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# **Making public the structure of the court. A comparative study and potentialities of court yearbooks and of their diffusion across the Holy Roman Empire and Central Europe during the 18th century**

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**MAKING PUBLIC THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURT. A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY AND POTENTIALITIES OF COURT  
YEARBOOKS AND OF THEIR DIFFUSION ACROSS THE HOLY  
ROMAN EMPIRE AND CENTRAL EUROPE DURING THE 18<sup>TH</sup>  
CENTURY**

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**ABSTRACT**

The yearbooks published in court almanacs can be interpreted as a new type of publication that was born in the early eighteenth century. It represented the court in a novel manner and enabled the public to comprehend the court as an institution. Particularly common in the German-speaking world (the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg lands), these publications listed all the members of court's personnel, department by department. These yearbooks represent a very important and attractive source for court studies: they not only allow a comparative and connected history based on the tables that the different courts published each year, but also a deepen study based on their symbolic and political dimension. Indeed, the almanacs constitute courts on paper form, and highlight the rationalization that this institution underwent during the Enlightenment.

**KEY WORDS:** Court; Households; monarchy; almanac; book; communication; 18<sup>th</sup> century; Habsburg Monarchy; Holy Roman German Empire.

**LA DIVULGACIÓN DE LA CORTE. ESTUDIO COMPARATIVO Y  
POTENCIALIDADES DE LOS DIRECTORIOS DE LA CORTE  
PUBLICADOS EN LOS ALMANAQUES Y SU DIFUSIÓN EN EL SACRO  
IMPERIO ROMANO Y EUROPA CENTRAL A LO LARGO DEL SIGLO  
XVIII.**

**RESUMEN**

El almanaque de la Corte puede interpretarse como una nueva publicación curial de principios del siglo XVIII, y renovó profundamente tanto la forma en que la Corte podía representarse a sí misma como la forma en la que el público podía conocer dicha institución. Especialmente presentes en el mundo germánico (Sacro Imperio Romano Germánico y Monarquía de los Habsburgo), estas publicaciones podían adoptar la forma de directorios que enumeraban a todo el personal de la corte,

departamento por departamento. Ahora bien, estas publicaciones representan un material muy importante y atractivo para los estudios de corte: no solo permiten realizar una historia comparada y conectada de los círculos cortesanos a partir de los organigramas que publicaban cada año, sino también de la dimensión simbólica y política que estas adquirieron. En efecto, los almanaques constituyeron verdaderas cortes de papel que hacían viajar la corte a través de Europa y ponían de manifiesto la racionalización que experimentó la institución en el siglo de la Ilustración.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Corte; Casa Real; monarquía; almanaque; libro; comunicación; siglo XVIII; Imperio Habsbúrgico; Sacro Imperio Romano Germánico.

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The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the appearance and spread of a new document type, the court yearbooks, which represented the court in a new way and enabled the public to comprehend it as an institution. And these compilations give us a very significant and attractive material for the study of the court.

Most of time, these yearbooks were published in court almanacs. An almanac is an old type of publication, known since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. At first, it was a calendar with astrological, meteorological, political, or anecdotal contents gradually added by printers<sup>1</sup>. In 1699, according to the wish of King Louis XIV, the publisher Laurent d'Houry converted this kind of publication into a yearbook, henceforth entitled *L'Almanach royal*. It listed in hierarchical order, the members of the dynasty, the great officers of the crown, the prelates, the military, political, administrative, and diplomatic officers, the counsellors, jurists, and rest of people living in the court and the city<sup>2</sup>. The publisher kept the name of *Almanach* due to the maintenance of a calendar at the head of the book.

In the following years, these yearbooks publications multiplied in the German-speaking regions (under the Habsburg monarchy, in the Holy Roman Empire and in Northern Europe) that are well-known today thanks to Volker Bauer's studies<sup>3</sup>. But they were different. On the one hand, French *Almanach royal* only listed important administration personnel and Parisian society circles. On the other, German yearbooks (*Amtsbücher*) gave an overview of the whole princely household and the departments of state from top to bottom. Alongside the initial calendar, which gave this publication

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<sup>1</sup> Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrinck, "La littérature des almanachs : réflexions sur l'anthropologie du fait littéraire", *Études françaises* 36/3 (2000): 47-64; Geneviève Bollème, *Les almanachs populaires aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Essai d'histoire sociale* (Paris: Mouton, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> The *Almanach royal* is still little studied: John Grand-Carteret, *Les Almanachs français* (Paris: J. Alisié, 1896) and more recently Nicole Brondel, "L'*Almanach royal, national, impérial*: quelle vérité, quelle transparence ? (1699-1840)", *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 166/1 (2008): 15-87.

