represent supposedly timeless natural and divine orders, it did not rigidly dictate who could access the practice of power. Dynasties were always searching for the middle ground between drawing legitimacy from the emphasis on the continuity of the structures of rulership, and the need to remain adaptable to geopolitical challenges and dynastic accidents. The variable applicability of notions of gender difference allowed the dynastic order an extent of flexibility in recruiting capable actors of sufficient rank for the practice of power, and I thus argue that the focus on gender allows us to better understand the durability of dynastic rule in the early modern Holy Roman Empire.

### ***To Marry or not to Marry***

As we have seen, marriage was an essential tool of early modern governance. It was used to create and strengthen alliances and even to acquire new territory. The preparation of an aristocratic marriage was therefore elaborate and contested. Dowries and morning gifts had to be fixed, and the arrangements for widowhood for the bride had to be negotiated. Questions of inheritance also had to be settled, since in the Holy Roman Empire dynastic women could, in principle, inherit lands and titles, though they were most often asked to renounce this right when their marriage

projects were being prepared.<sup>1</sup> The initial probing for a marital alliance could be, and often was, carried out by women.<sup>2</sup> But once both families had signalled their interest in an alliance, males usually took the lead in hammering out the details of the marital contract. The subject of aristocratic marital negotiations and strategies has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years, particularly where the bilateral interactions between the dynastic families about to be joined are concerned.<sup>3</sup> In the following, I would like to focus on two aspects, which have so far not been developed extensively. On the one hand, I will pay specific attention to how gender difference shaped the marriage (-making) of Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia, and what that might have meant for the court as a political entity. On the other hand, I want to draw attention to the ways in which discussions of marriage as a gendered institution could also be a vehicle for the negotiation of governance within a dynastic family.

This latter point emerges quite distinctly from the correspondence of Prince Johann Friedrich with his father Duke Friedrich I of Württemberg. Johann Friedrich felt no urgency to get married while his father was still alive. In fact, father and son exchanged letters on this subject for about a year and a half, from 1606 up until Friedrich's death at the beginning of 1608. Duke Friedrich became increasingly outspoken in his letters, saying that he wished Johann Friedrich to find a wife soon and that he felt his failure to do so needed to be explained to his paternal authority.<sup>4</sup> Friedrich's unrest in this matter reflects that marriage and the practice of power were

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<sup>1</sup> See on this Hurwich, *Noble strategies: marriage and sexuality in the Zimmern Chronicle*, p. 41; Baumann, 'Eheanbahnung und Partnerwahl', p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> On this see Philip Haas and Bengt Büttner, 'Qualia ex repudiis Illustrium infortunia et calamitates! Der Verhandlungsgang dynastischer Ehen der Frühen Neuzeit als Frage Sicherheit' in Horst Carl, Rainer Babel, Christoph Kampmann, eds., *Sicherheitsprobleme im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert – Bedrohungen, Konzepte, Ambivalenzen*, forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance Marra, *Allianzen des Adels*, chapters 3 and 4, pp. 48-104, on alliance strategies for the marriages of the Counts of Bentheim and on princely marriages as 'reciprocal exchanges'; also Schönplüg, *Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern*, chapters 3 and 4, pp. 113-90, on the pool of eligible marriage partners for the Hohenzollern dynasty and on the impact of marriages on foreign policy; also see Margareth Lanzinger, *Aushandeln von Ehe: Heiratsverträge der Neuzeit im europäischen Vergleich* (Köln, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> The letters are located in HStAS G 67 Bü 1.

intimately connected. The current duke wanted his heir to have a suitable bride, in order to prepare him for his duties as future ruler of Württemberg.

In the spring of 1606 Duke Friedrich wrote to Johann Friedrich at the *Collegium Illustre* in Tübingen on several occasions, ‘paternally wishing that you would explain yourself to us if you were willing or not to now enter matrimony’.<sup>5</sup> Friedrich said that he wanted to prepare himself and he wanted to know what to do with the many servants and horses Johann Friedrich kept in his entourage at the academy. In his answer Johann Friedrich insisted that ‘at this time I do not plan to be married: but want to offer this issue up to God the almighty’.<sup>6</sup> At the time of writing, he had only just come of age at twenty-four. Yet, Duke Friedrich reminded his son ‘that among your brothers you [are] the eldest’, and that he would also need to think of the fact that a marriage, even once decided, needed a preparation time of at least half a year.<sup>7</sup> Thus, we are reminded of the paramount importance of the position a person occupied within the familial order, which, particularly amongst the high nobility, was crucial in dictating the parameters within which an actor might decide on his or her personal development.<sup>8</sup> Johann Friedrich was the oldest son and heir, and these categories largely determined his path in life. Nevertheless, he had his own very clear perspective on his prospective nuptials, which revealed some distinct differences to his father’s view of marriage. Johann Friedrich insisted that a princely marriage could not be rushed: ‘In view of the temporal indissoluble union, [...] which no man - good or evil - may retract or dissolve. And this is very important to the

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<sup>5</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, letter from Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, doc. 5, 22 May 1606, fol. 1r, ‘väterlich begeren thun, du wöllest gegen vns dich entlich erkleren, ob du gemeint seyest, oder nicht, dich {nunmehr Inn Ehestand zubegeben/}’.

<sup>6</sup> G 67 Bü 1, letter from Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, doc. 6, 30 May 1606, ‘habe von keiner anderen person als vom dem Geunthaler EG Oberhoffmeister zu Tübingen bekommen: wie EG von dem gnedig zuvernemen.’; ‘noch der zeytt mich zu verheürathen nicht vorhabens: sondern will in diesem fall es Gott dem allmechtigen heimstellen [...]’.

<sup>7</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, doc. 2, 16 April 1606, ‘Nachdem du auch vnder deinen Gebrüdern der Elltiste, vnd nahend dein 24. Jar erreicht, auch ohne das, biß alles zu einem heüradt Inn das werck gerichtet, es sich bald vff ein halbes jar nach verlengern möchte [...]’.

<sup>8</sup> Ruppel, *Verbündete Rivalen: Geschwisterbeziehungen im Hochadel des 17. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 80–2.

princely house into which I was born, as well as not least to my own well-being in this temporal life.’<sup>9</sup>

Besides its permanent nature and potential impact on both the family and the person, Johann Friedrich listed further compelling reasons why he did not feel this was the right time for him to be married. On the one hand he wanted ‘now in the time of my youth much more to seek, learn, to see and to experience, also to step into y[our] g[race’s] and mine praised ancestors’ Christian, memorable footsteps than to let myself be drawn into marriage right now.’<sup>10</sup> On the other hand he also noted that ‘I was never certain of coming into my own place and courtly household, or what y[our] g[race] decided further to do with me, I never knew nor do I know it now’,<sup>11</sup> which he felt also prevented him from even thinking about marriage. Johann Friedrich is feigning ignorance here since Württemberg had actually adopted primogeniture quite early in 1495, when the territory was elevated to a duchy.<sup>12</sup> Yet, that he judged this to be an effective argument nevertheless, highlights that there remained more flexibility in terms of dynastic inheritance structured by aristocratic ‘house laws’ than one might suspect.<sup>13</sup> Friedrich responded to his son’s statements with some astonishment. In his response from 16 April 1606 he scolded his son and said that he was acting as if he had not known that the reason he was being sent to different courts in Germany was exactly that he might find a suitable wife. Furthermore, he stated ‘what further concerns your travels, you have until now experienced enough, [...] and do not be of the opinion that a married lord must

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<sup>9</sup> HStAS, G 67 Bü 1, doc. 3, letter from Johann Friedrich to his father from 21 April 1606, ‘Inbetrachtung, das ertlich vnaufflössliche verbündtnißen daselbsten gesuchte vnd geschlossen werden so kein mensch sey gerathen auch wol, oder vbel *retractieren* oder vflößen kan: Vndt hieran dem ganzen fürstlichen hohen hauß daruon Ich entsprossen, trefflich viel gelegen, auch meiner in diesem zeyttlichen leben, nicht geringste wolhardt darauf bestehet.’, original cursives.

<sup>10</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, doc. 1, 12 April 1606: ‘[...] noch zur zeytt, meiner Jugendt viel mehr ettwas weitters mich zu uersuchen zusehen, lernen, vndt zuerfharen, auch In E.G. vndt meine hochlöblichen Voreltern christseeligen löblicher Gedechtnus füßstapffen zutretten dan also baltt Im heüratten mich In zulassen vndt in den Ehestandt zu begeben’.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, ‘weil ich keines aigenen Orths vndt hoffstatt fürgewissendt jemals gewesen, oder was EG mit mier ferners für zunemmen gnedig entschlossen, nich gewüst, noch aniezo weiß’.

<sup>12</sup> See Peter H. Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793*, (March 1995), p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> On the non-linear development of practices of primogeniture see Hurwich, *Noble strategies: marriage and sexuality in the Zimmern Chronicle*, pp. 36–40.

constantly remain in the house, but he also has the opportunity here and there to travel.<sup>14</sup> In answer to his lack of household, Friedrich stated that he was certainly aware that princely houses did not normally ‘entrust something of his own to a young prince before he is married during the lifetime of his father’.<sup>15</sup>

As the exchange stretched on over another year, the topics of discussion remained largely the same, but it emerges increasingly that Johann Friedrich was beginning to use the situation to impose on his father a discussion about his own preferences for his immediate future, and how that differed from the current practice of power in Württemberg. The young man made repeated appeals to be allowed to travel somewhat more, before his eventual marriage, and Friedrich agreed to a smaller journey to the Netherlands, stipulating merely ‘but that he accept a marriage on his return’.<sup>16</sup> Duke Friedrich, as we have seen, was highly mobile and actually spent relatively little time at court in Stuttgart. In the debate with his son, he was driven to state clearly his view that, even after marriage, it was legitimate for a man of his standing to travel far afield, without the company of his wife.<sup>17</sup> Johann Friedrich was implicitly contesting this view with his continued petitions to be granted more time to travel before committing to a marriage.

His raising of the issue of a proper household and a perspective on his inheritance is also very interesting. In March 1607 Johann Friedrich wrote to his father stating that he was ‘without any knowledge and counsel’ on whom he could marry that would be ‘useful and praiseworthy for the princely dynasty of Württemberg’, and he asked Friedrich to support him with his ‘highly illuminated

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<sup>14</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, doc. 2, 16 April 1606: ‘Was dann dein angezogen ferner Raysen belangen thutt, hastu Inn deinen bishero dergleichen gethanen Raysen genug erfahren, vnd ist jezo an dem, das wir deine Gebrüder nunmehr auch verschicken müßen vnd hatt die meinung nicht, das ein verheüradtete herr stätigs allein der haushüten wartten, vnd nicht bißweilen nach gelegenheit ein Rays fürnemmen sollte [ ...]’.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, ‘das bey den [...] fürstlichen heüsern nicht herkhommen, einem jungen fürsten vor seiner verheüradtung Inn lebzeiten des herrn vatters, etwas eigens einzuvertrauen [...]’.

<sup>16</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, 4 July 1606, doc. 14, quotation from notes in Friedrich’s own hand on back of this document, ‘aber das er zu seiner widerkunfft sich in heuradt ein lasse’.

<sup>17</sup> On this see chapter 4, also compare to Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, p. 92.

reason'.<sup>18</sup> In response Friedrich stated that Johann Friedrich should have found out on his previous travels where eligible young women dwelt in Germany at this time, but that he was certain that 'the most noble princely houses which adhere to the pure confession of Augsburg are at this time Saxony, Brandenburg, Palatine-Neuburg, Braunschweig, Holstein [...], there it should be possible to find princely young women'.<sup>19</sup> Johann Friedrich responded by asking: '[If] I would be married to a young woman from a prince-electors dynasty, would y[our] g[race] then grant me sufficient opportunity to treat and lodge her according to her dignity?'<sup>20</sup> He further stated that 'princes can be found who have a smaller annual income [than me], but they either do not marry, or they marry outside of their estate, but y[our] g[race] would doubtlessly not like to see this and disapprove of it'.<sup>21</sup> He also pointed out that if the family of a potential bride would want to visit, and he could not lodge them properly 'it would cause me to be slandered and other trouble could grow out of it'.<sup>22</sup> We have seen in previous chapters that Duke Friedrich was very selective in his representational spending, and evidently Johann Friedrich felt strongly that he was being given less than was appropriate for a prince and heir.<sup>23</sup>

Friedrich was not pleased by his son's resistance, and he revealed to his favourite councillor, Matthäus Enzlin, and his chamber secretary, Sattler, that he thought Johann Friedrich's personal servants were leading him astray. Suspicion fell in particular on one Johan Hemmer, who was eager to assuage the threat of Friedrich's disfavour by offering to travel to Berlin in order to obtain a likeness of

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<sup>18</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, doc. 46, 17 March 1607, 'ohn vorwissen vndt raht', 'dem fürstlichen stam Württemberg am löblichsten vndt nuzlichsten', 'hocherleuchten Verstand'.

<sup>19</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, doc. 47, 19 March 1607, 'die fürnembste vnsrer Reinen Augspurgischen Confeßion zugewandte fürstliche heüser, Sachse, Brandeburg, Pfalz Neuburg, Braunschweig, Holstein, [...] bey denen fürstliche Frewlin zufünden sein möchten [...]'.  
<sup>20</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, 'zu eines Chur: vnd Fürsten Frewlin mich ver heürathen würde: Ob EG dieselbige dero standt vnd würden nach, zu halten, zu *Tractieren*, vnd zu *Logiren*, mir genugsame gelegenheit verschaffen wolten.', original cursives.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 'ob wol mehr Fürsten zu finden, so geringer Jharliche einkommen haben, so pflegen aber dieselben sich entweder nicht, oder geringer ständen zu verheürathen: Welches EG zweiffels ohne nicht gern sehen vndt dulden würden.'

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 'darauß dan mir schimpfflich nach geredt werden, auch ettwan viellerley vngelegenheyten zuuer wachsen könnte'.

<sup>23</sup> See chapter 4, esp. pp. 153-5.

Barbara Sophia.<sup>24</sup> Hemmer gave Johann Friedrich a false pretence for his travel abroad, and thus showed that his real loyalty was directed to the ruler in Stuttgart and not the lord he served at the academy in Tübingen.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of Hemmer's covert actions, Johann Friedrich was perhaps not yet aware, in the spring of 1607, that the negotiations of his father and his councillors had started to hone in on Barbara Sophia of Brandenburg, and that they had already sent out an informal envoy to Berlin. Nevertheless, he remained acutely aware of the importance of his position as eldest son, as he continued to press his father on the issue of his maintenance. In late April he began to hint that he would consent to a marriage, if 'I saw the princely lady in my own person and conversed with her', since 'the princely house of Württemberg has not a small interest [in my marriage]'.<sup>26</sup> In what follows, Johann Friedrich began to launch concrete negotiations for his provision after his marriage, which entailed pragmatic discussions about the assignment of territory and subjects to him in his function as an incumbent heir. Friedrich wanted him to establish his potential courtly household in Neuenstadt, but Johann Friedrich found that this was impossible for several reasons.

The proposed apartments are very near the houses of the citizens [...] and moreover at the intended house there is no opportunity for me to ride, and to practise running at the ring and similar pursuits. Besides, the stables there are very bad for noble horses. Also there is no room for a ball house [...] and in the same way for a wife, who is used to restore herself in pleasure gardens with her *Frauenzimmer*, there is no opportunity in Neuenstadt, but it is a necessity, particularly in such cramped quarters [...] that young princes and princesses can find their respective pleasures in one or the other in order to maintain a healthy body and to avoid *melancholia*.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See HStAS, Hemmer to Duke Friedrich, 12 April 1607, doc. 52, this is most likely the same Johann Hemmer who came to be appointed as a non-noble privy councillor in 1609 and served up until his death in 1609, see Pfeilsticker, *Neues württembergisches Dienerbuch*, vol. I, § 1145 (though Pfeilsticker spells his name as "Hemer").

<sup>25</sup> HStAS, Hemmer to Johann Sattler, doc. 56, 19 April 1607, Hemmer gives details of what provisions he would need for his journey and he informs Sattler that he will merely leave a note for Johann Friedrich explaining that his services were needed elsewhere.

<sup>26</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, doc. 58, 23 April 1607, fol.1v, 'fürstliche Frewlein in eigner person selbstem gesehen vndt mit deren conuersirt haben würde', 'meinem heurath (daran dan dem fürstlichen Stammen Württemberg nicht wenig gelegen) [...]'.  
<sup>27</sup> Ibid, fol. 2v, 'gedachte wonung in vndt an dern Bürgerlichen heüßern gar nahe ligt, [...] Nachdem ist an gedachtem haußen keine gelegenheyyt gemacht, da mich mit Reytten, Ringrennen, vndt

Johann Friedrich here interweaves in his argumentation the categories of age and gender with perceptions of the princely body.<sup>28</sup> The gendered body here becomes a compelling argument in these intra-dynastic negotiations.<sup>29</sup> To push things further, Johann Friedrich further stated that ‘a young prince-electress would hardly accept such a place and be content with it’.<sup>30</sup> Once again, he used the perspective of being married to a woman of high rank in order to impose on his father the demand for a more representational courtly household. His implications were clear: if he and his wife were not able to pursue their princely interests, their health would be impacted negatively. This would void the original purpose of their marriage, which was of course to ensure the continuation of the dynasty. Friedrich did not agree, and he pointed out that Neuenstadt was perfectly suitable for a prince who was not yet ruling in his own right. Nevertheless, he took a step towards Johann Friedrich, and offered him Brackenheim, in addition to the four departments that were already being offered to him.

Johann Friedrich here asked to see his father in person to discuss the issue, but Friedrich told him that he was unable to receive him, as he was on his way to a bathing cure. Instead, Johann Friedrich petitioned him by letter that he would prefer Sachsenheim as a residence, since ‘for a young person like me, it is more pleasurable

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dergleichen sonderes weitters zeyt exerciren könte. Darneben Ist für vornehmme pferde die stallung daselbsten gar schlecht. So ist auch für ein Balhauß vndt andere Übungen kein füglichlicher Platz daselbsten. Gleicher gestalt einer Gehmahlin halben, so aller Örten in Lustgärten mit dero Frawenzimmer zu weillen sich zu *recreiren* gewohnt, hatt es zue Newstatt kein bequempung: doch will es die Notturfft an solchen Engen [...] das junge fürsten vndt fürstinnen zuerhaltung leybsgesundt heytt vndt vermeidung *Melancholia* Ire *respectiue* belustigung in einem oder anderen haben.’, original cursives.

<sup>28</sup> Contemporaries believed that life at court harboured many threats to the bodily health, since the six Galenic ‘non-naturals’ did not occur in a beneficial balance in this setting. Food was often too rich, the air too confined, and emotions ran too high, which did not make for healthy living. For an overview of this topic see Werner Friedrich Kümmel, ‘De Morbis Aulicis: On Diseases Found at Court’, in Vivian Nutton, ed., *Medicine at the courts of Europe, 1500-1837* (London ; New York, 1990), pp. 15–48.

<sup>29</sup> Johann Friedrich’s assumption that melancholia was as likely to befall him as his potential wife confirms Claudia Opitz’s arguments on the complex (de-)gendering of this affliction. See Claudia Opitz, ‘Männliche Melancholie?: Krankheit, Körper und Geschlecht in der Renaissance’, in Franziska Frei Gerlach, Annette Kreis-Schinck, Claudia Opitz, and Béatrice Ziegler, eds., *Körperkonzepte / Concepts du corps* (Münster, 2003), pp. 167–178.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 3v, ‘Chur: od. fürstliches Frewlin schwerlichen ein solches Ort sich fügen lassen vnd damit vorlieb nemmen wollen’.

and the place is located not far away'.<sup>31</sup> Sachsenheim was situated only about thirty kilometres from Stuttgart. A residence in this proximity would have made it much simpler for Johann Friedrich to be present at court regularly than if he had taken up lodgings in Neuenstadt, which lies at more than double this distance. The importance of physical presence at court in order to maintain a stake in the practice of power is now well known to historians of early modern court society, and it makes perfect sense that the young prince would have borne this in mind during these negotiations.<sup>32</sup>

Friedrich remained non-committal on this point, and in June he sent his son Barbara Sophia's likeness, instructing him to consider it, and to finally decide if he was going to get married. In the following, Johann Friedrich appealed to Friedrich's memory of his own courtship, 'Y[our] G[race] will paternally remember that one cannot count on likenesses and one can judge much better from one's proper gaze and conversation'.<sup>33</sup> Johann Friedrich then began to plan his journey to Brandenburg, and in the coming months he asked Friedrich for money for new clothes for himself and his pages. He also wrote letters discussing his entourage for the journey, proposing that Friedrich give him a physician to take along, as in the end that would be cheaper than if he used a doctor elsewhere on his journey.<sup>34</sup> Johann Friedrich, in this prolonged interaction with his father, built on his claim that he 'was never certain of coming into my own place and courtly household',<sup>35</sup> by insisting continuously that if Friedrich wanted to make a successor out of him, he would have to treat him accordingly. To him this meant being housed in a representational courtly household that offered specific amenities for him and his prospective wife, and that allowed him to maintain active links with the court of Stuttgart. The

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<sup>31</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, 16 May 1607, doc. 66, 'weil das hauß Sachsenheimb vor ein jungen person, als Ich ettwas lustiger vndt das Ort in aller Nähe gelegen'.

<sup>32</sup> Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider: Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reiches*, pp. 299-305; Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, pp. 258-61.

<sup>33</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, 28 July 1607, 'werden sich EG vätterlich zuerinnern wissen, das vf Conterfacter nicht zugehen, vndt man auß eingehenem augenschein vndt Conversation viell besser mag judiciren [...]'.  
<sup>34</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, 8 August 1607, doc. 85.

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 11.

exchange shows how decisions on marriage-making, which are often assumed to be the prerogative of the head of the dynasty,<sup>36</sup> could also provide an opportunity for an incumbent heir to test the boundaries of family hierarchy and to create a discussion about the practicalities of inheritance and his own role in the practice of power. The distribution of competencies and decision-making power within the dynastic family was constantly being renegotiated across generations.

Johann Friedrich used references to gendered conceptions of aristocratic marital life, as well as to his age and rank, to bolster his position in the negotiations. Although we must assume that he was using these arguments with his own best interests in mind, we have no reason to doubt him when he insisted that these discussions were likely to have a long-lasting impact. As he confessed to his father, he could not imagine living in Neuenstadt for ‘20, 30 or more years [...] (since I ask God every day for a long life for Y[our] fatherly Grace)’.<sup>37</sup> Friedrich was only fifty years old, and since he only rarely saw Johann Friedrich and told him nothing in his letters of his health, it was plausible for his son to claim that he thought he would have to wait for his inheritance for a long time to come.<sup>38</sup> For the time being, he presented it as his primary duty to make sure that he and his prospective wife oversaw a household that was indicative of their rank, and that would allow them to maintain healthy bodies through the pursuit of gender-specific princely exercise. Moreover, Johann Friedrich’s potential married life was throughout imagined as being a clear precondition to his becoming the heir of the duchy. On this point Friedrich and his son agreed. The act of acceding to a position of power over the territory was not imagined as based on a lonely masculine figure. Rather, it was a task for a married couple of rank, who could effectively stage the divine order of

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<sup>36</sup> This view is put forward for instance in Schönplugh, *Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern*, p. 71f.

<sup>37</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich to Friedrich, 23 April 1607, doc. 58, fol. 4v, ‘20, 30, oder mehr Jhar [...] (wie dan Gott vmb E vätterliche Gnaden langes leben täglich bitte)’.

<sup>38</sup> See Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, p. 301, who finds that Friedrich was ill with a kidney disease and health problems for all of 1607, and perhaps even for longer. He never mentioned these problems in his correspondence with Johann Friedrich.

gender and household in order to create legitimacy.<sup>39</sup> Marriage has often been described as the ultimate coming-of-age ritual of early modern Europe.<sup>40</sup> This was just as valid for male princes and heirs as it was for artisans and peasants, though, among the high nobility, the symbolic and actual power of this gendered union was heightened since it stood at the gateway to territorial governance. When marriage was being discussed, constructions of gender difference were crucial to the way the dynastic actors concerned were imagined in relation to the practice of power, but the impact of such constructions cannot be dissolved into simple binaries. Johann Friedrich proposed a view of adulthood where gender difference and its representational manifestations were embedded in the lived reality of married life, which already in its early design differed from Friedrich's view of how a married prince should comport himself.

The finalisation of the match between Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia was not to be realised until November 1609. It was delayed by Friedrich's death in January 1608, and, subsequently, by the death of Barbara Sophia's own father, the prince-electors Joachim Friedrich of Brandenburg in July of that same year. After his father's death, even Johann Friedrich began to be visibly interested in the efficient organisation of his nuptials. In the early days of September 1608 he sounded somewhat impatient when he instructed his court marshal to go to Brandenburg and report to him, via one of his own messengers, when the funerary rites for the late prince-electors were finally going ahead, since until then he could not continue his courtship.<sup>41</sup>

In the meantime, Johann Friedrich did not enjoy a gradual ascension to power, which would have allowed him to get used to his governing duties while his

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<sup>39</sup> See chapters 1 and 3; see also Anna Becker, "'Antike' und 'Mittelalter' in der politischen Philosophie der 'Renaissance': Gender als Markierung zwischen Kontinuität und Wandel", *L'Homme*, 25 (2014), pp. 15–32, here esp. p. 31, who also makes use of the 'tracer concept' of Mommertz, and who argues that in Florentine Humanism the political engagement of a citizen of the republic was always seen in relation to his role in the household.

<sup>40</sup> See for instance: Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and love in England 1300-1840* (1986), esp. chs. 7 and 13; Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England. Honour, Sex and Marriage* (London, 1999), esp. pp. 39, 104.

<sup>41</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, doc. 122, 3 September 1608.

father was still alive. Rather, he saw himself thrust into the business of governance at a time when strong leadership was desperately needed in Württemberg. In the early months of 1608 it became clear that the Imperial Diet in Regensburg would fail, and all territorial rulers had to decide how they would react to the upheavals in the Empire.<sup>42</sup> Johann Friedrich found himself at a cross roads where he had to choose between loyalty to a Catholic emperor toying increasingly with firmer Counter-Reformation measures, and the loyalties dictated to him by his Protestant faith. He could now either work to maintain alliances and keep up the status quo, as his conservative councillor, Melchior Jäger, most likely advised him to, or he could openly support the Evangelical cause and become a member of the Protestant Union.<sup>43</sup> In this trying time, Johann Friedrich must have felt acutely the need to complete his courtly household with a wife whose symbolic and actual labour would contribute towards the stabilisation of his lineage and thus the entire territory of Württemberg. In the current foreign political situation the duke would have appreciated the importance of good alliances more than ever, and the match with Protestant Brandenburg and future Union ally was strategically interesting.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, I want to direct attention to the marital contract and agreements that were made in advance of the union between Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia. The framework of marriage negotiations and contracts has been discussed in detail elsewhere,<sup>45</sup> but it does seem pertinent to reflect on what these documents reveal about the ideally imagined task sharing between the spouses, and about how marriage as a gendered institution fitted into the practice of governance.

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<sup>42</sup> Parker, *The Thirty Years' War*, p. 24.

<sup>43</sup> On the different interest groups at the court of Stuttgart in 1608 see Axel Gotthard, *Konfession und Staatsräson: Die Außenpolitik Württembergs unter Herzog Johann Friedrich (1608 - 1628)*, pp. 19–23.

<sup>44</sup> It is curious that the authoritative study on Johann Friedrich's foreign policy does not mention the negotiations for his marriage. See Gotthard, *Konfession und Staatsräson: die Außenpolitik Württembergs unter Herzog Johann Friedrich (1608 - 1628)*.

<sup>45</sup> Karl-Heinz Spieß, *Familie und Verwandtschaft im deutschen Hochadel des Spätmittelalters: 13. bis Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts*, revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Stuttgart, 1993) is very useful for an introduction to the topic; For more recent, specific consideration of the early modern period see Baumann, 'Eheanbahnung und Partnerwahl', pp. 50-70 on marriage contracts in the early modern period; as well as Marra, *Allianzen des Adels*, pp. 72-104 on the multi-level exchange between dynastic families in the event of a marriage.

Historiography today stresses that contracting a noble marriage created a union through the notion of reciprocity of giving.<sup>46</sup> In the empire, dowries were fixed at comparably low rates that were adjusted according to the status of the families involved in a specific marriage project. This means that marriages were usually not conducted for financial gain among the nobility, which is a marked difference to the situation in England. Quantitative studies have shown that this premise appears to have led to a situation in which daughters tended to marry suitors of equal or of lower status, while it was more common for men to marry ‘upwards’.<sup>47</sup> The exchange of immaterial goods was as significant as the exchange of material wealth. The different stages of marriage-making and the different payments of dowry, jointure (*Widerlage*), and morning gift (*Morgengabe*) created a complex, multi-stage process of giving and receiving, which brought about intensive points of contact between the families.<sup>48</sup> While the process was certainly gendered, in the sense that the marriage of a daughter demanded different considerations from the match of a son for his or her family, some historians have to my mind been too literal in the adaption of Mauss's gift-giving theory. Schönplug, for instance, argues that the family who were giving up a daughter stood, *per se*, at a disadvantage. Therefore, they had to compensate for this by negotiating political favours for them, gaining in prestige, or perhaps even negotiating another marriage ‘in the other direction’ with the same family. He argues accordingly: ‘The exchanged daughter had little to gain. She was the object of the exchange, not a partner thereof.’<sup>49</sup> It does not seem useful to me to minimise the agency of the bride to such an extent, particularly because this narrow view readily eclipses the fact that, after the wedding, brides often came to be very active dynastic players, who could provide distinct advantages to both their new family and their dynasty of origin. For instance, married women could be valuable informants for their families of origin, and later on in life they often administrated

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<sup>46</sup> Specifically in Marra, *Allianzen des Adels*, pp. 72-104.

<sup>47</sup> As is shown by Judith J. Hurwich, ‘Marriage Strategy among the German Nobility, 1400–1699’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 29 (October 1998), pp. 169–195, here p. 194.

<sup>48</sup> See Marra, *Allianzen des Adels*, pp. 103f.

<sup>49</sup> Schönplug, *Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern*, p. 108.

their widow's seats to the betterment of the patrimony into which they had married.<sup>50</sup> There is also evidence, however, that it was possible for dynastic women to have a distinct influence on marriage-making. Stephanie Marra reports on the case of Anna von Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg (the half-sister of Anna Sabina, who married Julius Friedrich of Württemberg in 1617), who was married to a Count of Ostfriesland in the late sixteenth century. During the negotiations for the match, she withheld her signature from her renunciation of her parental inheritance because she felt that the dowry promised to her was inadequate.<sup>51</sup> Since her father was already too far along the negotiations to withdraw without losing face, he eventually had to accept her conditions in order to obtain her signature. Anna used what was meant to be a mere formality as leverage to attain her own objectives. This highlights simultaneously the price of ambiguous legislation regarding gendered inheritance, as well as the possible advantages assertive actors could draw from this openness.

The marital contract written jointly by Johann Sigismund of Brandenburg and Johann Friedrich concerning his marriage with Barbara Sophia stipulates a dowry of 20,000 gulden, which was to be matched by Johann Friedrich in the form of his *Wiederlegung*. On top of this, Johann Friedrich agreed to give Barbara Sophia a morning gift of 4000 gulden, and to allocate her 400 gulden as 'needle money' every year, which she could spend for her own needs.<sup>52</sup> All of this was concluded on the first three pages of a sixteen-page document. The most substantial part of the contract was the discussion of Barbara Sophia's provisions for widowhood. Johann

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<sup>50</sup> These roles of married dynastic women will be discussed below. Also see on this point Pauline Puppel, 'Das Prinzip der Subsidiarität: Die Herrschaft der verwitweten Fürstinnen von Nassau-Diez(-Oranien)', in Ulrike Ilg, ed., *Fürstliche Witwen in der Frühen Neuzeit: zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte eines Standes* (Petersberg, 2015), pp. 14–26, here esp. p. 21.

<sup>51</sup> See on this case Marra, *Allianzen des Adels*, p. 97; Such 'Erbverzichtserklärungen' were standard practice for marital contracts among the German aristocracy. Dynastic women had to sign them in order to renounce any future claim on territorial holdings of their family of origin. See Baumann, 'Eheanbahnung und Partnerwahl', p. 53; Marra, *Allianzen des Adels: dynastisches Handeln im Grafenhaus Bentheim im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, p. 97-9; Ruppel, *Verbündete Rivalen: Geschwisterbeziehungen im Hochadel des 17. Jahrhunderts*, p. 211f.

<sup>52</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich and Johann Sigismund of Brandenburg, doc. 130, fol. 4r; Schönplflug, *Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern: Verwandtschaft, Politik und Ritual in Europa 1640-1918*, p. 108, suggests that 'Nadelgelder' were allocated for 'everyday expenses such as clothing' ('laufende Kosten, etwa für Kleidung'), for Stuttgart I have not been able to determine with more precision what these monies were used for.

Friedrich decided to give her the city and department of Brackenheim as a widow's seat. The idea was that Brackenheim should create a revenue for her that came to '10 out of every 100 Gulden of Heyrathsgut', which, including the yearly allocation, would come to 4,400 gulden a year.<sup>53</sup> The administration of Brackenheim was laid out in some detail. The marriage contract specified exactly how many deer the residence was owed annually by the ducal heirs. Barbara Sophia would be responsible for the general maintenance of the castle, although larger repairs would have to be under taken by Stuttgart. Moreover, Barbara Sophia was to be allowed to hunt 'for her household and pleasure [...] does, rabbits, foxes, forest birds and woodhens'.<sup>54</sup> The omission of stags is noteworthy, since, as we have seen in previous instances, the dukes often prided themselves on successful stag hunts, thus emphasising the masculine connotation of the hunting of male deer. On many occasions the marital contract made reference to the future heirs of the couple: 'the marital heirs begotten of both our bloods', usually specifying that they would receive monies intended for Barbara Sophia, should she die early. If she died without heirs, her dowry would be paid back to Brandenburg.

The vision of marriage laid out in this document is one of a union in service to the connection between the two families and to the reproduction of the Württemberg dynasty. Both individuals in the union were charged with reproduction, as the reference to both their bloods indicates. Widowhood was not only a latent possibility, but a minutely planned expectation. For the bride the documents thus spelled out several life stages. First she was to create heirs and live in good community with her husband. Then she was to go to Brackenheim and administer the territory according to the guidelines agreed upon in the contract. The document stated that all *Ambtleute* and subjects of Brackenheim were to swear oaths of loyalty to her, and she would gain, for instance, the power to appoint priests of her own choosing, as and when a fief (*Lehen*) became available. On the other hand, she would

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<sup>53</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich and Johann Sigismund of Brandenburg, doc. 130, fol. 4v.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., fol. 8v, 'zue dero haußhaltung vnnd lustbarkhait [...] Rehen, Hasen, Füchs, Waldtvögell vnnd Valdthüener'.

not be able to try *Malefizsachen* in the courts in Brackenheim. The agreement anticipated the possibility of Johann Friedrich's passing before any of their children had reached majority. The document stated clearly that, in this case, Barbara Sophia would retain the charge of the education of any daughters, 'but not for the young lords, nor should she have any dealings with the land or the regency or be a co-guardian, unless we Duke Johann Friedrich make other stipulations in our will or in a disposition'.<sup>55</sup> By default she was not to have any power in the delicate period of succession from one duke to the next, unless her husband later decided that he trusted her with this crucial task (which indeed came to pass). This is one of the rare instances in the dynastic system where influence on the practice of power could formally be made dependent on personal preference and capability, rather than on rank, gender, and age alone. Since this asymmetrical form of meritocracy was fundamentally gendered, it is notable for this analysis and will be discussed further below.

Furthermore, it also seems striking to me that while there are quite concrete provisions as to how Barbara Sophia was to comport herself as a dynastic actor after Johann Friedrich's death, this marital contract (and marital contracts in general) stated nothing on this point for the lifetime of their husbands. All other people of noble descent recruited to take up an office at court received notes on what their duties were in the form of court ordinances or instructions. Even male rulers were given extensive written advice on how their roles should be constituted in the popular and extensive *Fürstenspiegel* literature. Only the female consort received no such formal guidelines.<sup>56</sup> It could be argued that custom dictated sufficiently the place of ruling women in the practice of power, thus making written statements in court orders obsolete. I argue, however, that this omission created a flexibility that could serve to accommodate the individual requirements and visions of the couple. Whilst

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<sup>55</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 1, Johann Friedrich and Johann Sigismund of Brandenburg, doc. 130, fol. 10r, 'aber nit der Jungen Herren, noch Landts, oder Regiments hendel, betreffen, alß ein Mitvormünderin zuegelaßen werden soll, Es wehre dann, daß wihr Herzog Johan Friedrich durch ein Testament oder sondere Disposition andere verordnung [machen]'.

<sup>56</sup> See also Duindam, *Dynasties*, p. 87 who notes that the scarcity of advice literature for dynastic women was a global phenomenon.

Duke Friedrich I avoided active collaboration with his wife Sibylla, and at times even sought to undermine her standing as the second half of the ruling couple, Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia chose a different approach, as shall be seen in the second part of this chapter. In this way, the gendered allocation of roles in the practice of power of a ruling family was an important resource, as its malleability permitted individual couples to make allowances for subjective capabilities.<sup>57</sup> Broadly speaking, individual women held less sway over how tasks within the practice of power were allocated than individual ruling men, but gender difference was a resource of rule neither of them could do without.

### ***Joint Rule***

This second part of this chapter will focus on the lived marriage of Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia, and will in particular pay attention to their collaboration and task sharing according to and beyond gendered notions of difference. The surviving correspondences of these actors will be drawn on where possible, but they have been decimated decisively over the centuries, and unfortunately none of the letters between the couple has survived to my knowledge. Fortunately, however, we do possess a handful of diaries written by Johann Friedrich, which will be very useful to guide us on this subject.<sup>58</sup> Johann Friedrich made frequent but short entries in his diaries. He wrote almost every day, but the handwriting suggests that he often wrote a series of entries for a number of days in one sitting, instead of writing daily.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the entries were brief, and past historians have dismissed the diaries as being of little or no political value. Clearly, they were puzzled by the fact that Johann Friedrich barely commented directly on the dramatic political upheavals he was

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<sup>57</sup> See also chapter 3 for the consequences of this organisation of task-sharing.

<sup>58</sup> The diaries are edited. See Ingrid Hanack, *Die Tagebücher des Herzogs Johann Friedrich von Württemberg aus den Jahren 1615-1617: Edition, Kommentar, Versuch einer Studie*, (Göppingen, 1972).

<sup>59</sup> The originals are located in the rare books department of the WLB under the signature Cod. Hist. 8° a/b. In the following I use the Hanack edition, but the folio numbers given correspond to the originals.

witnessing at the time of writing.<sup>60</sup> Rather, he used the diaries to keep track of what we might view as more trivial matters, such as his hunting excursions, letters he wrote or received, which family members came to court and when, which foreign dignitaries he received, and what gifts they brought him, as well as how his horse-breeding endeavours were advancing, and what *divertissements* were being planned at his court. Ingrid Hanack attempted to save these diaries from oblivion in the 1970s by editing three of the volumes covering the years 1615 to 1617, and using them as a basis for some reflections upon their worth as sources for cultural history, which is undeniable.<sup>61</sup> In view of current research on court societies the diaries are likely to attract renewed attention, since they give a rich insight into dynastic networks.