<sup>3</sup> For a complete overview and typology of the production of German-speaking almanacs, see Volker Bauer, *Repertorium territorialer Amtskalender und Amtsbandbücher im alten Reich : Adress-, Hof-, Staatskalender und Staatsbandbücher des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1997-2005), 4 Vols.

its name, almanacs listed political, administrative, diplomatic, and courtly agents, and gave historical and genealogical descriptions, or information on toll fares or the timetables and fares of postal coaches.

In this paper, I would like to focus on the specific format of court almanacs, which provides a “*Parade des fürstenstaatlichen Apparats*” (a parade of the princely pomp) through lists of the royal households (*Hof-Staat*) members<sup>4</sup>. But also, to propose a series of reflections on this still under-utilised tool, and on its potential for court studies in three ways:

1. Even if the remarkable work of inventory and analysis conducted by Volker Bauer enables a deeper understanding of the almanac as a political tool, these kinds of sources can also be used by historians since they give data on the composition of princely households or administrative divisions of the state<sup>5</sup>, even enabling the spatial dimensions of the court to be assessed by analysing its officers<sup>6</sup>. In this way, these yearbooks represent a profitable source for a comparative history of princely courts in Europe.

2. Nevertheless, almanacs are rarely used as a tool, though they demonstrate a new kind of court literacy that sheds light on the administrative and symbolic dimensions of European courts. According to Pierre Bourdieu, almanacs can be understood as “foreshadowing literacy” (*écrits surplombants*). They are a self-representation of the court as an institution and a testimony of the processes of modernization that the institution underwent. Almanacs grew out of tensions between personal and institutional dimensions. The yearbook listed both state departments and princely households as groups of individuals included in princely service and dependant on their favour. At the same time, it showed the court as a rationalized and structured organism<sup>7</sup>, just as normative written documents did, which relied on a theoretical perception of the institution: thinking how it was structured, how the several departments were organized or how the personnel were ordered. Finally, the almanac also places the court in a chronological and spatial context. On the one hand, for the time of a year, which makes it possible to measure changes from one year to

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<sup>4</sup> Bauer, *Repertorium*, vol. I, 60.

<sup>5</sup> See reflections on the value of the almanac for data collection: Volker Bauer, “Hof- und Staatskalender des 18. Jahrhunderts als Datenspeicher. Information, Wissen, Erschließung”, in *Wissenspeicher der Frühen Neuzeit. Formen und Funktionen*, eds. Frank Grunert and Anette Syndikus (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 61-93, 62. Some applications: Eric Hassler, *La cour de Vienne, 1684-1740. Service de l'empereur et stratégies spatiales des élites nobiliaires dans la monarchie des Habsbourg* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2013); Irene Kubiska-Scharl and Michael Pözl, *Die Karriere des Wiener Hofpersonals 1711-1765. Eine Darstellung anhand der Hofkalender und Hofparteiprotokolle* (Wien: Studien Verlag, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> A systematic collection of addresses makes it possible to carry out a topographical study of the princely cities of residence over the long term: Natacha Coquery, *L'hôtel aristocratique: le marché du luxe à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998); Hassler, *La cour de Vienne*.

<sup>7</sup> On the question of court “rationality” (*höfische Rationalität*) and “functionality” (*Funktionalität*) and discussions of sociological contributions of Elias and Krüedener, see a synthetic summary in: Volker Bauer, *Die höfische Gesellschaft in Deutschland von der Mitte des 17. bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts: Versuch einer Typologie* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1993), 28-30.

the next one. But also, allow the historian to measure them over a longest period, when relatively continuous series are available.