It is certain that we will not find painstaking introspections of a duke trying to make sense of the belligerent and unsettling times his rule bore witness to, but we can observe someone engaging in a social practice of self-narrative.<sup>62</sup> Johann Friedrich's concern with the people physically present at court, as well as the people writing to him from other locations, must be taken seriously as an effort to narrate the texture and dynamics of his social networks. From a major study on Johann Friedrich's foreign policy, we know that, during the years covered in the diaries edited by Hanack, the duke was more interested in diplomatic rather than military solutions.<sup>63</sup> Later, in 1619, he unexpectedly proposed to lead an army on behalf of the Protestant Union and backed up his promise one year later. At the time, the majority of his councillors argued against this undertaking, and certainly the estates were opposed to becoming actively involved in the war effort.<sup>64</sup> Axel Gotthard, who analysed Johann Friedrich's foreign policy, is deeply surprised at this sudden decision, arguing that the only plausible explanation he sees would be in the

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<sup>60</sup> Hanack, *Die Tagebücher des Herzogs Johann Friedrich*, 'Einleitung', pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>61</sup> As argues *ibid.*, p. ix.

<sup>62</sup> In the sense of Gabriele Jancke, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis: Beziehungskonzepte in Selbstzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Köln, 2002), pp. 211-5, who argues that self-narratives of the early modern period were written with social goals in mind, rather than as explorations of the self. Authors wrote in service of their offspring and the legacy of their family, as well as in order to situate themselves within social networks.

<sup>63</sup> See Gotthard, *Konfession und Staatsräson: die Außenpolitik Württembergs unter Herzog Johann Friedrich (1608 - 1628)*.

<sup>64</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 275 and 320.

‘chivalrous, romantic “unpolitical” view of the military’ that Johann Friedrich allegedly held.<sup>65</sup> While Johann Friedrich’s decisive change of mind remains astonishing, I would argue that from a gender perspective his decision appears less surprising. In the diary mentioned, he meticulously noted the many instances in which he, one of his princely siblings, or a court official organised a shooting competition, a running at the ring, or when he had been successful hunting.<sup>66</sup> While these activities do not fall strictly into the military domain, it is clear that, in the courtly context, they were thought of both as occasions of sociability and opportunities for the practice of warfare, which was regarded as a one of the primary identifiers of male high nobility.<sup>67</sup> Hence, Johann Friedrich’s decision to engage in war might to him not have appeared to be such a departure, since all his life he would have assumed that his extensive training in horse- and marksmanship was, at least in part, a preparation for the test of the battle field. His own words add to this view, for in response to his doubtful councillors, he wrote that he had the correctly ‘regulated body’ (*denominationem corporis*) in order to pursue his proposed actions.<sup>68</sup> In this, he referred to his noble male body that was predestined for warfare, and which came to be prepared and actively gendered for this occasion through his lifelong participation in combat sports.<sup>69</sup> While this does not explain why it was at this exact point that he felt the time had come for his own military action, it adds to our understanding of Johann Friedrich as a person, if we think of him as someone who always felt that his rank’ and gender were to some degree interlinked with military action.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 275, ‘Erklärbar ist der Wunsch des Herzogs wohl nur aus jener chevaleresk-romantischen, ‘unpolitischen’ Sicht des Militärischen.’, my own translation.

<sup>66</sup> See also chapter 2, pp. 97f.

<sup>67</sup> On this see for instance the work of Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Triumphhall shews*, pp. 15–28.

<sup>68</sup> HStAS A 90A, tom. 29, ‘Resolution’ from Johann Friedrich, 31 July 1630, fols. 170rv, ‘mit einer solchen dispositionem corporis [...] [und] courage gesegnet’, cited in Gotthard, *Konfession und Staatsräson: die Außenpolitik Württembergs unter Herzog Johann Friedrich (1608 - 1628)*, pp. 320f.

<sup>69</sup> Also see pp. 207f. of this chapter, as well as chapter 2, pp. 97f.

<sup>70</sup> Also see Georg Schmidt, ‘Voraussetzung oder Legitimation? Kriegsdienst und Adel im Dreissigjährigen Krieg’, in Otto Gerhard Oexle and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Nobilitas. Funktion und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa* (Göttingen, 1997), pp. 431–452, who shows that in the Thirty Years’ War the positions of officers and generals were nearly without fail allocated to landed nobility.

Furthermore, his self-narrative lets him emerge as a ruler intensely aware of his position at the centre of a complex network of powerful dynastic kin by blood or by marriage. Judging by this text, as well as other traces left by him, it appears that he treated this interconnectedness as a resource to be mobilised, rather than as an obstacle to be overcome (as had, at times, his father). Therefore, his diaries are an ideal source for my analysis of the work system that was the practice of ducal power, in order to find out how it distributed tasks and how far these were allocated along gendered lines.

Let us now turn to the diary and its treatment of ducal travels. The visiting of foreign courts and territories by a prince, a king, or even a duke was a highly visible practice of power. It could be a moment to reinforce hierarchies through the performance of the elaborate ceremonial welcoming of the ruler, and thus was crucial to the upkeep of international diplomatic hierarchies and relations. Indeed, Johann Friedrich keenly noted in his diaries with how many horses he was received by the individual counts or dukes he was visiting. In this time of increasing potential for religious and political conflict, travel by the duke himself was an important moment to create and maintain alliances, and to gain information about the political views and leanings of allies and friends. Furthermore, such visits were necessary in order to cement and create more family alliances through the instigation of marriage projects. As we know from Johann Friedrich's correspondence with his father, he enjoyed his mobility as a young man, and so it is unsurprising that he embraced the advantages of keeping his court mobile once he was in power. Although Duke Friedrich travelled very often, within as well as outside the frontiers of his own territory, his son's approach to travel was rather different. For, when he travelled, he either remained in very close contact with his wife at court, exchanging letters with her several times a week, or alternatively she accompanied him with her female entourage.<sup>71</sup> Occasionally a third option came into play: the duke and duchess might

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According to Schmidt, these men held the advantage that others viewed them as predestined to lead because of their birth, though he stops short of problematising their gender.

<sup>71</sup> See for instance Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fols. 51v-74v, from September to November 1615. Johann Friedrich travelled to Freudenstadt, Mömpelgard, Strasbourg, and as far as Clermont and

leave Stuttgart at the same time or with only a few days between their departures, then they would hold to travel routes in each other's vicinity, even combining their courtly households in selected locations where they were being hosted by counts and princes.<sup>72</sup> In 1615, the Protestant Union was facing its biggest internal struggle to date in the form of the crisis of succession of Jülich-Cleve. Both Barbara Sophia's brother, the prince-elect of Brandenburg, as well as Neuburg, laid claims to the territory, and it was next to impossible to find a solution. As a result, Spanish troops entered the scene supporting Neuburg in 1614, and they immediately faced off against Dutch troops already present. Both James I and Marie de Medici found themselves drawn into mediation of the dispute. In the end, the territories were divided between the claimants, but neither of them went away satisfied. The Union felt the repercussions of this conflict for several years to come, but most immediate was the division between the territories and the cities. The cities had refused to go to war on Brandenburg's behalf. Brandenburg was, of course, not pleased about this, but it was well aware that it was not in a position to impose its will on other members of the Union. For Brandenburg, as well as Württemberg and other territories, was behind in its Union payments, whilst the cities were in sound financial shape.<sup>73</sup> The heterogeneous nature of the motives of the Union members thus came to the fore, as did their financial weaknesses.

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Mandeur in order to discuss with the parliament of Dôle a dispute about the claim to lands in the border region between Burgundy and the Württemberg left-Rhine territories (on this see Gotthard, *Konfession und Statsräson*, pp. 325-7). During this time he received and wrote letters to his wife at least once a week, perhaps more, as at times Johann Friedrich did not specify his correspondence more clearly than stating that he had received correspondence from Stuttgart. Further see fols. 203v-211v, when Johann Friedrich travelled to Heilbronn for a meeting with the princely members of the Protestant Union during the first two weeks of April 1617. During this relatively short absence, Johann Friedrich referred to having received or written or received letters to or from his wife or his sisters on thirteen different occasions. Five of these references referred specifically to correspondence with his spouse, and during the same two weeks he mentioned the receipt of only two letters from male relatives.; Also see fols. 113v-115r, for Johann Friedrich's diary entries relating to a short trip to Urach and its surroundings with his wife in April 1616 .

<sup>72</sup> See for instance Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fols. 18v-34r; 285r-286r.

<sup>73</sup> Parker, *The Thirty Years' War*, p. 35f.

Although Johann Friedrich was a committed member of the Protestant Union, this was not the first insecurity he felt within the alliance.<sup>74</sup> It is certain that at this point in time he and his advisors would have reflected on whom they could really count for support beyond the boundaries of Württemberg.<sup>75</sup> We must view Johann Friedrich's diary entries of May and June 1615 in this context. Towards the end of the month, he had received a group of representatives from Schaffhausen, a Protestant city in the Swiss Confederacy, not far from the Southern borders of Württemberg. He was pleased with the gifts and the wine they brought, and decided to follow their invitation immediately. On the first of June he set off for Schaffhausen: 'on the road we were met by the mayor and the councillors [...] and they led me and my beloved brothers to the fall of the Rhine and as far as the city, and at the same time the *Frauenzimmer* made its way to the lord of Pappenheim in Engen.'<sup>76</sup> The Lords of Pappenheim were an old German noble family, who since the time of the Golden Bull had held the office of the *Reichserbmarschall* for the emperor.<sup>77</sup> On 2 June 'after the [substantiation] of honour sufficed', Johann Friedrich rode to meet his wife in Engen, while his brother travelled to Zurich 'to see the city'. Soon, the news reached Johann Friedrich that the Margrave of Anspach with his spouse wished to visit him, and hence he immediately left with the post towards Stuttgart. The *Frauenzimmer* travelled onwards to Tuttlingen, Balingen and Tübingen before arriving in Stuttgart several days after Johann Friedrich.<sup>78</sup> The travel routes of the duke and the duchess were most certainly coordinated. Hence, I

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<sup>74</sup> See on this Axel Gotthard, 'Norm und Kalkül. Über Württemberg, Baden und die Union von Auhausen', in Albrecht Ernst and Anton Schindling, eds., *Union und Liga 1608/09: konfessionelle Bündnisse im Reich - Weichenstellung zum Religionskrieg?* (Stuttgart, 2010), pp. 29–61, esp. 45–7, in 1610 Union troops fell into Alsace without Johann Friedrich's knowledge, the action had been decided by only three of the leaders: Landgrave Moritz von Hessen-Kassel, and the Margraves of Anspach Joachim Ernst and Georg Friedrich of Baden .

<sup>75</sup> See also *ibid.* p. 43.

<sup>76</sup> Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fols. 32v-33r, 'Vndt er wegens von Burgermeister vndt Rhatt Empfangen worden [...] mich vndt mein Geliebte Gebrüder Zu dem Reihinfaal gefhürdt, Vnd Vollents in die Statt beglayttet, daß *Frawenzimmern* ist der-// weillen zu dem Herrn von Bappenheimb getzogen.'

<sup>77</sup> See Ernst Heinrich Kneschke, *Neues allgemeines deutsches Adelslexikon*, 9 vols. (Hildesheim, 1996) vol. 7, s.v. von 'Pappenheim', pp. 52–4.

<sup>78</sup> Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fols. 32v-33.

would argue that it was no coincidence that, while Johann Friedrich visited a Protestant city in a strategically important location, his wife moved to stay with a nobleman who stood in a loyal relationship with the emperor. The absence of his wife in Schaffhausen meant that his visit to Switzerland could not be read as a grand, representational event, which sought to impress potential allies. Instead, the ducal court, both the dynastic males and females, reunited in Engen under the dominion of the von Pappenheims. Representationally speaking, Engen received a higher honour than Schaffhausen, which facilitated a conciliatory reading of the travels of the duke and duchess, since they continued to pay the greatest homage to the representatives of the Holy Roman Emperor.

In previous chapters we have seen that Friedrich not only travelled habitually without his wife Sibylla, but also that, at times, she was not even made aware of his itineraries. In contrast, Johann Friedrich actively collaborated with Barbara Sophia, sometimes while they were on the move with both their households, and also when she stayed in Stuttgart and he travelled abroad. On a trip in 1617, for instance, Johann Friedrich noted that he ‘sent my spouse and the *Frauenzimmer* to Stuttgart along with all the pages’, while he went on to visit a monastery with his brothers.<sup>79</sup> During these separations the couple wrote to each other regularly. Unfortunately, Johann Friedrich did not usually retell the contents of these letters in his diaries, and they have not survived. On a rare occasion on 28 October 1615, however, he noted: ‘I received a letter from my wife who informed me that Gall Goll Gewölbschneider, fell to his death in Stuttgart, I was also informed that the margrave in Durlach was told that I would touch on his land on my way back, and it was written to those in Basel that I will visit them on the way back’.<sup>80</sup> We can thus infer that, even when Barbara Sophia was not sharing her husband’s travels, she was involved in the labour of planning his journeys.

One of the duchess’s key tasks was of course the bearing of children. Whilst the study of courts and dynasties today widely recognises the utmost importance of

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., fol. 264v.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., fols. 66v-67r.

this labour as an integral part of the practice of power, the question of whether this work was seen as an entirely female task still needs our attention. We have already seen that, in the marital negotiations, potential heirs were referred to as ‘begotten from both our bloods’<sup>81</sup>, thus betraying a Galenic bodily understanding of generation, in which both parents contributed a kind of sperm in order to create a child.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, if we consult Johann Friedrich's diary around the dates of the births of his children, we find that he, too, did not remain entirely independent of his wife's pregnancies. Both at the birth of his son Friedrich on 19 December 1615 and again at the birth of Ulrich on 15 May 1617, he was present in Stuttgart. In 1615 he returned to Stuttgart three days prior to the birth from a hunting excursion to nearby Herrenberg.<sup>83</sup> In 1617 Johann Friedrich was also present in Stuttgart three days before the birth took place, and the furthest he had travelled in the week before were the twenty kilometres to Leonberg. It is with some certainty that we can read from this that the duke's travel itineraries were coordinated with the expected due dates of his spouse, so as not to lead him too far away from court when Barbara Sophia might go into labour at any time. Cordula Nolte's similar findings on the basis of sources from Brandenburg-Ansbach suggest that this was common practice for princely husbands.<sup>84</sup> Even Duke Friedrich appears to have avoided travelling when Sibylla's births approached, thus suggesting that there was at least a normative expectation according to which the princely husband had to be physically present, if not in the room then in the immediate vicinity, for the birth of his children.<sup>85</sup> Of course,

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<sup>81</sup> HStAS, G 67 Bü 1, doc. 130.

<sup>82</sup> David Warren Sabean, ‘Descent and Alliance. Cultural Meanings of Blood in the Baroque’, in Christopher Howard Johnson, Bernhard Jussen, and David Warren Sabean, eds., *Blood & kinship: matter for metaphor from ancient Rome to the present* (New York, 2015), pp. 144-74, here p. 146.

<sup>83</sup> See Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fol. 80rv.

<sup>84</sup> Cordula Nolte, ‘der leib der hochst schatz - Zu fürstlicher Körperlichkeit, Gesunderhaltung und Lebenssicherung (1450-1550). Familien- und alltagsgeschichtliche Perspektiven’, in Jörg Rogge, ed., *Fürstin und Fürst: Familienbeziehungen und Handlungsmöglichkeiten von hochadeligen Frauen im Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2004), pp. 45-93, here p. 84.

<sup>85</sup> See chapter 4, see also Ulinka Rublack, ‘Pregnancy, childbirth and the female body in early modern Germany’, *Past & Present*, 150 (February 1996), pp. 84–110, here pp. 88-90, where it is argued that women could demand enhanced treatment and attention when they were pregnant or lying-in, even if they belonged to the the lower social orders. Furthermore, men were regarded as carrying a high level of responsibility for the successful completion of their wives' pregnancies. They were not allowed to

broader studies would be needed to confirm and elaborate these hypotheses in wider settings, but the evidence given is enough to suggest that we need to be open to the possibility that both the beginning and the end of a dynastic pregnancy at this time were imagined to be a labour husband and wife shared, albeit in unequal parts, and which thus was not neatly divided up along gendered lines.

Finally, I want to direct attention to Johann Friedrich's relationships with his siblings, which are prominently featured in his diaries. Once again, he did not disclose personal sentiments and attitudes, but the frequency with which he mentioned his sisters and brothers shows beyond doubt that they formed an integral part of his social network. Unlike his father Friedrich, who had no surviving siblings in his adulthood, Johann Friedrich had five sisters and four brothers. Linda Pollock and, more recently, Sophie Ruppel have shown that younger siblings were not merely a dynastic burden, as has previously been suggested, but they stood in complex obligations of reciprocal duties and privileges to their older princely siblings, and were in fact valuable resources.<sup>86</sup> Johann Friedrich's siblings provide a textbook example of this. Except for Sibylla Elisabeth, all of his sisters were yet to be married when he came to power and he procured matches for all of them with the exception of the youngest Anna, who had become so close to his wife Barbara Sophia that she may have preferred to remain at her home court in any case. Eva Christina married Johann Georg of Brandenburg (Barbara Sophia's brother) in 1610, and thus helped him to become Johann Friedrich's brother-in-law two times over.<sup>87</sup>

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beat them, shout at them, or otherwise mistreat them, and they were expected to stay close to them before, and after the birth. See *ibid.*, pp. 98-100.

<sup>86</sup> See Ruppel, *Verbündete Rivalen: Geschwisterbeziehungen im Hochadel des 17. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 180-212; Linda Pollock, 'Younger Sons in Tudor and Stuart England', *History Today; London*, 39 (June 1989), pp. 23-9.

<sup>87</sup> This was a very significant match. Margrave Johann Georg's father was the elector of Brandenburg Joachim Friedrich (r. 1598-1608). Johann Georg and the Württemberg family shared an ambivalent history. In fact, Johann Georg had been the administrator of Strasbourg from 1592 to 1604, during which time he stood in an ongoing conflict with Duke Friedrich who had claims on the department of Oberkirch, which belonged to greater Strasbourg. Both the Emperor Rudolph II and the King of France Henri IV became involved in this dispute, and eventually Johann Georg had to leave Strasbourg and Oberkirch was pawned to Württemberg. See on this Hertel, 'Die Residenzstadt Herzog Friedrichs', pp. 14-18, who discusses these events in some detail. It is likely that the marriage of

Barbara married the Margrave of Durlach in 1616, and Agnes married Duke Franz Julius of Saxony-Lauenburg in 1620.<sup>88</sup> Johann Friedrich kept in touch with all his sisters after they were married, but his correspondence and meetings were most frequent with Eva Christina and Barbara. The occasions on which he recorded receiving or responding to letters from his ‘sister the *Markgräfin* of Brandenburg’ were nearly as numerous as those of his wife. When Eva Christina came to visit him in March of 1615, he was so happy to have her there that he addressed a letter to her husband in Brandenburg asking him if she would be allowed to stay until Easter.<sup>89</sup> When the time came for her to leave some six weeks later, he gave her an escort of honour consisting of himself, his wife, and two of his brothers.<sup>90</sup> Besides personal affection, it was clearly advantageous to Johann Friedrich to have a loyal sister in Brandenburg, writing to him regularly about the comings and goings at the courts of this key partner in the Protestant Union. Norbert Elias has named the acquisition of information about other dynastic families and court dynamics as one of the key tasks of a ruler,<sup>91</sup> and this was clearly a less visible task that could effectively be carried out by female royal siblings.

Ruppel describes such a function of a sibling as akin to a ‘permanent envoy’ installed at foreign courts.<sup>92</sup> Barbara's marriage to another key Union member in 1616, a time of crisis for the alliance, was certainly no coincidence either. Her wedding gave Johann Friedrich an occasion for festivities in December 1616, which, in themselves, were a key opportunity to ceremonially formalise his personal alliance with the margraves of Durlach, at a time when no one could be certain of the future of the wider alliance they shared in the Union. Both Barbara and her younger sister Agnes remained in close contact with Johann Friedrich after their respective marriages, with both eventually coming back to stay at the court in Stuttgart for

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Barbara Sophia to Johann Friedrich prepared the ground for the wedding of Johann Georg to Eva Christina.

<sup>88</sup> Lorenz, Mertens, and Press, eds., *Das Haus Württemberg: ein biographisches Lexikon*, p. 149.

<sup>89</sup> Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fol. 16r.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 23r.

<sup>91</sup> Elias, *The court society*, p. 129.

<sup>92</sup> Ruppel, *Verbündete Rivalen: Geschwisterbeziehungen im Hochadel des 17. Jahrhunderts*, p. 180.

prolonged periods of time when the Thirty Years' War plunged them and their husbands into uncertainty.

Johann Friedrich's brothers also contributed to the information flow of Central European dynastic and political news towards the court of Stuttgart. When they were away from court, they sent Johann Friedrich letters, and we can assume that when they returned they also gave oral accounts of what they had learned abroad. However, the brotherly relationships must certainly have experienced some difficulties over the years, as the five brothers only came to agree on a *Vergleich* on the topic of the *Appanagen* and Württemberg holdings in March of 1617. As Johann Friedrich noted in his diary, the matter was 'finally resolved'.<sup>93</sup> The oldest brother after the reigning duke was Ludwig Friedrich, and, in the agreement, he was given Mömpelgard in the exposed location on the left side of Rhine. Next was Julius Friedrich who received Weilingen and Brenz, which had only fallen to Württemberg in this generation. Friedrich Achilles received Neuenstadt as a seat, and the youngest, Magnus, reached an agreement over his yearly accommodation payments and his right to live in Neuenburg. Magnus was active in the military and was to die only a few years later in a battle at Wimpfen. But the two brothers who had received territories that they would be able to pass down to heirs lost no time and were married in the same year as the agreement between all the brothers was made, once more illustrating how fundamentally linked territorial government and heterosexual domesticity were.

For ducal siblings to hold territories at some distance from the representational efforts of the court of Stuttgart must also have brought benefits beyond the direct channels of information they created from different corners of the territory. It would also have brought the ducal family much closer to their subjects living at some distance from the capital, and thus helped to extend the political reach of the Duke of Stuttgart more widely. This is a function younger brothers shared with ducal widows such as Sibylla, who had her seat for several years in Leonberg, or the Duchess Ursula (the widow of Duke Ludwig), who occupied Nürtingen for decades

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<sup>93</sup> Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fol. 202v, 'Entlichen resolvirt'.

and made extensive use of her connection to the court, as shall be discussed further below.

Overall, Johann Friedrich's diary shows him acting in a tightly-knit social network in which his spouse and his siblings were key anchor points. Both brothers and sisters contributed to a steady flow of information that made its way to the seats of rule in Stuttgart. Moreover, the marriages the siblings made offered important opportunities to create and maintain political alliances. Hence, it would appear that the usefulness of younger siblings for the main line of the dynasty was not primarily decided by the category of gender. In relation to Johann Friedrich's diary, another observation remains to be made. The most striking topics that he omitted, to the dismay of political historians, were pragmatic activities of governance, such as military activity and the attendance of chancellery meetings and Diets. On the other hand, he was forthcoming about his hunting habits, the frequent *divertissements* organized at court, as well as dynastic births, deaths, and marriages involving his extended family. It appears to me that it is no coincidence that a source that focuses on activities that were carried out in mixed society, and left out pursuits that were strictly limited to the male gender, was for a long time classified as 'worthless'. Nowadays, however, we are forced to take Johann Friedrich's notes seriously as a record of court life, which, as such, is intensely political.

### ***Guardians***

Johann Friedrich died from a sudden and unexpected illness in the early morning of 28 July 1628. At this time, Barbara Sophia's oldest son, Eberhard, was only fourteen years old, and thus not in a position to take over the rule of Württemberg. All dynastic families feared the threat of a lapse in the list of successors at the death of a ruler. Over time, several routes of action had been developed to counter the fragility of this situation and to attempt to ensure a smooth transition of power that did not destabilise the political order. Pauline Puppel has shown that, in the Holy Roman

Empire, such plans usually involved noble widows as a matter of course.<sup>94</sup> For them it was an expected duty to their territory to take over the guardianship of a young son, should this be needed, and often this would entail the claim to the regency of the polity. The high fertility of Sibylla and Friedrich, however, meant that, besides Eberhard, other dynastic males were available to contribute to the leadership of the territory until he could fill his father's spot. Barbara Sophia thus came to be the *Mitvormünderin* alongside her husband's younger brothers. At first, Ludwig Friedrich, who had been given the territory of Mömpelgard to rule, was made administrator of Württemberg, and he moved back to Stuttgart to take up his role. During his time in office, he was heavily engaged in the negotiations surrounding the edict of restitution that was threatening Württemberg at this time.<sup>95</sup> The edict proposed that all lands taken from monasteries during the Reformation of the territory would have to be given back to the Catholic Church. Since the territorial surface of Württemberg at the time comprised nearly a third of formerly ecclesiastic lands, this measure was greatly opposed by both the administrator and the local estates. Ludwig Friedrich died in January 1631, and it has been suggested that his death was hastened by the intense pressure his office had bestowed on him.<sup>96</sup> Thereafter, Julius Friedrich was officially charged with the administration of Württemberg alongside Barbara Sophia. In the meantime, despite the tribulations of war, Eberhard's education according to his rank continued. From summer 1630 to June 1632, he pursued a grand tour of Europe, accompanied by his two younger brothers.<sup>97</sup> During his absence, Barbara Sophia does not appear to have been deeply implicated in governance, most likely since, without her son, she did not have a relational link to the practice of power. Yet, at the time of his return, he was only a

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<sup>94</sup> See Pauline Puppel, *Die Regentin: vormundschaftliche Herrschaft in Hessen*, pp. 82-8, Puppel finds that different legal traditions within the German lands had varying views on the question of female regency. The Roman legal tradition stipulated that only men could act as regents, but a great number of German princes made allowances in their wills to install their wives as regents. Once a woman took the office of regent, she had all the authorities and responsibilities as a man would in her place.

<sup>95</sup> On the *Restitutionsedikt* see Axel Gotthard, *Der Dreissigjährige Krieg : eine Einführung* (Köln, 2016), pp. 133-9.

<sup>96</sup> Lorenz, Mertens, and Press, eds., *Das Haus Württemberg: ein biographisches Lexikon*, pp. 178-80.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

few months away from his eighteenth birthday, and now Barbara Sophia prepared a political move, which was ultimately to position her squarely in the centre of the ducal decision-making framework. She contacted the *Landthofmeister*, the chancellery, and a number of secret councillors stating that

although we would wish to be able to grant our beloved oldest son Eberhard to distract himself for some more time with travels in foreign countries and not to bring the cumbersome reign of the land on his neck just now:/ but because of urgent reasons [...], especially in order to take over the heavy cumbersome burden that has been carried by the lord Administrator [...] we reveal and announce that [Eberhard] [...] who now has achieved an appropriate age by the grace of God will now without much delay take over the reign of his inherited lands and people himself, alongside you his [...] secret, faithful councillors, [and] with divine assistance.<sup>98</sup>

Her letter evokes an image of a dutiful mother offering up her son in sacrifice to the territory, but, despite the virtuous associations this narrative created, her demand concealed a barely veiled sting. In order for her son to take over power at the age of eighteen, Julius Friedrich would have to cut short his regime as the head administrator of Württemberg. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Julius Friedrich was less than pleased when he received a nearly identical letter to the one quoted above. He sent a 'heated' response to Barbara Sophia claiming that her endeavour was unlawful.<sup>99</sup> She reacted very much in keeping with the contemporary legal tradition, and consulted the wills of previous dukes to lend strength to her arguments. The late Dukes Christoph and Ludwig had stipulated, for a similar dynastic accident, that their spouses should take up the guardianship alongside the secret councillors, and that their hypothetical underage sons should be slowly inducted into the matter of

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<sup>98</sup> HStAS, G 87 Bü 4, Barbara Sophia to 'Landthofmaister, Cantzley, geheime Regiments Räte', 24 June 1632, fols. 1rv, 'ob wir woll vnßerm geliebten eltern sohn hertzog Eberhardten alß ainen jungen herrn woll hetten gönnen mögen, mit Raysen in frembden Landen noch vf ein Zeitlang sich zuerlustigen, vnnd nicht so leichtlich die beschwerliche Landts regierunf vf dem halß zu landen :/ dennoch auß vilen dringenden [...] Vrsachen, sonderlich aber auch zubenehmung deß Herrn Administratoris Ld: bißhero getragenen schweren vndt Mühseeligen Last [...] entdecken vnd zuerkennen geben [...] daß [Eberhard] welcher Nunmehr durch die gnade Gottes sein gebührendes alter eraicht, die Regierung seiner anverebten Land vnd Leüthen, neben eüch allß seinen [...], geheimen vnd getreüwen Regimentsräthen, mit verleyhung Göttlichen Beystandts, ohne langern Vorzug selbst antretten'.

<sup>99</sup> HStAS G 87 Bü 4, Barbara Sophia to Julius Friedrich, 18 July 1632, fol. 1r, 'Ob ich wohl Eur. Lbd. Jungstes an mich abgegangenes widerantwortliche handschreiben so gleichwohl über mein verhoffen ettwaß hitzig gewesen [...]'.

rule by the guardians from the age of fourteen or fifteen.<sup>100</sup> No mention was ever made of younger brothers since they had none. She further argued that Johann Friedrich's own will had merely stipulated that Ludwig Friedrich should be made administrator alongside 'the widow left behind as the lady mother'.<sup>101</sup> Julius Friedrich was not included in the formulations, and she went on to point out that 'outside of the houses of prince electors' it was not common to give a younger brother such a generous appanage as he had received, and that her actions on behalf of Eberhard 'out of faithful maternal care, besides other highly important causes, will also remove exorbitant costs from the state'.<sup>102</sup>

It is evident that her proposition to the councillors and the chancellery was very attractive, and it may well have been conceived in collaboration with them. She offered them a significant share in governance, while simultaneously indicating a way to improve the financial standing of the duchy, which was desperately needed at this time. Furthermore, she did not propose a formal role for herself in the administration of her son. However, as we shall see below, her close relationship with him meant that she would hold considerable sway over his decisions as a ruler, as she must have known even when writing these letters. The crux of the matter was that Julius Friedrich, the acting administrator, would have to be removed from his office in order to achieve these objectives. The dispute between Julius Friedrich and Barbara Sophia was evidently gendered: would her authority as the mother of the next duke trump his claim to power, which was based largely on being the oldest living dynastic male in Stuttgart? This is the matter that the councillors had to discuss at this point in time.

In September of 1632, they eventually produced a report weighing up the legal arguments. They took pains to stress that they did not in any way want to push

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<sup>100</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 4, 'Extract [...] herrn herzog Christoffen [...] vnnd herzog Ludwigen beeder zu Württemberg Testamentis. Wie es der Minderjährigen Herrn nach ihrem absterben vormundschaftt halber gehalten werden solle'.

<sup>101</sup> HStAS G 87 Bü 4, Barbara Sophia to Julius Friedrich, 18 July 1632, fol. 2v, 'neben der hinderlaßnen Wittwe, als der fraw Mutter'.

<sup>102</sup> HStAS G 87 Bü 4, Barbara Sophia to Julius Friedrich, 18 July 1632, fol. 4r, 'vnd dann auß Mutterlicher getrewe fürsorge, neben andern hochrichtigen Vrsachen, auch dem Staat einen ferner gantz ohnerschwinglichen Costen zuentnemmen'.

Julius Friedrich to give up his claim to the guardianship.<sup>103</sup> Yet, after more than twenty pages of deliberations over the Württemberg house laws, the customs in other dynastic centres of the Holy Roman Empire, and Emperor Charles V's legal code, they stated that, in light of all the arguments made, they had little doubt 'that the lord administrator P[rincely] G[race] will not have any further concerns over deferring amicably to the desire of the P[rincely] lady widow'.<sup>104</sup> Their arguments boiled down essentially to the same points made by Barbara Sophia in a much shorter text. Johann Friedrich had stipulated his brother Ludwig Friedrich as guardian to his oldest son, and besides that there was no precedence in the Württemberg laws for the current situation. The councillors could, however, show that there were many precedents for dukes taking up their reigns before their official majority, and they were clear that, at eighteen years, a good case could be made to induct Eberhard into the business of governance. Julius Friedrich had to cede to the combined arguments of the most important government councillors and the dowager duchess. In 1633 Eberhard III was declared of age by the emperor, and he took over the reign of Württemberg. Barbara Sophia's role in this transfer of power has largely been omitted in regional historiography.

Using gender as a tracer in this instance alerts us to the salience of different rules for dynastic succession. It was clear that the agnate outranked the cognate.<sup>105</sup> Julius Friedrich did not even raise the possibility of becoming duke himself; his claim was to the regency alone. On the other hand, the circumstances for the regency were less clearly defined and the gender difference of the two contenders here complicated the situation. This created room for manoeuvre in dynastic procedure, which resulted in a certain amount of competition among a number of politically

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<sup>103</sup> HStAS G 87 Bü 4, doc. 54, 19 September 1632, signed by Drs. Jäger, Breitschwert (not the same person as Veit Breitschwert, here probably Johann Leonhard Breitschwert who was active in the upper council from 1621-1635, see Pfeilsticker, *Württembergisches Dienerbuch*, vol. I, § 1208.), Baser et al., here fols. 1v-2r.

<sup>104</sup> HStAS G 87 Bü 4, doc. 54, 19 September 1632, fol. 12r, 'es werden deß hern Administratoris F.G. ainig ferner berdenckhens nicht haben der F. Fraw Wittib in dero begehren freündtlich zu deferiren'.

<sup>105</sup> For a stimulating view on the history of inheritance law from a gender perspective see Gianna Pomata, 'Blood Ties and Semen Ties: Consanguinity and Agnation in Roman Law', in Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Waltner, eds., *Gender, kinship, power: a comparative and interdisciplinary history* (New York; London, 1996) pp. 43-64.

adept individuals (Barbara Sophia, Julius Friedrich, and the councillors). In this case, it was Barbara Sophia who came out on top with her arguments relating to the sentiments and sacrifices of motherhood.<sup>106</sup> The creation of this bottleneck situation is owed to the category of gender difference, and I argue that this was one of the ways in which gender contributed to the longevity of a dynasty.

### *Widows and Advisors*

When Eberhard formally took over the reign in May 1633, the eighteen year old was faced with a formidable task. Just in the previous month Württemberg had become part of the *Heilbronner Bund* and allied itself with the Swedish army. It was thus now a full participant in the Thirty Years' War, a fate that Duke Johann Friedrich had put off for a long time. Eberhard's initial reigning years were completely dominated by the war effort. A little over a year after being declared of age, he and the whole court of Stuttgart were forced to flee their lands and seek refuge in Strasbourg for four years until Eberhard was able to return to his ravaged and much reduced territories in 1638.<sup>107</sup> He did not have the luxury of time to organise a suitable marriage whilst still in Württemberg, but it is evident that he needed support to rule. A number of councillors were very active at this time, since the problematic succession had opened up room for them. Jakob Löffler, who had served as vice-chancellor until 1633, was the most prominent of these, and, at this time, he simultaneously came to be vice-chancellor of Sweden, whilst remaining in Württemberg employment.<sup>108</sup> He thus took on a very central position in government, but Barbara Sophia, too, came to play an important advisory role for Eberhard. She

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<sup>106</sup> See also Ulrike Ilg, 'Fürstliche Witwen in der frühen Neuzeit - Eine Einführung', in Ulrike Ilg, ed., *Fürstliche Witwen in der Frühen Neuzeit: zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte eines Standes* (Petersberg, 2015), pp. 5–13, here p. 7, who argues that dynastic widows often found ways to make the absence of a clear regulation of their status work in their favour.

<sup>107</sup> Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg 1593-1793*, pp. 93–4.

<sup>108</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 119–20; On his biographical data see Otto von Alberti, s.v. 'Löffler, Jacob' in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, ed., Band 19 (1884), S. 105–106, digitised text, <[https://de.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=ADB:L%C3%B6ffler,\\_Jacob&oldid=250149](https://de.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=ADB:L%C3%B6ffler,_Jacob&oldid=250149)>, last checked on 6 September 2017.

took over some of the responsibilities in the two-pronged ruling constellation that would normally have consisted of the duke and his wife.<sup>109</sup> They kept in very close contact as Eberhard endeavoured to make his mark with military interventions, initially outside of the territory of Württemberg. It is fortunate that enough of this correspondence has survived to gain an image of the mother-son dynamics. At times, they exchanged daily letters and almost invariably they discussed subjects of a sensitive nature. Because of the semi-public nature of most aristocratic correspondence, Barbara Sophia took care in her formulations and on occasion even advised Eberhard: ‘do not let anyone see this letter, burn it’.<sup>110</sup> Evidently, he did not comply on this occasion, but it seems likely that at other moments in time he did, and we must consider the existing correspondence as incomplete.<sup>111</sup>

In her letters Barbara Sophia never failed to emphasise her love for her son and her concern for his security. Many begin with a variation of the following: ‘highborn prince, kind, heartily beloved son, I could not help myself pushed by maternal faithful care to beg you and to command you to take care of yourself and not to enter danger needlessly.’<sup>112</sup> Since Eberhard was at this time taking part in a siege, Barbara Sophia's motherly wishes were certainly not mere pleasantries, but expressed sentiments that likely had multiple meanings. Pauline Puppel has shown that early modern German jurists used motherly love as a defining argument as to why women should be allowed to be guardians and even regents ruling in lieu of their sons. Since they were, on the one hand, at least equally responsible for the raising of these sons and also carried a deep love for them, it was argued that they would be deeply committed to the best outcome for their sons, and thus for the politics they were heading.<sup>113</sup> So, in reaffirming her love and concern for her son,

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<sup>109</sup> On the importance of this constellation see previous two chapters.

<sup>110</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 23, Barbara Sophia to Eberhard, 16 August 1633, ‘las doch das Schreiben niemandt sehen verbrenns’.

<sup>111</sup> The surviving letters can be found in the archive in Stuttgart under HStAS G 67 Bü 23.

<sup>112</sup> HStAS, G 67 Bü 23, letter from Barbara Sophia to Eberhard, 16 August 1633, ‘hochgeborner Fürst, freindtlicher hertz aller liebester Sohn, Ich habe nicht konnen vnderlassen, aus Muetterlichen trewer Sorgfaltigkeit, dich noch mahlen zubitten, vndt zubefehlen, du wollest dich doch sehr woll in acht nemen, damit du nicht mogest in vnnützig gefahr geben [...]’.

<sup>113</sup> See Puppel, *Die Regentin: vormundschaftliche Herrschaft in Hessen 1500-1700*, p. 66.

Barbara Sophia reminded him of the legitimacy of her counsel in all introductory parts of her letters.