3. By publishing the list of personnel in the service of a prince, household by household, service by service, from the aristocrat to the groom, these almanacs laid bare the court institution, which until then had only been shown to the public through the glory of its prince. If courtly institutions already produced lists of personnel simply for organizational purposes or for the payment of wages<sup>8</sup>, these later publications gave public access to what was previously the privacy of the prince, or even the secret of the monarchical state. Volker Bauer was able to show for the German-speaking world that these almanacs were a political tool used for communication. Specially for small courts, seeking to assert themselves on the political stage of the Empire in opposition to large electoral territories, such as Prussia, Saxony, or Bavaria. Which contested their immediate status during the length of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## A DESCRIPTION OF A BODY OF HETEROGENEOUS MATERIAL

The French and Austrian monarchies published yearbooks in almanacs since 1700, Saxony and Prussia since 1702 and 1704, respectively<sup>9</sup>. French influence in this case is not definite, but the simultaneous publications of several almanacs in a very short period of time underlines this phenomenon<sup>10</sup>. Other publications followed progressively, with variable forms that were improved over the years: in the prince-bishopric of Würzburg from 1707, in the Electorate of Cologne from 1717, in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel since 1721, in Salzburg from 1723, in Bavaria and Electoral Palatinate from 1727, in Württemberg from 1736, in Brandenburg-Ansbach and Hanover from 1737, and in Brandenburg-Bayreuth from 1738. During the 1740's and 1750's, around ten new almanacs started to be published, and another twenty in the 1760's and 1770's. Volker Bauer had identified 74 almanac-producing territories in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, until the Holy Roman Empire collapsed in 1806, including 54 seculars as well as ecclesiastic principalities<sup>11</sup>.

The status and the contents of these almanacs were heterogeneous. Volker Bauer categorizes nine different types of information, creating a multitude of

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<sup>8</sup> On the question of court archives and especially the genealogy of the household lists published in the Viennese almanac, see: Heinz Notflacher, "Ordonnances de l'hôtel, Hofstaatsverzeichnisse, Hof- und Staatskalender", in *Quellenkunde der Habsburgermonarchie (16.-18. Jahrhundert). Ein exemplarisches Handbuch*, eds. Josef Pauser, Martin Scheutz and Thomas Winkelbauer (Wien and München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004), 59-75.

<sup>9</sup> Beside the *Almanach Royal*, there are two other publications: *L'Etat de la France* published in 1689, 1692, 1699, 1722, 1727, 1736 and 1749; *L'Almanach de Versailles* (1773-1791). Two Viennese publications: *Hof- und Ehrenkalender*, 1692-1806; *Staats- und Standeskalender*, then *Hof- und Staatsschematismus der Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien*, 1701-1806; *Adresskalender der Hauptstädte Berlin und Potsdam*, 1704-1806; *Jetztlebendes Königliches Dresden*, 1702-1750.

<sup>10</sup> Volker Bauer, "Publicité des cours et almanachs d'État dans le Saint-Empire au XVIIIe siècle", in *L'espace du Saint-Empire du Moyen Âge à l'époque moderne*, ed. Christine Lebeau (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2004), 157-171, 162.

<sup>11</sup> Bauer, *Repertorium*, vols. I-III.

variations<sup>12</sup>. Some were specialized, such as the almanac of Saxe-Gotha which is famous for its genealogical contents. Only 51 principalities published almanacs with a court and/or state yearbook, which appears in most cases after the first year of publication. For example, the Bavarian almanac in its early years only presents a detailed diary of court occasions, promotions, marriages, and deaths, with lists of knights. The court of Bavaria published a political yearbook in 1737, and from the following year also a court yearbook. The Würzburg almanac published its first yearbook 33 years after the initial publication, and the Bavarian almanac was published 11 years later. This document could be managed directly by the state or by a private editor with a princely privilege<sup>13</sup>. The yearbook could be a prominent part of the almanac and directs the choice of the title for it, like *Schematismus*<sup>14</sup>. Some of them provided geographic information such as addresses, to specify where agents or courtiers would be localized. As a result, some were entitled *Adress-buch* or *Adress-calender*<sup>15</sup>.

Almanacs were considered standardized and institutionalized during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as attested by the gradually more stable structure of the almanacs of the main German courts. The publication of a theoretical treatise in 1792 by the jurist Joachim von Schwarzkopf shows that the almanac was henceforth an essential printed object in the German context, and even in the wider European courtly landscape<sup>16</sup>.

In the second half of the century, the almanac-yearbook reached Mediterranean Europe: the court of Naples published a *Calendario della Corte* from 1758 onwards, the court of Modena in 1789<sup>17</sup>; the court of Spain published a *Guía de la Grandeza de la corte de España* for 1769 (another yearbook exists for 1796) which

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<sup>12</sup> Bauer, *Repertorium*, vol. I, 73: calendar, weather and astrology, yearbook, sovereigns genealogies, court information, scholarly or erudite contents, statistical contents (demography, economy...), literary and intellectual contents, practical contents (markets, tolls, post timetables, weights, measures and currency equivalences...).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. I, 29-35.