This was useful, for after such an opening she usually turned to very practical suggestions for how her son was to behave in his military and political endeavours. For instance, she wrote to him on 17 September 1633, when Eberhard was taking part in the siege of the city of Konstanz:

It would be my opinion that you should speak to the field marshal in secret, because there are rumours saying that he had received the entire chancellery of the bishop of Costnitz, and he should give you what concerns our city, but you should not tell anyone about this before it is in your hands, because I am of the opinion you will find strange things of Berittschwertt [sic] and Lutzen.<sup>114</sup>

Most likely, she is referring here to the prominent court official Veit Breitschwert, who had died two years earlier, and the battle of Lützen, which was fought in 1632.<sup>115</sup> Unfortunately, Eberhard's reply to this is lost, but it is evident that she is advising her son on sensitive matters based on acquired knowledge and possibly politically charged speculation. Although we cannot say for certain what the outcome of this piece of advice was, it is apparent from the correspondence that Eberhard did not mind paying attention to the words and 'opinion' of his mother. From the military camp outside Konstanz he kept her minutely informed of the strategies pursued, for instance informing her that 'yesterday at dawn we undertook a storm on the city of Konstanz'.<sup>116</sup> The manoeuvre ended in failure, and he went on to

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<sup>114</sup> HStAS, G 67 Bü 23, Barbara Sophia to Eberhard, 17 September 1633, 'Maine meinung wehr, du solltest den feltt marschalck ansprechen, in geheim, weill man alhier sagt, er habe des Bischoffs vom Costnitz gantze Cantzley bekommen, das er, was den hiesigen Stadt betreffen möchte, Dhr wollen zu kommen lasse, dusolst aber sonst niemandt etwas dauon sagen, bis in deine henden ist, denn ich der meinung bin, du wurdest vielleicht seltsame sachen, vonn Berittschwetth [sic] vndt Lutzen finden ./'.

<sup>115</sup> See Pfeilsticker, *Württembergisches Dienerbuch*, vol.1, § 1136 and 1208, Breitschwert had held the office of learned *Oberrat* at the court of Stuttgart from 1609-1629, thereafter he was promoted to privy councillor, and he held that office until his death on 20 March 1631.; Breitschwert had been one of the most vocal officials speaking out against Johann Friedrich's plans to lead an army into battle in 1620. On this see Gotthard, *Konfession und Staatsräson: die Außenpolitik Württembergs unter Herzog Johann Friedrich (1608 - 1628)*, pp. 287, 320 and 324; Perhaps Barbara Sophia was particularly critical of a councillor who had opposed her husband at a crucial moment, but her exact suspicions must remain the subject of speculation.

<sup>116</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 23, Eberhard to Barbara Sophia, no date, 'gestern zu Anbruch des tages ein General Sturm auff Constantz vorgenommen worden, es hatt aber der liebe Gott denselben für dißmahl, nicht wollen glücklichhen lassen'.

describe what plans he had for a canon he had left at Rotweil after a previous engagement. Eberhard's youth was not fully concealed by his descriptions of military actions. He also asked his mother 'how a few more dozen gulden [...] might be sent to us', and he promised to allocate the money in the best possible way.<sup>117</sup> In another instance he justified his prolonged absence in military engagements to her with the words 'through this I may in time gain honour and glory as a *prospective* regent'.<sup>118</sup> At the time of this letter he had actually held the position as ruler of Württemberg for more than three months, but evidently this reality had not yet sunk in. Barbara Sophia's recurring reminders for him to stay out of danger and that 'your presence in the chancellery is greatly needed' should not be read as mere expressions of protective maternal sentiments.<sup>119</sup> His prolonged participation in several sieges prevented him from being present in Stuttgart and left court officials, chancellery, and the estates to vie for power amongst themselves.<sup>120</sup> Hence, Barbara Sophia's insistence on his return was likely to be based on sound political judgement, as well as maternal instinct. Furthermore, she did not appear to shy away from suggesting to Eberhard to engage in military aggression, when she judged that the best course of action. When the siege of the city of Villingen in the summer of 1633 was dragging on for longer than expected, she reported to Eberhard that she had been hearing rumours of discontent coming from both high and low ranking military officials at the strength and costs the siege seemed to be swallowing. She advised Eberhard to 'take a brave resolution [...] to attack in other places than until now for the best possible expedition [...] of the issues at hand'.<sup>121</sup> During that same siege Barbara Sophia grew increasingly concerned about a general Rau who was serving with Eberhard. On 1 September 1633 she mentioned that she was unhappy that this 'Rau'

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 'wie vnß noch ein paar dz gl. [...] möchten zugeschaftt werden'.

<sup>118</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 23, Eberhard to Barbara Sophia, 6 September 1633, 'dardurch mihr allß einen *angehenden* Regenten mit der Zeitt auch Ehr vnd Ruchm zuewachsen kan', emphasis added.

<sup>119</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 23, Barbara Sophia to Eberhard, 27 August 1633, 'deiner gegenwart, bey der Cantzley hochbenöttiget'.

<sup>120</sup> See Paul Revellio, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Villingen: gesammelte Arbeiten* (Villingen, 1964), p. 311.

<sup>121</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 23, Barbara Sophia to Eberhard, 16 August 1633, 'eine tapferen resolution faßen [...] angriff an verschidenen orthen, als etwan bis dato geschehen wie auch sonsten zu müglicher beschleunigung [...] der sachen an handt'.

still had something to say and implored Eberhard: 'in God's name, listen also to the other Obristen and do what goes along with that.'<sup>122</sup> One week later she emphasised again:

the longer the more I hear nothing else of this Rau than that he brings you disadvantage and mockery [...] it would be my faithful maternal opinion you should ask the field marshal to provide you with a suitable person who understands the business of war and leave the godless Rau [...], for if it is only half true what is said about him, he is not worth the post of a simple soldier, never mind a general [...].<sup>123</sup>

Her concerns were shared by the estates who implored Eberhard to dismiss Rau. Rau had attracted vivid criticism for his military decisions which were incredibly costly and proved to be inefficient. Moreover, it was said that he was only interested in his own gain, that he had been raiding entire herds of cattle, and, to top it off, that he lived in sin with a woman to whom he was not married. Worst of all Rau did not speak out against these allegations, which made him look excessively guilty, since a man of honour could not have let such slander stain his reputation.<sup>124</sup> Barbara Sophia's demands to drop Rau were thus accompanied by the voices of the estates and of several councillors in Stuttgart. Her information came from sources at the top levels of the administration, and it is likely that these men believed that it would be beneficial to their endeavour to have her arguing on their side. The combined efforts of the dowager duchess, the councillors, and the representatives of the estates paid off, and in a relieved letter from 17 September Barbara Sophia wrote: 'I have received your letter and understood thereof that Rau was dismissed and the Obrist

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<sup>122</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 23, Barbara Sophia to Eberhard, 1 September 1633, 'höre doch In Gottes willen die andern Obersten auch, vndt thue doch was darzu gehört'.

<sup>123</sup> HStAS G 67 Bü 23, Barbara Sophia to Eberhard, 9 September 1633, 'weil ich je länger je mehr nichts anders vom Rauhen hör, als was dir zum Nachtheil vndt Spott gereicht [...] so wer meine Mietterliche trewe hertzige Meinung, du soltest doch dem veldtmarschaleckh anssprechen, das er dir ein ta[u]gentliche person gebe, die das kriegs wesen woll verstandte, vndt dem Gottlosen Rauhen [...] lassen [...] vndt wans nun halber wahr wer, was man vonn ime redt, so ist er nicht werth, das er ein gemeiner soldat seye, vil geschweigen ein Generall'.

<sup>124</sup> On this criticism of Rau see Revellio, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Villingen: gesammelte Arbeiten*, pp. 304ff; who discusses in illuminating detail the correspondence between Eberhard, the estates, and the councillors during these events.

Degenfeldt took his place, so I wish you fortunate [...] welfare with this from my faithful maternal heart'.<sup>125</sup>

For Barbara Sophia to be able to seize the role of advisor to her young, ruling son to my mind showcases her familiarity with various practices of power, which she would have been able to build up during the reign of her husband. Since Johann Friedrich and she had shared many aspects of political rule, and thus had made effective use of the resources their union offered, she found herself in a strong position to help facilitate the transition of power to her young son, an important concern for all dynastic families. That Württemberg lay in disarray at Barbara Sophia's death in 1636 was beyond her control. Though it should not go unsaid that she managed to provide some relief for the region of Brackenheim where her widow's seat was located. From her exile in Strasbourg in October she addressed several petitions to Ferdinand III asking for the protection of Brackenheim from the spoils of war. After some back and forth negotiations, in which Ferdinand insisted that it was proper for the subjects to carry some of the burden of war since they had stood against the emperor,<sup>126</sup> he finally conceded in July 1635, and wrote a charter of protection for Brackenheim. This was certainly an immeasurable gain at the time for the inhabitants of Barbara Sophia's widow's seat, even though the regional historian recording her act in the 1980s felt the need to point out that she certainly did this 'in the first place in her own interest'.<sup>127</sup>

### *The Widow of Nürtingen*

Another highly interesting Württemberg widow is Ursula von Nürtingen, who had been married to Duke Ludwig. We have already briefly encountered her in the

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<sup>125</sup> HStAS, G 67 Bü 23, Barbara Sophia to Eberhard, 17 September 1633, 'Ich habe dein schreiben endpfangen vndt dar aus verstanden, das der Rau rasiert ist, vndt der Obrist Degen felts an sein stadt kommen, so wunsche ich dir vonn getreuen Mutterlichen hertzen darzu, alle gelickliche [...] wollfarth'.

<sup>126</sup> See HStAS, G 67 Bü 23, Ferdinand III to Barbara Sophia, 14 November 1634.

<sup>127</sup> Wolfram Angerbauer, *Heimatbuch der Stadt Brackenheim und ihrer Stadtteile* (Brackenheim, 1980), p. 91.

second chapter on the Stuttgart court festival, where Philipp Hainhofer mentioned her in his account of the 1616 festivities at key ceremonial moments.<sup>128</sup> She joined the Stuttgart *Frauenzimmer* for the official greeting of the guests of honour, Friedrich V of the Palatinate and his wife Elisabeth Stuart.<sup>129</sup> Then at the first feast in the *Ritterstube*, she sat in one of the most prominent seats directly beside the Princess Elisabeth.<sup>130</sup> Her presence at important dynastic events at the court of Stuttgart was indispensable over several decades. For the wedding of Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia in 1609, she arrived with a significant entourage of thirty-six people and thirty horses.<sup>131</sup> Her retinue was thus larger than that of fellow-widow Dorothea Maria (twenty-six people and twenty-three horses), who was a daughter of Duke Christoph's and had been married to the Count Palatine of Sulzbach, but smaller than that of the Dowager Landgravine Eleonore of Hessen. She was yet another daughter of Christoph's, and arrived in Stuttgart with forty-three persons and fifty-five horses accompanying her.<sup>132</sup> Years before this entrance, at Friedrich's great event of 1599, where he played Queen America, 'Duke Ludwig's beloved spouse' was cited directly after Duchess Sibylla as observing Friedrich's grand entrance to the tournament.<sup>133</sup> So what was the background to Ursula's prominent position in the Württemberg ceremonial? First of all, her familial position must be cited. As Duke Ludwig's widow, she was a member of the main Württemberg dynastic line. Ursula was the daughter of the Count Palatine of Veldenz-Lützelstein and of a Swedish princess. She came to be Ludwig's second wife and, at their wedding in May 1585, she was only thirteen years old. Ludwig's previous marriage with Dorothea Ursula of Baden had remained childless, and this second opportunity at dynastic procreation did not succeed either.<sup>134</sup> When Ludwig died in 1593, Ursula became a twenty-one year old dowager duchess of Württemberg without any children of her own. This was, of

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<sup>128</sup> See chapter 2, pp. 101f.

<sup>129</sup> Hainhofer, 'Beschreibung seiner Reise nach Stuttgart 1616', p. 323.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>131</sup> Oettinger, *Warhaffte Historische Beschreibung*, p. 19.

<sup>132</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 20 and 21 respectively.

<sup>133</sup> Frischlin, *Beschreibung des Fürstlichen Apparatus*, p. 12.

<sup>134</sup> For the biographical data see Lorenz, Mertens, and Press, eds., *Das Haus Württemberg: ein biographisches Lexikon*, pp. 116–7.

course, the moment when the rule over the duchy fell to a side branch of the Württemberg dynasty, personified in Friedrich, who at that time was reigning as the Count of Mömpelgard. As a result, Ursula came to embody the direct link between the newly reigning side-branch of the dynasty and Ludwig's dynastic line, which could be traced back unbroken to Count Eberhard IV of Württemberg (r. 1417-1419).<sup>135</sup> Although Ursula had married into the family, contemporary cultural notions of marriage as a visceral union that combined the blood of husband and wife into the same family line meant that, in this specific family constellation, she could be seen as a dynastic link between Ludwig and Friedrich, and his children.<sup>136</sup> The kinship between her and the new Württemberg line benefitted both sides, and it was reciprocally emphasised in almost all interaction between Friedrich's dynastic line and the dowager duchess. As shall be discussed below, in her letters she addressed Friedrich's male descendants as 'sons', and they in turn called her 'mother', reminding us of the constructed nature of dynastic kinship.<sup>137</sup>

Ludwig had made an effort to secure a good arrangement for Ursula's widowhood. During his lifetime he had documents drawn up, which were intended to give her the use of the towns and *Ämter* of Neuenstadt and Nürtingen. On top of this, he wanted her to have the use of the residency in Sachsenheim, the full value of the wedding goods of 10,000 gulden, as well as a yearly payment of 1000 gulden for 'as long as she was to remain a widow'. Yet, as occurred very often in the lives of dynastic widows, once Ludwig was dead, Ursula found it very difficult to claim the goods that he had promised her. Friedrich was not content with the arrangements, and in December 1593 he came to an agreement with Ursula, in which she gave up any claim to the use of Sachsenheim, and in return was granted an annual income of 600 gulden.<sup>138</sup> Neuenstadt completely fell away from her widow's lands, but she

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<sup>135</sup> Compare this to Puppel, 'Das Prinzip der Subsidiarität', p. 21, who argues that a dynastic widow acted as a representative of the 'gendered organisation' (*Geschlechterverband*) in the sense of Heide Wunder (see on this chapter 3 pp. 134f.), and that the widow 'assured the maintenance and the continuation of dynastic territorial power'.

<sup>136</sup> On this see Sabean, 'Descent and alliance. Cultural meanings of blood in the Baroque', pp. 55f.

<sup>137</sup> See on this the letters in HStAS G 57 Bü 17.

<sup>138</sup> On the practice of *Erbverzichtserklärungen* see footnote 51 of this chapter.

took up residency in Nürtingen, which was a strategically advantageous position, since Nürtingen was much closer to the court of Stuttgart than Neuenstadt and Sachsenheim. As a result of this, Ursula found it easier to remain a presence to be reckoned with at court, even in widowhood. She continued to insist on her inheritance of 10,000 gulden, which she had not yet received. Almost identical documents survive from the years 1600, 1601 and two from 1607, in which Friedrich promises Ursula that she would have her 10,000 gulden for the next Martin's day (i.e. 11 November). Evidently it was not a promise to be taken seriously, but the sequence of records certainly speaks to Ursula's tenacity.

During Friedrich's reign, a number of new marriages were proposed to her. Once again, Enzlin was the key operator in these projects, and in 1598 he wrote to Friedrich that Duke Johann of Courland 'explained himself yesterday to me that he was not displeased by h[er] p[rinclly] g[race] the princely lady widow's person'.<sup>139</sup> He reasoned that now would be the time to find out Ursula's view of the duke, and 'in case there was no lack in this place' one could contract the marriage, and 'y[our] p[rinclly] g[race] could finally resolve the question of the widow's usage'.<sup>140</sup> Besides this latter point, Friedrich wrote in the margin 'alone five years', referring to the duration of Ursula's widowhood at that time, which evidently appeared excessive to him.<sup>141</sup> Nothing ever came of this project. While the exact reasons for this are lost to us, a further marriage proposal directed at Ursula by Friedrich and Enzlin gives us some clues. In late 1604 a match with August of Braunschweig-Lüneburg was being discussed. This time, Enzlin was on high alert. He asked Friedrich to seize the opportunity and invite August immediately after the New Year, and to have Ursula come to court at the same time, since 'the princely lady widow (as has happened previously in similar cases) might cause difficulties'.<sup>142</sup> Clearly he did not get his

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<sup>139</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 16, Enzlin to Friedrich, 1598, doc. 13, 'der Herzog von Churlandt sich gestern gegen mir g. erclert das s.f.g. die f. fraw witib (dero person halben) nit misfällig.'

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 'Im fahl diß orths khein mangell vorhanden sein würden'; 'e.f.g. sich der Widumbsnutzung halben endlich resoluiren möchten'.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 'allein fünf jhar'.

<sup>142</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 16, Enzlin to Friedrich, 23 December 1604, 'es werde die ff. Witib (.wie auch hieuor in gleichen fehlten geschehen.) tifficultiren'.

wish, for one year later the project was still undecided. August then wrote graciously to Friedrich, mentioning that he himself had been much delayed with urgent business and ‘with a great and protracted weakness of the body’.<sup>143</sup> Now in better health, he was eager to come to a resolution of the ‘marriage business’, and he expressed his happiness that he had heard that ‘I.L.’s previous weakness had now turned [...] to a good and solid health’.<sup>144</sup> Ursula’s bodily health indeed was a grave obstacle in Friedrich’s plans, because once more her answer to August’s request was delayed by many weeks. Eventually she addressed Friedrich:

I let y[our] g[race] know amicably that although my mind has not changed towards the Duke of Lüneburg [and] the known marriage issue, [and] he should not have to tarry in connection with this in vain for longer, I wanted to explain fully, but in these days I needed medicine because of my bodily weakness [...] and it could not happen this time [...] since it is not possible for me to write any further at this time.<sup>145</sup>

Friedrich was clearly dissatisfied with this, and he pressed her on the same day, again asking if she had not read August’s personal letter. Ursula did not waver in her position, however, and she wrote back a short note explaining that she had not mentioned the letter sent to her because of her ‘weak head’, which caused her barely to be able to write: ‘I ask y[our] g[race] to count me as excused in this matter, with this I wish y[our] g[race] a good night’.<sup>146</sup> Finally in January 1605 Ursula wrote a letter to August, in which she definitively ended the match. She asked Friedrich to send her letter onwards as soon as possible so August would not miss out on any other opportunities on her behalf and she confidently explained:

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<sup>143</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 16, August of Braunschweig Lüneburg to Friedrich, 25 November 1605, ‘mitt grosser vndt langwiriger leibes Schwachheiten’.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., ‘Verheurath Sachen’, fol. 1v, ‘I.L. damals vorgewantte Schwacheitt nuhmern zu einem gutten bestendigen gesundheit sich sole geschickt vndt gewandt haben’.

<sup>145</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 16, Ursula to Friedrich, 18 December 1605, ‘so gib E:L. ich hierauf freuntlich zuuerstehen, das ob ich wol mich meinen gemiechts, welches sich beß dahero Innichts geendert, für dismal gegen des hertzogs von Lunenburg, bewussten heüraths sachen halben, damit die selbige sich nit verner damit v[er]gebenlich aufhalten, thuen ausfuerlich eklertt hette, so hatt es aber weil ich disen tagen meiner fortwerenden leibs blödigkait halben artzney gebraucht [...]diesmals nicht beschehen mögen [...]dannn mir vf dismal nit möglich ist weiter zuschreiben [...]’.

<sup>146</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 16, Ursula to Friedrich, 18 December 1605 (second letter on same day), ‘mein kopff so blöd’; ‘pitt E: L: dawegen mich hierin für entschuldigt zuhalten, wünsche E:L: hiemit eine freuntliche gutte nacht’.

I see myself facing many reasons, which no one in this world knows better than I do, and I cannot explain otherwise [...] why it pleases the Lord to keep me in this mournful state, but I have to give this up to his divine might with Christian patience, [...] and I ask y[our] g[race] very friendly you may keep me as until today [...] and show yourself to be a true cousin and relative [...] towards me.<sup>147</sup>

Duke Friedrich actually did not have much choice in the matter. He was unable to force Ursula into a marriage, and he could not officially question her bouts of ‘bodily weakness’ since, of course, it was a well-accepted fact that the female body was less robust than its male counterpart. While I do not want to reject Ursula’s illness as outright fabrication, it has to be borne in mind that she was to live to the respectable age of sixty-three, and that she in fact outlived three dukes of Württemberg, thus attesting to her rather sturdy health. Magdalena Sánchez has identified the usage of illnesses, such as melancholia, as a ‘tool’ of dynastic women ‘which took advantage of male notions about weak female constitution and inverted them to afford royal women greater power and control’.<sup>148</sup> The correspondence concerning Ursula’s marriage projects shows that one did not have to be of royal descent in order to take part in this practice of power. Traditional regional historiography does not have much to say about Ursula, except that she mourned her late husband Duke Ludwig with such intensity that she never married again.<sup>149</sup> We could, however, read her choices differently, and suggest that, beyond her grief, she may also not have felt like giving up the measure of liberty she had gained in widowhood. At this stage of her life she used her gendered body as a resource to attain her goals.

In September 1607, when Ursula was thirty-five, Enzlin once more wrote to Friedrich on the subject of Ursula stating that

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<sup>147</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 16, Ursula to Friedrich, 2 January 1606, ‘dan ich mich gegen seh auf aller hant vrsachen, welge niemant auf disser welt besser, alls mier bekant, anderst nicht erklären kan, [...] die weil es den meinem lieben gott also gefelt, vnd mich in dem bethribten stant haben wil, mus ich es seiner göttlichen almacht mit christlicher gedult beuellen, [...]so bitte ich el ganz freündtlich, sie wellen mich der selben, hien förder wie bis hero, zum besten lassen [...] vnd sich gegen mier, alls ein gethreuwer vetter vnd geuatter [...] also er wissen’.

<sup>148</sup> Magdalena S. Sánchez, ‘Melancholy and female illness: Habsburg women and politics at the court of Philip III’, *Journal of Women’s History*, 8 (Summer 1996), pp. 81–102, here pp. 94f.

<sup>149</sup> See the short entry on her in Lorenz, Mertens, and Press, eds., *Das Haus Württemberg: ein biographisches Lexikon*, pp. 117f.

after the princely lady dowager of Nürtingen when y[our] p[rincely] g[race] was treating with Duke August of Lünenburg she spoke of weakness of the body, but now h[er] p[rincely] g[race] is in good health, so I thought if it might be possible to contract a match between h[er] p[rincely] g[race] and Duke Johann zu Zweybrückhen so that y.p.g. could now end the cumbersome widowhood, [...].<sup>150</sup>

Documents about this final marriage project are lacking, but this is likely to be because Ursula remained equally unenthusiastic about a remarriage, and also because the enterprise was cut short by Friedrich's death in 1608 and Enzlin's swift fall from grace in the months thereafter.

After Johann Friedrich took power in Stuttgart, no further marriage projects were proposed to Ursula. Perhaps she was deemed to be too advanced in age now, or maybe she had come to be such an accepted part of courtly life in Württemberg that removing her from it ceased to be a priority. Johann Friedrich's diary shows that she was a frequent visitor at court in Stuttgart. Several times a year Johann Friedrich noted that she came to court and stayed for several days. When she could not make the New Year's celebration in 1615, he noted that she had excused herself because she was not feeling well, thus indicating that it was out of the ordinary that she would miss a major annual celebration.<sup>151</sup> But even when she was not at court, she made sure to keep her connections active with the help of letters and gifts. In April 1617 Johann Friedrich noted in his diary that Ursula sent him a strange bird that a servant of hers had shot by the Neckar River, a gift that certainly delighted this prince, who was deeply passionate about hunting.<sup>152</sup>

What survives of Ursula's correspondence with members of the court of Stuttgart reveals her to be a well-connected dynastic actor, who was adept at information gathering, and who engaged closely in the administration of her widow's

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<sup>150</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 16, Enzlin to Friedrich, 16 September 1607, 'Nachem die fürstliche fraw Witib zu Nürtingen alß E.f.g. mit denselben Herzog Augustin von Lünenburg halben tractieren laßen leibschwacheit fürgerredet, aber I.f.g. sich aniezo bey gueter gesundtheit befunden, das ich dahin gedacht, ob nit zwischen I.f.g. vnd herzog Johann zu Zweybrücken ein f. heürath möchte zuerlangen sein damit E.f.g. das beschwärlichen Widumbs einmahl abkhommen khändten, [...]'.

<sup>151</sup> Johann Friedrich, *Tagebücher*, fol. 83r.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 217r.

residence.<sup>153</sup> In 1602 the current *Landhofmeister*, Eberhard von Limpurg, wrote to her in order to discuss an intervention in a matter of governance in the village of Denzlingen in his home department. Apparently, a local pastor had been accused of serious wrongdoing to the extent that Limpurg had seen himself forced to order an in-depth inquisition into the matter. Unfortunately, his letter did not specify the details of his findings, but they were alarming enough that he was certain that a *Vogtgericht* would have to be held to decide on the matter. He was worried that shifts in the local *Ehrbarkeit* would jeopardise the outcome of the ruling. Since his duties kept him at court at all times, he informed Ursula that he would send one of the court councillors to attend to the matter. He now wished her to send one of her own officials to travel to Denzlingen at the same time, so that they could work together, and ‘the incorrect matters could be changed and abolished’.<sup>154</sup> While the details of this operation are lost, it is evident that von Limpurg placed significant trust in the widow of Nürtingen, and saw in her a political collaborator.

Ursula appears to have had detailed knowledge of the microdynamics of power and the competencies among the officials at court. When, in 1629, her brother the Count Palatine of the Rhine Georg Gustav was gravely ill, and wished to have his territory pay homage to his son in order to clarify the line of succession, she wrote directly to Ludwig Friedrich (who was a regent of Württemberg after Johann Friedrich’s death the year before). She asked him to lend her the services of the upper council member Johann Ulrich Wolf ‘the legal doctor’, so that he could travel and support Georg Gustav in her stead.<sup>155</sup> In 1625 Ursula interceded for one of her subjects, a nobleman named Wilhelm Ludwig von Freiberg, who had fallen into arrears with payments he owed to Johann Friedrich, and who was thus supposed to leave his residence on the estate of Falkenstein. Ursula wanted him to be able to remain in the home while he struggled to repay his debt, and she wrote directly to the

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<sup>153</sup> Her correspondence in the archive carries the signatures HStAS G 57 Bü 16 and Bü 17.

<sup>154</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Eberhard zu Limpurg to Ursula, 25 October 1602, ‘Vnrichtigkeitten geendert vnd abgeschafft’.

<sup>155</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Ludwig Friedrich, 19 October 1629, ‘den Rechten doctoren’.

privy councillor in Stuttgart about the matter.<sup>156</sup> She thus shows a very intricate grasp of the councillors and officials working at court, and their respective specialties. Supplicants of all rank usually addressed their petitions to the duke, although in many instances it was actually his advisers and councillors who took the decisions, unless the matter touched a special ducal area of interest.<sup>157</sup> Ursula, too, usually wrote to the duke directly, but she appeared to know precisely when there was someone else who would be likely to assist her in a more efficient manner.

Her involvement in the issue of Freiberg's residential rights is revealing in a number of other ways. In 1625 she was successful with her petition to the privy councillor, and Freiberg and his family were allowed to remain on Falkenstein for the time being. In June of 1626, however, Freiberg's situation had remained unchanged, and Ursula now appealed to Johann Friedrich directly for an extension of Freiberg's leave to stay on the estate.<sup>158</sup> She added to her intercession that a failure to provide lodging for the Freiberg family would mean that they would return to his parents, who followed the teachings of the spiritualist Kaspar Schwenckfeldt, who did not share Luther's belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. She feared that the younger Wilhelm Ludwig von Freiberg, as well as his wife and children, would then endanger their souls with a return to the faith of their parents 'which would be difficult to answer for and would cause me grief of the heart, since I raised them from the christening basin'.<sup>159</sup> Ursula thus made it clear that she felt a very direct responsibility for the spiritual situation of those whom she considered to be her subjects.

How far she was willing to go to protect her flock became evident when her petition was denied. She decided to host the von Freiberg family in her own

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<sup>156</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to *Rath und Cammer Secretario*, 25 November 1625, she does not mention him by name but she is certainly addressing Heinrich Hiller the 'privy secretary' in office 1622-1628, and again from 1631, see Pfeilsticker, *Neues Württembergisches Dienerbuch*, vol. I, §1157.

<sup>157</sup> On the bureaucratic procedure attached to supplications see Birgit Rehse, *Die Supplikations- und Gnadenpraxis in Brandenburg-Preußen: eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der Kurmark unter Friedrich Wilhelm II. (1786 - 1797)* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 377-95.

<sup>158</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Johann Friedrich, 10 June 1626.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 'welches vns dan weil wir selbige vsser der heiligen tauff gehalten, von herzen leidt auch dermal eines schwerrlich zu ver andtworten were'.

residence, rather than let them move back to Freiberg's father in Öpfingen and risk their fall away from what she considered to be the one true faith. This was, of course, a complicated time to lodge additional people, since the Thirty Years' War had broken out some years earlier, and all of Württemberg was suffering from having to lodge troops over the winters. Ursula's situation was particularly difficult, as she explained to Johann Friedrich one year later in July 1627. She informed him that she had kept von Freiberg for over a year in her courtly household and 'furnished him with apartments and the necessary provisions for over a year at court, but we have to be ready daily that our amicable and beloved brothers and their relatives will come again to our house, since they are completely ruined and spoilt by the war'.<sup>160</sup> Yet Ursula did not present a problem to the duke without thinking of a solution. She wrote further that 'the councillor and bailiff in [Lieben]Zell Philip Ludwig, lord of Limpurg was called away by temporal death yesterday, [...] y[our] g[race] will know this by now'.<sup>161</sup> She proposed that Johann Friedrich now needed a 'capable person' to substitute him, and she thus proposed Freiberg for this position, which would give him both lodging and income.<sup>162</sup>

Ursula's resourcefulness and solution-oriented attitude also showed in her day-to-day running of her residence throughout the difficult years of war. During the frost of the winter of 1624/5, the fountain in the residence of Nürtingen suffered damages when a lead pipe burst. Ursula had asked Duke Johann Friedrich several times to send her his construction master to repair the damage, since now her servants were forced to walk much further to collect the water for the whole residence. Since the duke did not react, she sent the pipe concerned to Stuttgart, along with a letter asking Johann Friedrich to order the repairs on this, and then to

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<sup>160</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Johann Friedrich, 23 July 1627, 'so wol mit loßamenten alß nothwendiger tractation nun mehr vber Jhars bey hoff versorgt, aber täglich gewarten müssen, daß beede vnser freundliche geliebte Brüder vnd die Ihrigen, weil sie durch das kriegsweßen laider ganz ruiniert vndt verderbt seindt, vnß auch wider zu hauß kommen möchten'.

<sup>161</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Johann Friedrich, 7 February 1627, 'Rath vnd Obvervogten zu Zell, Philips Ludwigen herren zu Limpurgs vsser dieser welt durch den zeitlichen Todt gestrigs tags abgefordert [...] Desse tragen E.G. zweiffels ohn nun mehr guet wissens'.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 'taugliche Persohn'.

send it back to her.<sup>163</sup> One summer in 1630, before the court set out on a large deer hunt, she wrote to Stuttgart with a reminder that in previous years she had at times missed out on her share of venison meat, when the weather was too warm and the hunt took place far away from her residence. ‘Hence we ask amicably, [...] that the part owed to us of the forests here and close by will be delivered to us fresh and without damage or loss, as far as that is possible’.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, she took care to remain informed of the complicated and protracted actions of war, and she took what preparations she could for an exit strategy, should her part of the territory become a battleground. In 1630 she wrote repeatedly to Stuttgart for information on how the ‘issue with the monasteries’ was developing. She referred here to the edict of restitution, which ordered the Protestant princes of the Holy Roman Empire to return lands they had previously confiscated from monasteries to the Catholic Church.<sup>165</sup> As a steadfast Lutheran, Ursula was, of course, horrified by these measures, and she thus asked that ‘y[our] g[race] would let us know the actual composition of the [monastery issue], although we do not want to doubt [...] that this arduous enterprise will be stopped again’.<sup>166</sup> On another occasion, in October 1631, she wrote to Stuttgart after her court master had brought her news from an officer in Schorndorff that General Tilly was planning to bring soldiers to Kirchheim and Nürtingen, as well as one thousand horses. This prospect alarmed Ursula and underneath the official letter she added in her own hand ‘y[our] g[race] may come to my aid in this and not allow that my widow’s seat will be charged with people to use as their winter quarters’.<sup>167</sup> In Stuttgart nothing had been heard of this rumour, and it was suspected that the officer was merely attempting to stir trouble. In 1633, however, war was

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<sup>163</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Johann Friedrich, 10 March 1624.

<sup>164</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Ludwig Friedrich, 4 August 1630, ‘alß pitten wir freündlich, E. Ld. Gnedig anbefehlen wollen, daß vnß die schuldigkeit vsser hiesiger oder nechstgelegenen vörsten frisch vnd ohne schaden oder abgang, souil möglich, geliffert werden thüe.’

<sup>165</sup> On the details of the ‘edict of restitution’ of June 1629 see Gotthard, *Der Dreissigjährige Krieg*, pp. 133-9.

<sup>166</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Ludwig Friedrich, 23 July 1630, ‘E.G. vnß die eigentliche beschaffenheit dessen zuer nachrichtung vngeschwert freüntlich wisse lassen wir wollen zwar nit zweiffeln, [...] dieses höchstbeschwerliche vorhaben widerum eingestellt [werden]’.

<sup>167</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Julius Friedrich, 10 October 1631, ‘El wollen mir hierinnen zu hilf kommen, vnd nit zu geben, das man meinen widum mit volck beleg, vnd wintter quardir haben’.

increasingly omnipresent and Ursula was trying to fortify her small territory. Again she turned to Stuttgart, enquiring if it was expected that Nürtingen would remain safe for the immediate future, or if it was time for her to retreat to the fortress of Hoheneuffen. If she was to stay, she wanted to have some additional troops sent to Nürtingen, or the assurance that the ‘widow’s subjects’ would be allowed to ‘take over the defence’.<sup>168</sup>

Ursula administered the department of Nürtingen during the reign of Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia, as well as in the war-torn years thereafter, with great care. The examples above show how she extended patronage to her subjects, assured the provision of the residence with food and water, gathered the latest information on domestic and foreign political developments, and designed proposals for the defence and evacuation of her residence. Her position as an administrator of a part of Württemberg territory in many ways mirrored the position of Johann Friedrich’s younger brothers, who had been given lands that they administered, and which served them as semi-independent residences to settle with their households. This type of division of territory distinguished itself from the medieval practice of dividing a territory up among brothers by its temporary nature. The *fürstbrüderliche Vergleich*, was meant to guarantee Johann Friedrich’s younger male siblings the opportunity to make good livelihoods in accordance with their princely rank, but it did not constitute the partition of Württemberg. As we have seen, Ludwig Friedrich was ascribed Mömpelgard on the west side of the Rhine, and Julius Friedrich Weitingen and Brenz in the east of Württemberg for the duration of their and their male offspring’s lives. Whilst Ludwig Friedrich was officially given sovereignty over Mömpelgard, this did not constitute a major *de facto* change on his administration of these lands.<sup>169</sup> When his last remaining successor died in 1723, the territory fell back to the main Württemberg line in Stuttgart, as Weitingen had in 1705.<sup>170</sup> The Dowager Duchess Ursula did not have the legal opportunity to pass on her rule over Nürtingen

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<sup>168</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Eberhard, 1 October 1633, ‘widumbsunderthanen’, ‘das defension wehen durch selbige bestellen lassen wollen.’

<sup>169</sup> Lorenz, Mertens, and Press, eds., *Das Haus Württemberg: ein biographisches Lexikon*, p. 176f.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

to a successor. After the battle of Nördlingen, in 1634, there was widespread looting by imperial troops in Württemberg, and Ursula had to flee to Esslingen. She died soon after, when she returned to her plundered castle in Nürtingen. Her widow's seat was incorporated again into the territory of the main line, although in reality at this point Duke Eberhard, Dowager Duchess Barbara Sophia, and the entire Württemberg court had been forced to flee into exile to Strasbourg. They were to remain there for four years, which left Nürtingen, as well as the rest of Württemberg, in a highly insecure position. So, whilst there were legal differences in the agreements that had given Ursula and Ludwig Friedrich the administration of their respective pieces of Württemberg land, their day-to-day running of these unequal territories did not appear to differ dramatically.

The themes of Ludwig Friedrich's correspondence with Stuttgart, after he had taken up his seat in Mömpelgard in 1617, are remarkably similar to those Ursula discussed in her letters sent to court. Both Ursula and Ludwig Friedrich sent regular courtesy letters to commemorate familial events and celebrations, such as New Year, births, and christenings.<sup>171</sup> In November 1617 Ludwig Friedrich had bought a group of falcons, and sent them to Stuttgart so that 'y[our] g[race] may keep all of them, or choose the best among them'.<sup>172</sup> In July 1618 Johann Friedrich sent some hunting dogs to Württemberg, and Ludwig Friedrich sent an enthusiastic letter thanking him, and insisting that he now felt deeply his brotherly affection.<sup>173</sup> The hunt was a recurring topic among the brothers. Ludwig Friedrich often wrote how many pigs, deer, or birds he had killed on a hunting expedition, and he made a special announcement on two occasions when he and his court master had killed wolves that had ventured on to the lands.<sup>174</sup> Ludwig Friedrich also engaged with the design of the living space in the Mömpelgard residence, and on one occasion he asked Johann Friedrich kindly to send him 'the life-size image of [Duke] Ulrich as he is drawn in

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<sup>171</sup> Many of these letters can be located in HStAS G 66 Bü 38.

<sup>172</sup> HStAS G 66 Bü 38, Ludwig Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, 10 November 1617, 'mögen E.L. sie alle miteinander behalten, oder die besten drauß wehlen'.

<sup>173</sup> HStAS G 66 Bü 38, Ludwig Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, 31 July 1618.

<sup>174</sup> HStAS G 66 Bü 38, Ludwig Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, 13 May 1628 and Ludwig Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, 13 February 1620.

Stuttgart [...], I would like to put it in the black chamber here'.<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, Ludwig Friedrich passed on any information regarding the political entities in close proximity to his borders. Shortly after his arrival in Mömpelgard, the Duc de Longueville in Normandy sent a diplomat 'who is now my neighbor and lives not a day and a half from here in his country'.<sup>176</sup> Equally Ludwig Friedrich reported that Archduke Leopold sent an emissary to greet him in his new position.<sup>177</sup> This was a diplomatic event that was certainly not without its delicacy after Barbara Sophia's family in Brandenburg had opposed Leopold's stance in the Jülich-Kleve succession crisis years earlier. Once military conflict in the war crept closer, in the summer of 1620, Ludwig Friedrich wrote to Stuttgart 'because I have had various uncomfortable news, as if the Duke of Bavaria would have approached y[our] g[race's] estates, by God we have to be very careful [...]to find out what the case is'.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, he gave news of troops of the Catholic league gathering 'not more than four hours from my borders [...] the whole Armada will take the direction of the Palatinate [...]'.<sup>179</sup> Ludwig Friedrich thus functioned as a provider of first-hand information, which certainly provided a valuable perspective to Stuttgart, since it stemmed from the immediate proximity of the French and Swiss frontier lands. His and Ursula's correspondence shared another topic, namely that of money. Ludwig Friedrich felt that his allocated payments were not high enough to cover all the expenses he had with his residence in Mömpelgard, and he was not shy to bring this to the attention of Johann Friedrich. Ursula, too, regularly had to write to Württemberg with reference to 'what is owed from y[our] g[race's] *Landschreiberei* accountancy'.<sup>180</sup> It appears,

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<sup>175</sup> HStAS G 66 Bü 38, Ludwig Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, 26 April 1620, 'Vlrichs biltnuß lebens groß wie er zu stutgardt [...] abconterfeit ist, wolt ihn gern ins schwarz gemach hier thun'.