<sup>14</sup> Five almanacs: Austria, Bavaria, Kempten, Konstanz, Liechtenstein. The use of this term is not clear. The Viennese case should reveal an evolution of the nature of this type of publication, more as yearbook than calendar. Even if the almanac of the Court of Vienna published a yearbook since 1702, the term « *Schematismo/us* » is not prominent in the title of the « *Kalender* », before 1775 when it becomes the principal title of the almanac, entitled *Schematismus der Kaiserlichen, Königlichen und Erzbischoflichen Instanzen*, then, the next year *Hof- und Staatsschematismus* until 1806. In contrast, the French version maintains the title *L'Almanach de la Cour Impériale et Royale* (1766-1805). The Bavarian almanac uses the term *Schematismus* only between 1749 and 1764.

<sup>15</sup> Seventeenth almanacs: Anhalt-Bernburg, Baden-Baden, then Baden-Durlach, Brandenburg-Ansbach, Brandenburg-Bayreuth, Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Fürstenberg, Hessen-Darmstadt, Hessen-Cassel, Hohenlohe, Lippe, Münster, Orange-Nassau, Brandenburg-Prussia, Saxe-Gotha, Saxe-Weimar, Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt.

<sup>16</sup> Joachim von Schwarzkopf, *Ueber Staats- und Adress-Calender: ein Beytrag zur Staatenkunde / vom Königlich-Grossbritannisch-Churbraunschweigischen Geheimen Canzley- und Gesandtschafts-Secretär Schwarzkopf* (Berlin: Rottmann, 1792).

<sup>17</sup> *Calendario e Notizia della Corte* (Napoli: Nella Stamperia Reale, 1758); *Calendario di Corte* (Modena: per gli Eredi di Bartolomeo Soliani Stamp. Ducali, 1789).

proposed a list of courtiers «para perfeccionar, y dar al público esta Obrita, ha sido el exponer a todos la numerosa Grandeza de nuestra Corte de Madrid »<sup>18</sup>.

Even if this exceptional material was usually preserved as archival documentation by court institutions<sup>19</sup>, its relative weakness and repetitive features weighed against a large and systematic preservation. This material is rarely well-preserved and is spread out amongst several archives and library collections. Nowadays, thanks to the systematic digitization of German cultural institutions<sup>20</sup>, it is possible to examine some relatively continuous series, which allow comparisons to be drawn, even if systematic comparisons cannot always be made at a fixed date<sup>21</sup>.

## PRINTED HOUSEHOLDS: POTENTIALITIES FOR A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF COURTS

Making an assessment of the different historiographical options for court history, Jeroen Duindam spoke in favour of «re-establishing the concrete outlines » of the court and especially of the household as a way to circumscribe the court institution as an organization focused on the prince<sup>22</sup>. This redefinition allows European and extra-European comparisons<sup>23</sup>.

Although the components of the court were ever changing, either because of the ceremonial requirements or due to the shifting configurations of the social groups

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<sup>18</sup> *Guía de la Grandeza de la Corte de España para este año de 1769. Su autor Don Geronymo Zuñiga Bracamonte* (Madrid: Manuel Fernandez, 1769).

<sup>19</sup> See in particular the introduction of the dossier “Archiver la cour”, published online by the Centre de recherche du Château de Versailles: Pauline Lemaigre-Gaffier et Nicolas Schapira, “Introduction”, *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles* (2019), online: <http://journals.openedition.org/crcv/17822>.

<sup>20</sup> On the potential of an exploitation within the framework of digital humanities: Volker Bauer, “Herrschaftsordnung, Datenordnung, Suchoptionen. Recherchemöglichkeiten in Staatskalendern und Staatshandbüchern des 18. Jahrhunderts”, in *Vor Google. Eine Mediengeschichte der Suchmaschinen in analogen Zeitalter*, eds. Thomas Brandstetter, Thomas Hübel and Anton Tantner (Bielefeld: Transkript, 2012), 85-108.

<sup>21</sup> Volker Bauer has already attempted a summary comparison of several German courts in the first half of the eighteenth century (numbers, costs, great officers, nature of ceremonial, type of polarized nobility, court life): Bauer, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, 90-91.

<sup>22</sup> Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13. Household is to be understood here not only as «familia», but also as extended kinship, i.e. all the individuals placed in the service of the prince. What Duindam also identifies as a «coeur domestique». The institutional perspective allows the households to be taken out of the socio-political standpoint of princely favour in which historiography had long confined them: Ronald G. Asch, “Introduction. Court and Household from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries”, in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450-1650*, eds. Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1-38.