<sup>176</sup> HStAS G 66 Bü 38, Ludwig Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, 18 December 1617, 'ist ehr jez mein nachbar wohnt nicht anderthalb tag reyß in seinem land von mir'.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> HStAS G 66 Bü 38, Ludwig Friedrich to Johann Friedrich, doc. 29, 10 June 1620, 'dan mier iezund allerhand vnangehehme zeitungen zukommen, als ob der herzog in Beyern E.L. Landschafft sich etwas genehrt hab solte, daher ich weiß gott sehr sorgfältig [...] habe zuuernemen wie es hierin beschafft'.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 'so nit mehr dan 4. Stund von meinen grenzen [...]die ganze Armada vff Chur Pfalz zu ihren weg nemmen sollen'.

<sup>180</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Ludwig Friedrich, February 1630, 'Vßstandt bei E.l.d. Landschreiberei verwaltung'; also see G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Johann Friedrich, 14 December 1623; G

however, that, at least prior to the start of the war, Ursula was usually quite solvent, since on occasion she lent significant sums to family members. In 1618 she had lent one thousand gulden to Julius Friedrich, who pawned her two expensive gems. Over a year later the debt still persisted, and it was Johann Friedrich who saw himself forced to pay her back in early 1620, for which she thanked her 'dear son and relative' graciously.<sup>181</sup>

Whilst the legal ramifications of Ursula's widow's seat and Ludwig Friedrich's rule over Mömpelgard were certainly not the same, their pragmatic relationship with the court of Stuttgart during their respective periods of administration do not appear to differ fundamentally. Both of them gathered political information and shared this with the duke in Stuttgart. Both of them acted as representatives of the Württemberg dynasty in their respective locations. They maintained their residences and kept up good relations with the local subjects, as far as this was feasible in wartime. I suggest that here we observe a political and social configuration under which the impact of the category of gender forfeited some of the meanings it carried in other contexts, for instance, where the main ruling household of the dynasty was concerned. Ursula was not impeded by her gender to carry out the tasks necessary to hold her department for as long as possible during the insecurities of war, and she even engaged with possible strategies for the defence of (and retreat from) her territory. That she found herself in this position is no coincidence, however. As has been shown above, she insisted on maintaining her state of widowhood using all the diplomatic tools at her disposal, and thus revealed significant skill in dynastic negotiations.

Once more it is in claiming or reasserting a certain dynastic position that gender proved to be an important resource that could be activated if the situation required it. The latent possibility of drawing on this potent resource comes to the fore in an instance of (perceived) conflict between Ursula and the court of Stuttgart. In

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57 Bü 17, Ursula to Cammer Secretario Heinrich Hillern, 26 February 1626, on Hillern see Pfeilsticker, *Württembergisches Dienerbuch*, vol. I, § 1157.

<sup>181</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Johann Friedrich, 6 March 1620, 'lieber sohn vnnd geuatter'; also see G 57 Bü 17, Johann Friedrich to Ursula, 19 February 1619 for details on the debt.

her usual official letters to Duke Johann Friedrich, Ursula habitually chose the following standard opening lines: ‘Highborn prince y[our] g[race] be always in the first instance [assured] of our amicable greetings and what we can provide in honourable love and good fortune, amicable dear cousin, son and relative’.<sup>182</sup> She digressed from these standard greeting lines on one occasion where she noted: ‘I feel and learn from a variety of circumstances, that y[our] g[race] has noted me disparately, and has cast an unfriendship on me, which aggrieves me not a little and hurts me very much’.<sup>183</sup> She responded to falling out of favour with a letter written ‘with my own hands’ and which she opened with the address: ‘amicable dear cousin son and relative, y[our] g[race] should firstly be [assured] of my faithful Motherly heart and what I can provide kindly and in good fortune [...]’.<sup>184</sup> Breaking with epistolary ceremonial to write in one’s own hand and forgoing the formal tone of the first person plural would already have caught the attention of the duke. Ursula followed this up with a reminder of her special familial ties to the duke with a reference to her ‘motherly heart’ that was at once visceral and of symbolic gravity. In the following, she entreated the duke to meet with her either in Nürtingen or in Stuttgart, so that they could ‘discuss with each other amicably and intimately’. Throughout the letter, she continued to use the gendered language of motherly affection: ‘do not let yourself be misled further from me, do not turn your faithful filial heart from me [...] for in me you have at all times a faithful lady mother’.<sup>185</sup> Ursula’s references to her position within the dynastic familial network were designed to evoke a trusting and intimate exchange with the duke, but equally it

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<sup>182</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Johann Friedrich, 15 March 1619, ‘Hochgeborner Fürst E.Ld. seye vnser freündtlich gruß auch was wir mehr ehren liebs vnnd guets vermögen allezeit zuuor Freundtlicher lieber vetter Sohn vnnd Geuatter’.

<sup>183</sup> HStAS G 57 Bü 17, Ursula to Freidrich, 2 February 1618, ‘weil ich aus aller hant vmstanden spir vnd erfar, das ich bey El vngeleich ein gethragen warden, vnd dieselb ein vnfreündtschaft auf mich geworffen, welges mich nit wenig bedriht vnd sehr weh tut’.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., ‘mit eignen handen’; ‘freüntlicher lieber vetter sohn vnd geuatter, El sey mein gethreüwes Mütterliches herz vnd was ich liebs vnd gutts vermag iderzeit zuuor’.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., ‘mit ein ander freundtlich vnd verthrauenlich besprechen kinten’, ‘sich weitter wider mich verleitten zu lassen, vnd ir gethreüwes söhnlisches herz von mir ab zu wenden, [...] auch an mir ein ganz gethreüwer frauw mutter {ider zeit} haben’; In the original German the turn of phrase ‘filial heart’ is more clearly gendered, since the word *söhnlich* was used.

would have reminded Johann Friedrich of the respect and care he owed to his dynastic ‘mother’, one of the most basic premises for the upkeep of a good social order structured along Christian ideals. As such, her reference to her ‘motherly’ heart and body interacts with gender and rank, and produces an argument of a different substance, than, for instance, Johann Friedrich’s construction of young princely bodies of husband and wife, who need appropriate exercise to stay healthy and fertile. Gender could be codified in multiple ways, which gave this resource of power its wide applicability.

### ***Conclusion***

In this final chapter I have sought to demonstrate that an important factor for the salience of gender for the practice of power was the option to expand and contract in meaning according to specific dynastic contexts. Johann Friedrich and Barbara Sophia collaborated more extensively on the pragmatic labour of governance than did their predecessors. Nevertheless, both marriages discussed in this dissertation remained compatible with the flexible conception of the ‘working couple’, with the exception of Friedrich’s attempts at establishing an alternative female household in his dependency.<sup>186</sup> The lengthy period of marriage contracting gave Johann Friedrich an opportunity to air his grievances from a strong position, since his father absolutely needed him to make a marriage in order to guarantee the survival of his (still very young) dynasty. The wedding contract between Barbara Sophia and Johann Friedrich left open the issue of whether she would be able to act as a guardian for an underage son, should Johann Friedrich die before her. The argument was put forward that gender complicated dynastic house laws without eliciting the same zeal for clarification, as did ambiguities of precedence and succession. This allowed for a limited room for manoeuvre that capable dynastic actors could use in order to carve out a greater stake in the practice of power for themselves. The guardianship and eventual declaration of majority of Duke Eberhard III was described here as an

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<sup>186</sup> See chapters 3 and 4.

instance where ambiguities about how gender affected a dynastic outcome created an intra-dynastic competition that Barbara Sophia was able to decide to her advantage. In this sense, gender could aid dynasties in specific situations to harness the labour of actors who were distinguished in political ability, as well as in dynastic rank. Similar findings were made for dynastic widows. The Dowager Duchess Ursula lived for decades in Württemberg, administering her widow's seat with much the same confidence and ability as Johann Friedrich's brothers governed their departments. For widows and younger brothers who were set up with appanages and residences, gender ceased to define concisely how they could contribute to dynastic labour. Overall, it has been found that gendered roles were most often invoked by individual dynastic actors who sought to bring about a change or an improvement in their status. Gender remained present as a latent resource at all times, and it could be drawn on by actors who felt the need to connect their personal situations with perceived natural and divine orders in order to strengthen their positions. It has thus been shown that the variability of gender as a category contributed to its value as a resource of power. It is certainly the same quality that complicates our analysis of gender in dynastic politics to this day, but I do hope to have shown that it is crucial to develop methods to achieve just that, since it helps us to understand better the complex reasons behind the longevity of the dynastic system itself.

## Conclusion

The introduction to this thesis stated that the attempt to locate the *Handlungsspielräume*, or spaces for action, of dynastic women without asking the same question of their male counterparts could not possibly lend insights into the wider dynamics of dynastic politics. In the following, some conclusions will be drawn on what the previous discussion of the court of Stuttgart under the Dukes Friedrich and Johann Friedrich reveals about male *Handlungsspielräume* in the courtly practice of power. Thereafter, the most central results of this thesis will be summarised, before some final considerations on the future of this field of study will be offered.

### *Male Spaces for Action at the Early Modern Court of Stuttgart*

In the first chapter we have considered the relationship between courtly spaces and gender, and it has emerged that one way in which the duke's exalted position was marked was through his access to all courtly spaces. For most male members of the court the *Frauenzimmer* was not readily accessible, except by special invitation or at designated hours, and even then a strict protocol was in place. The head of the courtly household, however, might access the *Frauenzimmer* at any time he chose. Duke Ludwig, for instance, was such a frequent visitor that the ordinance for the *Hofmeisterin* at the time stipulated that she see to it that the rooms were not too hot, as this would anger the duke when he dropped in.<sup>1</sup>

While the reigning duke enjoyed extensive freedom of movement at court, the situation was rather different for younger dynastic males. The first years of their lives were spent living as part of the community of the *Frauenzimmer* under the tutelage

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<sup>1</sup> HStAS A 20 Bü 27, ordinance for the *Hofmeisterin*, 1577, fol. 2v, ‚vnnnd das sie es nit zu heiß mach, darmit wann mein gnediger Fürst vnd herr darinnen ist, das Irrer F.G. nit zornig werdt/.‘.

of the duchess, the *Hofmeisterin*, and the *Hofmeister*. From a very young age they followed a strict didactic routine that centrally included sermons and religious tuition. Their movements were supervised and, as their health was central to the dynasty, the court ordinances stipulated minutely how often they should be washed, when their chambers would be cleaned and who would taste their meals.<sup>2</sup> As they grew older they were sent away from their home court, and the Württemberg princes usually attended the *Collegium Illustre* in Tübingen. At this time they were given a small courtly household of their own that comprised a *Hofmeister*, some young noble pages, and a varying number of servants. They acquired some decision-making power over this group of people, but ultimately the members of their entourage were contracted by their ducal fathers. The case of one of Johann Friedrich's servants who collaborated with Duke Friedrich in order to push forward the marriage negotiations with Brandenburg behind his master's back has indicated that the ultimate loyalty of the prince's entourage lay elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> We have also seen some evidence that details of the prince's physical wellbeing were being remotely decided by his parents, as the letters from Johann Friedrich asking his mother Sibylla for confectionary and pharmacy items suggest. Furthermore, a young prince's freedom of movement could be dictated by his father to a significant extent. For several months in 1607 Friedrich denied his son an audience with him in Stuttgart,<sup>4</sup> and Johann Friedrich expended considerable energy trying to persuade his father to allow him to travel further afield.<sup>5</sup>

In order to reach full adulthood and to become qualified to rule over a Lutheran territory, a Württemberg prince had to get married. For both Friedrich and Johann Friedrich, tying the knot was a ritual of passage that stood in close connection with their ascent to power. When Friedrich married, he was immediately given the Württemberg department of Mömpelgard by his cousin Duke Ludwig, and this comprised the first step towards his eventual rule of the entire duchy. Yet, the

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<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.* and the other ordinances in HStAS A 20 Bü 27, as well as chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> See chapter 5, pp. 206f.

<sup>4</sup> See HStAS G 67 Bü 1, letters from Johann Friedrich to Friedrich in May 1607.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter 5.

process of finding a suitable bride was more complicated than might be imagined, for the pool of potential candidates was relatively small. A bride would have to come from another princely dynasty of approximately similar status in order to maintain the noble lineage. In the Holy Roman Empire there was less of a tendency for high aristocratic princes to marry women of slightly lower rank, but with better financial credentials, than for example in England, because dowries were usually fixed according to the status of the families involved.<sup>6</sup> Besides parity in status, the confession of prospective marital partners was crucial. Marriages across confessional divides were viewed with great suspicion, which essentially narrowed the pool of potential brides for Württemberg princes to daughters from Lutheran families of at least ducal rank. Yet even within this manageable group of potential brides, princes were by no means completely free to choose. Friedrich and Johann Friedrich were fortunate in being able to marry the women who appear to have been their first choice, but in actual fact the fathers or older brothers of young princes were the crucial figures in marriage brokering. Hence, we should not see uncertainty and lack of agency in marital negotiations as a purely female concern. The correspondence between the twenty-four year old Johann Friedrich and his father on the topic of marriage has revealed that dynastic males could also suffer from anxiety about the significant changes in lifestyle that marriage would entail. Furthermore, Johann Friedrich absolutely insisted on meeting with his bride before any marital contracts were made in an attempt to assert some control over the specifics of adulthood that were awaiting him.<sup>7</sup>

A princeling of a Lutheran dynasty would have been crucially aware of the importance of a functioning ducal marriage. In the third chapter we have considered the importance of the division of labour between the married ducal couple in order to fulfil the roles of *Landesvater* and *Landesmutter*, which held such a crucial symbolism in this context. It has emerged that princes were aided by the prescription of active obedience for their wives, which allowed them significant freedom in their

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<sup>6</sup> See Hurwich, 'Marriage strategy among the German nobility, 1400–1699', p. 194.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter 5, pp. 201–17.

comportment.<sup>8</sup> This would be balanced out by the (emotional) labour of their wives. Hence, even if a couple no longer communicated efficiently, prescribed gendered roles within marriage could uphold the prince's role as a *Hausvater* within his own household, allowing him to lay claim to the role of *Landesvater* for the territory with more legitimacy. Yet, one aspect of married life was much less negotiable: fertility. The failure to produce children was a grave political risk that could dramatically restrict the prince's *Handlungsspielraum*. This was an experience that Friedrich's own father had suffered, when it became apparent that the Württemberg dynasty was running the risk of dying out in the male line. Georg, Count of Mömpelgard, at the age of fifty-seven, was coerced into marriage with a young woman against his express wishes.<sup>9</sup> This marriage nevertheless produced the result everyone had hoped for in the form of Friedrich. Pregnancy and reproduction were particularly fraught topics for dynastic men. The labour associated with these issues had to be shared, but they could never control them completely; the eternal threat that a child might not be theirs was always looming in the background.

When Dukes Friedrich and Johann Friedrich finally held power over their duchy, we cannot think of them as fully independent rulers imposing their will on a complacent territory. The princes of the Holy Roman Empire often comported themselves as if they were sovereigns of their territories. It was accurate that the Emperor's power over their decisions was quite limited, but nevertheless they were locked into multiple dependencies. For one, contemporary prescriptions for territorial rulers maintained that in order to fulfil their appointed task properly they had to remain open to the suggestions of their advisors and the representatives of the estates.<sup>10</sup> Although it was accepted that the duke had decision-making power over a

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<sup>8</sup> See chapter 3, pp. 159-64.

<sup>9</sup> See on this Sauer, *Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg 1557-1608*, pp. 15-7, Duke Christoph and Philipp of Hesse were apparently the main instigators of this marriage.

<sup>10</sup> See Gerhard Menk, 'Der deutsche Territorialstaat in Veit Ludwig von Seckendorffs Werk und Wirken', in Heide Wunder, ed., *Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung in der Frühen Neuzeit: Geschlechter und Geschlecht* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 55-92, here p. 73, where it is argued that contemporary prescriptions for good rulership focused on the communicative relationship between rulers and their advisors.; Also see Bernhardt, *Die Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg und ihre Beamten 1520 - 1629*, p. 7, where the author cites a passage written by Melchior Jäger, which

wide range of issues, it was crucial that he was perceived to be listening to the opinions of the stakeholders, whose rank and position bound them into political procedure, even if in the end he could not follow all their suggestions. If he failed to do this, perceptions of imbalance could arise, and these were often given shape in gendered terms. Rachel Weil has found that the accusations against Charles II of England were constructed over sexual motives:

Charles's overactive penis was equated with his overmighty sceptre: that is, he was a tyrant. And at the same time, Charles's sexuality was presented as exhausting him, draining his fluids, and exposing him to infection or poisoning at the hands of Roman Catholic French whores [...].<sup>11</sup>

Duke Friedrich failed to achieve balance and measure on a number of issues. He bullied the estates into giving way to his will on key issues such as the levying of military powers and taxation. In order to impose his ideas he relied on a small number of trusted councillors, thus opening himself up to allegations of an improper distribution of influence among councillors and courtiers. Moreover, his extramarital relations went above and beyond what could be counted as acceptable even for a ruling prince. In Magdalena Möringer's house he consolidated a space not dissimilar to the courtly *Frauenzimmer*, but with an agenda that stood solely in his personal interest.<sup>12</sup> On top of this, he entertained a significant number of other affairs with women of very different backgrounds and marital status. Mistresses of his could be found at one time in Urach, Heidenheim, Freudenstadt, and Tübingen, and it is likely that on his many journeys through Württemberg he engaged in illicit sexual activity as well as in affairs of the state. This thesis has argued that Friedrich's behaviour opposite the estates and councillors, and his role as a philandering husband, should be read as two sides of the same coin. Duke Friedrich was, it seems, particularly influenced by French and English ideals of sovereignty, and his endeavours were focused on centralising power on his person. In the context of the territorial diets he

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advised that the duke should listen to his councillors even when they disagreed with him, as long as they argued their points in a reasoned and respectful manner. It was emphasised that the duke should not listen to flatterers (*Schmeichler*). Bernhard cites HStAS A 17 Bü 22/1.

<sup>11</sup> Weil, 'Royal flesh, gender and the construction of monarchy', p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> See chapter 4.

found that he could do this with the help of capable jurists who pushed through his initiatives. Furthermore, in terms of divesting attention away from the ducal couple onto himself, he may have found it equally useful to pluralise some of the components of the role of the *Landesmutter* across a number of women, whilst simultaneously constraining Duchess Sibylla's areas of influence within the courtly practice of power.<sup>13</sup>

All of these endeavours were observed with apprehension by a number of councillors and representatives of the estates, as well as by Friedrich's dynastic family, to the extent that on his death the new administration had to address the negative repercussions of Friedrich's most significant transgressions in order to consolidate itself around a new ruler. Johann Friedrich's first steps as ruler of Württemberg were entirely determined by Friedrich's legacy, not by his own political initiative.<sup>14</sup> He persecuted the former privy councillor Enzlin, and the former *Landprokurator* Esslinger, who had been Friedrich's closest collaborators.<sup>15</sup> They were widely resented by the estates and their severe prosecution (and Enzlin's eventual execution) helped to redress the relationship between the territorial diet and the ducal regime. Johann Friedrich further invited councillor Melchior Jäger to join his administration. He had already served under Dukes Christoph and Ludwig, but had been dismissed by Friedrich. Jäger was tasked with an assessment of how to address the fallout from Friedrich's extramarital affairs. Jäger responded with a long and detailed document that surveyed closely biblical and legal prescriptions on adultery, and eventually came to the conclusion that this was a matter that had to be kept as quiet as possible. For he argued that it would be impossible for Johann Friedrich to proceed against his father's transgressions without undermining his own authority, and he stated explicitly that the same was true for Duchess Sibylla, whom he addressed as a stakeholder of equal proportions in this conflict. An extract from

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<sup>13</sup> See chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>15</sup> See Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag: 1457 - 1957*, p. 276f., Eßlinger was almost equally resented by the estates as Enzlin, but his punishment was milder: he was merely exiled from Württemberg. Enzlin bore the brunt of the resentment and came to act as a scapegoat.

this document gives us a flavour of the severity with which this threat was regarded.

Jäger insisted:

How irresponsible it would be also against the princely brothers if they would be [...] driven away from this land and people alongside y[our] p[rincely] g[race] [...] cannot be described with any words also y.p.g. can assess himself, as a prince blessed by God the almighty with a high reason, [...] how highly the papists would be pleased if they could engage such a noble and powerful duchy in a dispute and they could push land and people back into the darkened popery, or if one was to [...] oppose them, there would still be great bloodshed and ruin in our beloved fatherland [...]

<sup>16</sup>

Of course it must be borne in mind that Jäger was in a position where he only stood to gain from guiding the young duke through a crisis situation, and it might have been in his interest to emphasise a threat and offer a solution to it in the same stroke. Nevertheless he could not have picked such a serious situation out of thin air. It must have been plausible at least to consider that the nature of the response provoked by Friedrich's sexual transgressions could pose a threat to the integrity of the territory. As we have seen in chapter four, Johann Friedrich was forced to let most suspected mistresses go unscathed, bar one, and even in the case of Magdalena Möringer the duke was reacting, not controlling the situation proactively. All of this would suggest that even a duke could not exploit and enlarge his *Handlungsspielraum* at will. Neither was it acceptable for him to constrain the areas for manoeuvre of his wife to an extreme degree in the Lutheran context: sooner or later there would be a destabilising backlash to deal with.<sup>17</sup>

Perception was key in order to rule effectively, and Johann Friedrich poured significant amounts of money and effort into a number of lavish court festivals in

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<sup>16</sup> HStAS G 60 Bü 9, Gutachten from Melchior Jäger, 7 July 1608, fols. 10rv, 'wie ohnverantwortlich auch es gegen hochvermelten herren gebrüder fallen würde das sie [...] neben vnnnd mit E.F.G. von lanndt vnnnd leuttten vertriben, [...], das khöndt mit kheinen wortten beschriben werden auch E.F.G. alls von Gott dem allmechtigen mit hohen verstandt begabten Fürsten, bey sich selbst vernunfftiglich ermeßen, Insonderhaitt aber auch Inn betrachtung ziehen, wie höchlich sich die Papisten erfreuwen würden, wann sie ein solches vornemb vnnnd mächtig fürstenthumb des Reichs In ein disputat [...] Landt vnnnd Leutt widerumb Inn das [verfinsterts Pabstumb] verstoßen, oder da man sich [...] opponiren soltte nichts desto weniger großes bluot vergüßen vnnnd verderbung vnnßers geliebten vatterlandts vorgehen würde [...]'.

<sup>17</sup> Another example is that of Duke Ulrich of Württemberg's mistreated wife Duchess Sabine, who eventually had a hand in his banishment from the territory. See on this Hohkamp, 'Marital affairs as a public matter within the Holy Roman Empire', pp. 213-28.

Stuttgart, which offered an opportunity for members of the Protestant Union to meet and negotiate their alliance.<sup>18</sup> Such occasions were crucial for territorial princes of this time, as it gave them an opportunity to reaffirm their rank within the hierarchy of the empire and the chance to strengthen alliances with other ruler. This became increasingly crucial to political and actual survival. The duke had some freedom of choice over how to present himself, as we have seen with Friedrich and his choice to portray the sexually alluring Americana. Nevertheless, the framework within which his grand entrance took place, as well as the reception it would receive, were largely outside his control. Tournaments and hunting were key occasions of dynastic male sociability and participation within them was not voluntary. Princes learned to accustom their bodies to such practices from a very young age, and it is certain that many rulers found great pleasure in military style practices, such as shooting and horse-riding, as well as in the drinking and feasting that usually accompanied such events. Yet such exercises to emphasise male vitality were not open to all dynastic men. For instance, Friedrich Achilles of Württemberg, one of Duchess Sibylla's sons, was too obese to mount a horse even from a very young age. He died unmarried at forty years of age on the small princely seat of Neuenstadt (the same one Prince Johann Friedrich had turned down in his youth), after a life devoted to learning and scholarship.<sup>19</sup> It is doubtful whether he had had much say in choosing this path for himself.

In general, the opportunities for action for younger dynastic males differed significantly from those of their older brothers in the direct line of succession. For one, they were only allowed to marry if their older brothers appointed them a certain amount of land to rule as an appanage, and otherwise they might see themselves pushed into alternative careers in the military or, in Catholic territories, within ecclesiastical life. Yet, even if they were appointed a small department to rule over, such as Ludwig Friedrich and Julius Friedrich were given by Johann Friedrich, it

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<sup>18</sup> As discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>19</sup> For the full biographical information on Friedrich Achilles see Lorenz, Mertens, and Press, eds., *Das Haus Württemberg: ein biographisches Lexikon*, p. 149.

could not be said that their day-to-day practice of governance differed fundamentally from that exercised by a dynastic widow such as Ursula of Nürtingen. Ludwig Friedrich and Julius Friedrich were afforded crucial influence during the regency on behalf of the underage Duke Eberhard, but the latter had to witness his claim to power being challenged by Dowager Duchess Barbara Sophia, who put forward a strong argument for her say in the specifics of the regency on the basis of her role as a dynastic mother.<sup>20</sup>

In view of this, should we conclude that the dynastic men and women of Württemberg both partook in the practice of power in similar ways, only in different gradations?<sup>21</sup> This would be a plausible and illuminating conclusion if our first interest lay with individual men and women. If we look at the specific cases of the duchesses considered here, it does emerge that they all held highly political roles. They represented the continuity of the dynasty as wives and mothers of rulers, and they shared directly in the practice of power over their fertility, their care-giving and didactic functions, as well as their relationship with the duke. Rulers' consorts usually also took on tasks of courtly representation to varying degrees, which might include patronage of the arts, representational visits to neighbouring princes, the upkeep of networks with other dynastic women of the empire, as well as the maintenance of their own representational household in the form of the *Frauenzimmer*. Here, however, their room for manoeuvre could be constrained severely if their husbands were interested in keeping much of the practice of power under their own control.<sup>22</sup> Yet, if we set our sights on an analysis of the dynastic

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<sup>20</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>21</sup> Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Nur die Frau des Kaisers? Kommentar', in Bettina Braun, Katrin Keller, and Matthias Schnettger, eds., *Nur die Frau des Kaisers?: Kaiserinnen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Wien, 2016), pp. 245-51, p. 247, suggests that the *Handlungsspielräume* of women in the early modern period differed from those of dynastic men in gradation, not in category. She puts forward the view that the categorical difference between men and women on the political stage only came into being with the rise of citizenship and universal male suffrage in the nineteenth century. Yet, Stollberg-Rilinger focuses on if and how dynastic women's political actions differed from those of their male counterparts in substance. I would agree with her assessment in this context, but argue that constructions of gender difference had the further far-reaching impact on dynastic power, which is outlined above.

<sup>22</sup> See chapter 3 for this argument.

courtly system itself, rather than on individual actors within it, it emerges that gender, much like rank, figured as a category of difference that constituted a resource for the continuity of dynastic power. Some women and some men may have had very comparable experiences of access to the practice of power. In sum, however, the clear hierarchy that was continually being reproduced between genders at court cannot be argued away.<sup>23</sup> This thesis has demonstrated that it is important to acknowledge this, because the category of gender difference actually performed important services for the cultural construct of dynasty. The identification of these services allows us to gain a deeper understanding of why dynastic forms of rule were successful in binding subjects in loyalty for so long.

### ***Flexibility and Differentiation***

The services that gender difference performed can be grouped according to two different contributions to the dynastic system: flexibility and differentiation. Let us now consider what each chapter has revealed about gender as a resource of the practice of power.

In the first chapter gender difference has been considered at the level of the dynastic court as a system incorporating household(s) and governance. Here it has emerged that gender provided an additional criterion according to which courtly space, and thus hierarchies, could be structured. The largely homosocial spaces of the *Ritterstube* and the *Frauenzimmer* conferred a higher status to those who were granted access to them than to those who remained within mixed courtly spaces. Secondly, gender could help in complicating the hierarchies of court officials via the levels of integration into the courtly household that were reached by individual members and their families. For instance, a nobleman in court service might have

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<sup>23</sup>See also Judith M. Bennett, *History matters: patriarchy and the challenge of feminism*, (Philadelphia, 2006), ch. 4 'The Patriarchal Equilibrium', pp. 54-78, which argues that it is a characteristic of patriarchy in history to make 'bargains' with some women, while continuing to disadvantage others. According to Bennett, this should not deter our view of the patriarchal system as a whole.

access to most of the male designated spaces of the court, whilst his wife could, under specific circumstances, gain access to the *Frauenzimmer*, thus elevating the opportunities for action at court of the couple. The same did not apply to courtiers with a burgher background, and in this way an additional level of differentiation was being created between them and their noble colleagues. Yet overall, it should also be noted that access to an additional gender role, such as that of ‘husband’, was an additional distinction. Many members of the courtly household were not granted the privilege of legitimate reproduction. These differentiations were controlled minutely, and the fact that the duke himself issued judgements over infractions, rather than delegating such matters to his trusted councillors, shows the importance of the ordering of the court as a highly differentiated reproductive regime. Finally, the gendering of different courtly spaces also helped to relate these areas more closely to each other. This increased the cohesion of the organs of household and governance, which together formed a dynastic centre.<sup>24</sup>

The second chapter was again concerned with the dynamics of gender at the systemic courtly level, but here the focus lay on the court’s relationship with its subjects, the estates, and the fellow princes of the Holy Roman Empire, rather than on its internal organisation and coherence. Processions marking dynastic events in Stuttgart were structured according to gender first, and rank second, with the categories of age and marital status providing additional categories of differentiation that could become active if the ceremonial event required it. Beyond this, the noble men and women of the court related to each other via their respective roles as observers and performers in the course of the festive tournaments, thus confirming both gendered groups in their appointed roles and distinguishing them as the ruling elite. The texts accompanying the descriptions of these festivals also used gender as an aid to the thinking and defining of dynastic principles of power. The ruler was presented here as the divinely appointed head of both his courtly household and his territory, the latter of which was at times imagined to take the position of the wife of the ruling duke, with all the requirements for submission and the guarantee of

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<sup>24</sup> On the notion of the ‘dynastic centre’ see Duindam, ‘Dynastic centres in Europe and Asia’, p. 3.

protection this role entailed. Finally, the tournaments offered a moment of flexibility within courtly sociability in which it became possible to explore fantasies of an ultimate ruling figure that was male at its core, but that could incorporate some of the famed qualities of noblewomen. These qualities would allow for control over the emotional responses of the onlookers and the ability to distinguish and illuminate any situation through the presence and aura of femininity, which was described as a reflection of the divine on earth by the festival books examined in this chapter.

The third chapter has made a point of analysing the marriage of Duchess Sibylla and Duke Friedrich as an institution of the state. As such it had to feature parameters that were recognisable to other actors sharing in the institution of marriage in different contexts, as therein lay its potential for fostering submission and loyalty across ranks. Simultaneously the institution had to offer enough flexibility in order to incorporate varying personalities within it whilst remaining functional. It was argued that, in the case of the Lutheran ducal marriage, this was achieved via the allocation of specifically gendered tasks to both spouses. Contemporary religious and cultural assumptions about gender relations prescribed the majority of the labour needed in order to maintain a successful marriage to the wife. A husband was appointed a considerable range of personal interpretation when it came to how he wished to conduct his marital relationship. Duchess Sibylla, for instance, was expected to practise active obedience in order to smooth over disputes that might arise and to maintain the duality of the 'working couple'. She achieved this successfully, despite the challenging conditions of her marriage, and she and Friedrich were remembered as *Landesmutter* and *Landesvater* of Württemberg.

Friedrich, however, tested the measure of flexibility his role within the ruling marriage allowed him to its breaking point. In the fourth chapter of this thesis Friedrich's practice of concubinage was considered as an issue of political history. Friedrich did not merely keep mistresses covertly, as princes were prone to do in the early modern period. He went as far as installing a number of women in a household in Urach that was equipped so splendidly that it would have provided appropriate housing for a princely *Frauenzimmer* household. It was argued that Friedrich played

with the gender roles that usually determined princely Lutheran marriages in order to position himself as the sole core figure of the practice of power at this time. In conducting his affairs in this way, he drew attention to one of the key differences between duke and duchess. Sexual plurality was perhaps not desired, nor advocated in Lutheran rulers, yet it could be tolerated in certain circumstances. On the other hand, such behaviour would have been unimaginable for the duchess. Any transgression would have threatened the legitimacy of the Württemberg dynasty, and would have been punished severely as a result. But Friedrich, who was increasingly unwilling to collaborate with his wife in the practice of power, pluralised a number of her functions across several women, thus breaking up the symbolic duality of the 'working couple'. While I am not suggesting that Friedrich's affairs were merely coldly calculated political manoeuvres, the point put forward is that they had an impact on the gendered configuration of the princely household irrespective of his personal intentions. His actions attracted a backlash in the form of Johann Friedrich's persecution of Magdalena Möringer that was not structurally different from the fallout provoked by Friedrich's excessive reliance on his councillor favourite Matthäus Enzlin. The considerable flexibility of the gendered, political configurations that constituted the courtly practice of power was simultaneously an opportunity and a risk for ruler and dynasty alike. This case has allowed us to observe these dynamics in some detail.

The final chapter has dealt with a crucially important characteristic of gender difference in the dynastic context, which differentiates it firmly from the category of rank. It has been shown that gender could cease to be meaningful in specific dynastic contexts. In comparing the stake in the practice of power of younger dynastic brothers and ducal widows, it has emerged that gender was not a crucial factor in determining their ability to exercise authority over the departments of the Württemberg territory that were allocated to them. The gender of younger dynastic siblings more generally did not appear to fundamentally change the strategic worth

they could have for their original dynasty.<sup>25</sup> At times, gender could complicate seemingly rigid structures of responsibility and create room for manoeuvre that favoured the most capable actors. This was the case in the debate over who should hold power during Duke Eberhard's minority. At first, a council of guardians, including a younger brother of the late duke, firmly controlled the practice of power. Yet, some years later, Eberhard's mother developed an argument that it was time for her son to take over the reins of power despite his young age, which she based on her inherent desire as a mother to identify the best outcome for her son. It was evident that such a development would place her in a key position to exercise authority, since she was very close to her son and he relied on her for advice on a wide range of topics. Both sides to this debate could draw on precedents within the history of the Württemberg dynasty to back up their claims, and gender difference facilitated the coexistence of multiple legal solutions without causing overly divisive contradictions.

Ultimately, it appears to me that it is this potential of gender difference to counteract increasingly rigid sets of dynastic rules and regulations by providing spaces for additional manoeuvrings that made it such a valuable resource for the dynastic practice of power.<sup>26</sup> It could provide additional levels of differentiation between members of the court where status hierarchies were seemingly exhaustively represented in complex ceremonial structures, and in the everyday micropolitics of courtly access. Furthermore, at times arguments could be made on the basis of gender difference that favoured the authority of the most politically adept actor,

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<sup>25</sup> The key study on this is Ruppel, *Verbündete Rivalen: Geschwisterbeziehungen im Hochadel des 17. Jahrhunderts*, see esp. pp. 180-229, for a condensed discussion of the different functions younger siblings could fulfill in service of their dynastic family.

<sup>26</sup> Compare this also to the recent findings of Cosandey, 'Honneur aux dames. Préséances au féminin et prééminence sociale dans la monarchie d'Ancien Régime (XVIe- XVIIe siècles)', p. 73, who argues that 'the female condition (which occupies a position that is simultaneously equivalent and slightly inferior to that of men)' could often offer a way to solve situations of deadlock in questions of precedence. My translation.; Also Puppel, 'Das Prinzip der Subsidiarität: Die Herrschaft der verwitweten Fürstinnen von Nassau-Diez(-Oranien)', esp. p. 21, who argues for the 'principle of subsidiarity' when it came to the regency of dynastic widows, in the sense that they could be given full power to rule, when the dynastic situation demanded this. Both Cosandey and Puppel are proposing findings that resonate with my argument that gender difference could support dynastic longevity as it facilitated some flexibility in otherwise rigidly conceived sets of dynastic rules.

rather than having to follow in all instances the increasingly standardised procedures of dynastic succession. As such, gender could make significant contributions to the survival of dynastic forms of governance, which goes some way towards explaining why it was continually reproduced and renegotiated within the systems of symbolism and practices that determined dynastic centres.

### *Outlook*

It is hoped that this thesis has succeeded in demonstrating why it is useful to study the category of gender difference in dynastic contexts as a structuring force, beyond what it can reveal about the power relationships between individual men and women. The focus on a single, well-documented court as a case study has allowed this thesis to incorporate a wide range of moments in the practice of power, where gender difference mattered and where it functioned as a resource of power, as well as some in which it did not. The necessary disadvantage of this approach is that a number of interesting subjects could only be touched upon, without verifying the wider applicability of the connected findings within the larger context of the Holy Roman Empire. In particular, I believe that Sarah Hanley's analysis of the family politics of court officials and the impact they had on the entirety of the practice of power can fruitfully be extended.<sup>27</sup> In the context of the Holy Roman Empire, we do not yet have the benefit of detailed studies that compare the backgrounds of noble and burgher councillors with their career trajectories and the political developments at court more generally. Furthermore, it has emerged that it is crucial to view the importance of the gender of specific political actors as something that needs to be demonstrated rather than presupposed.<sup>28</sup> Here it has emerged that male and female favourites did not differ from each other as fundamentally as has been assumed in the past, and that younger brothers of the duke and dynastic widows may have had more in common than might seem likely at first glance. Such comparisons should be tested

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<sup>27</sup> Hanley, 'Engendering the state', pp. 4-27.

<sup>28</sup> See on this Boydston, 'Gender as a question of historical analysis', pp. 558-83.

for their wider applicability within the political contexts of the Empire, and it is hoped that this thesis may provide some incentive for such future studies.

Finally, although the consideration of dynastic women is today far from a historiographical innovation, there is a sense in the field that much work still lies ahead in order to fully integrate gender with political history. Current publications on these subjects continue to be numerous and to attract great attention, and this development is not limited to the field of early modern history.<sup>29</sup> Although Louise Olga Fradenburg postulated the intimate relationship between gender and sovereignty over twenty-five years ago, it appears to me that the field is still running the risk of perpetuating fragmentation into the strands of women and gender history, and political and dynastic approaches. It is the ambition of this thesis to demonstrate one way in which these approaches can be fused to their mutual benefit, and to insist that neither of them can provide us with the full story without the insights of the other.

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<sup>29</sup> See for instance Derval Conroy, *Ruling women, volume 1: Government, virtue, and the female prince in seventeenth-century France* (Basingstoke, 2016); Monika Schneikart and Dirk Schleinert, *Zwischen Thronsaal und Frauentzimmer: Handlungsfelder pommerscher Fürstinnen um 1600* (Köln, 2017); Bettina Braun, Katrin Keller, and Matthias Schnettger, eds., *Nur die Frau des Kaisers?: Kaiserinnen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, (Wien, 2016); for the medieval period Simon McLean's findings in *Ottoman queenship* (Oxford, 2017) that the extension of queenly political clout in the Ottonian period was not linked to the institutionalisation of rulership are highly intriguing. McLean's student Frances Murray is currently preparing a fascinating Ph.D. thesis entitled *Weeping kings: Masculinity and power in the early Middle Ages* at the University of St. Andrews.

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