<sup>23</sup> About articulation between court studies and connected history, see reflexions in the introduction of: Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters. Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 1-33. See also: Jeroen Duindam, Tülan Artan and Metin Kunt, eds., *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), or more recently: Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: a global history of power, 1300-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

present in courtly spaces from time to time, princely households show an organizational coherence<sup>24</sup>. Using them as vantage points, it is possible to carry out comparative studies and then broader syntheses that allow us to understand the court phenomenon beyond the ever-problematic question of the sociological model proposed by Norbert Elias<sup>25</sup> and the supposed primacy of the Versailles model. Jeroen Duindam advocates for a precise preliminary study of the princely households, which is exactly what yearbooks allow. In line with Duindam's work, yearbooks offer the historian an opportunity to observe the evolution of the organization of a court over several years. But also, to compare the structures of different courts and households, observing points of convergence and divergence or long-term influences. What is obviously possible thanks to the annual publication of yearbooks in the almanacs and the systematic listing of servants for a wide range of courts, now simultaneously accessible thanks to digitization.

The question of curial models is important from a heuristic point of view<sup>26</sup>. It should not be discarded under the pretext that it shrinks curial realities to pre-established models. On the other hand, it should be observed from the perspective of a connected history of courts. Numerous studies have demonstrated the cultural circulation<sup>27</sup> and permeability of courts of all sizes, especially medium and small ones<sup>28</sup>. As certain studies have shown, the fragmentation of the Holy Roman Empire is a

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<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Spangler, "Holders of the Keys: The Grand Chamberlain, the Grand Equerry and Monopolies of Access at the Early Modern French Court", in *The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Princely Courts, 1400-1750*, eds. Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 155-177.

<sup>25</sup> On this question, see: Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam: University Press, 1994); Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Saint-Simon ou Le système de la Cour* (Paris: Fayard, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> On the question of the models' historicity: Christoph Kampmann, Katharina Krause and Eva-Bettina Krems, eds., *Neue Modelle im Alten Europa: Traditionsbruch und Innovation als Herausforderung in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> About circulation, see the stimulating studies in: Joan-Lluís Palos and Magdalena S. Sánchez, eds., *Early Modern Dynastic Marriages and Cultural Transfer* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> See for example some reflections about court models in: Eva-Bettina Krems, *Die Wittelsbacher und Europa. Kulturtransfer am frühneuzeitlichen Hof* (Wien: Böhlau, 2012), 14-21, 95-130; Elisabeth Wünsche-Werdehausen, "Habsburg Tradition - French Fashion: The Residence of Vittorio Amadeo II in Turin (1684-1730)", in *Beyond Scylla and Charybdis: European Courts and Court Residences outside Habsburg and Valois/Bourbon Territories, 1500-1700*, eds. Birgitte Bøggild Johannsen and Konrad Ottenheim (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2015), 137-147; Eric Hassler, "'Mes estats estant situés entre l'Allemagne et la France il faudra prendre de l'un et de l'autre'. Vienne, Versailles, Lunéville : réflexions sur les 'modèles' de cour au début du XVIIIe siècle", in *Échanges, passages et transferts à la cour du duc Léopold, 1698-1729*, ed. Anne Motta (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017), 151-165; Thomas W. Gaetgens, Markus A. Castor, Frédéric Bussmann and Christophe Henry, eds., *Versailles et l'Europe. L'appartement monarchique et princier, architecture, décor, cérémonial* (Paris/Heidelberg: Centre allemand d'histoire de l'Art, 2017); Eric Hassler, "Réflexion sur les modèles curiaux : le cas des cours d' « entre-deux » au XVIIIe siècle", *Source(s). Arts, civilisation et Histoire de l'Europe* 13 (2018): 53-68.

privileged field for watching its permeability, particularly in Bavaria<sup>29</sup>. However, a functionalist approach to the adaptations made by the courts, and in particular the households, must not be ruled out. This perspective is complementary to the ceremonialist and the symbolist approaches. The first interpretation would see the almanac as a communication tool. In other words, a material transcription of the court ritualization through the expression of the precedence (by listings) and a substitute for the “culture of presence”<sup>30</sup>. Princes and court society were conveyed through paper, but no more by their physical presence. I will go back to this later. A second interpretation sees in the almanacs the reproduction of a model based on the desire to imitate, arising from a fascination for a type of government and the pomp and circumstances displayed by a prestigious court, from the necessity to be integrated into a sphere of influence or to strengthen diplomatic links. The example of the revival of the ducal court of Lorraine in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century shows how the curial institution was in tension between these two logics, articulating the search for symbolic markers and the material contingencies that altered the processes of reproduction of existing models<sup>31</sup>.

Mathieu Da Vinha conducted a comparison limited to the great officers of the major Early Modern European courts and shed light on how difficult was to compare multiple court realities/configurations<sup>32</sup>. We must be wary of charges going under the same name whilst referring to different realities. But, as Da Vinha has pointed out, we can still identify the balance between the different departments, the place given to an element or the department in which it appears, and finally the hierarchies between the major offices.

These great charges seem to constitute a stable and immutable curial matrix, which reproduces the main needs of the prince's service: the Bedchamber, the Table (dining service, kitchen, cellar...), the Stables, the Hunt etc. As shown by an abundant historiography, the organization of Court institutions stabilized during the Middle Ages by means of a progressive separation between *curia maior* and *curia minor*. And through the separation of political and domestic spheres across the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Even if the great officers could potentially command a degree of political influence thanks to their proximity to the prince<sup>33</sup>.

In this article, I will limit myself to the study of a few courts deliberately chosen for their different levels of importance: Vienna, Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg and Hesse-Cassel. The first of these centres of power can be considered the most

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<sup>29</sup> See priory: Krems, *Die Wittelsbacher und Europa*, chapter III; but also: Samuel J. Klingensmith, *The Utility of Splendor. Ceremony, social life, and architecture at the court of Bavaria, 1600-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

<sup>30</sup> See Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider. Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reiches* (München: C. H. Beck, 2008), especially introduction and chapter VI.

<sup>31</sup> Hassler, “Mes Estats”.

<sup>32</sup> Mathieu Da Vinha, “Structures et organisation des charges de cour à l'époque moderne”, in *The Court in Europe*, ed. Marcello Fantoni (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2012), 275-289, 289.

<sup>33</sup> See, for instance: Duindam, *Vienna*, 47 and ss.; Da Vinha, “Structures”, 276-283; Leonhard Horowski, *Die Belagerung des Thrones: Machtstrukturen und Karrieremechanismen am Hof von Frankreich (1661-1789)* (Ostfildern: J. Thorbecke, 2012), chapter III; Spangler, “Holder of the Key”, 158-163.

important in the Empire, since it was the Emperor's court and had a certain influence through the entire imperial territory<sup>34</sup>. The next two were really attractive courts since their prince was an Elector, but also because they were on their way to becoming important powers. Finally, Württemberg was a rising power endowed with a particularly brilliant court, and Hesse-Cassel can be described as a small court<sup>35</sup>. For these courts, we have a relatively continuous series of yearbooks from the late 1730s onwards, except for Hesse-Cassel<sup>36</sup>.

Bavaria		Hesse-Cassel		Saxony		Vienna		Württemberg	
1738	1764	1764	1791	1736	1775	1702	1775	1735	1775
calendar	calender	calender	calender	calender	calender	calender			
								Dynasty	Dynasty
Order of Chevalry	Order of Chevalry		Order of Chevalry	Order of Chevalry					
		MINISTERIUM	MILITAIR-ETAT			STATE/CITY (+Gd Marshall)	STATE MILITARY		STATE
<b>HOFSTAAT</b> Gd Master of the Court Gd Chamberl. Gd Marshal Stables Hunting Falconry	<b>HOFSTAAT</b> Gd Master of the Court Hunting Falconry Gd Chamberl. Gd Marshal Stables	<b>HOF-ETAT</b> Chamber Gd Marshal Stables-Etat Hunting Falconry Court Buildings Music Cabinet Medicine Library Archive Pages Wardrobe Kitchen Handcraft Garden Residences Livree-Etat	<b>HOF-ETAT</b> Chamber Gd Marshal Stables Falconry  Medicine Musee/Library Archive Handcraft Wardrobe Kitchen  Residences	<b>HOFSTAAT</b> Gd Marshal Gd Chamberl. House Marshal Stables Hunting	<b>HOF-ETAT</b> Gd Marshal Intendance Gd Chamberl. House Marshal Music Stables Hunting	<b>HOFSTAAT</b> Privy Council Imperial Council. Gd Master of the Court Falconry Court Building Gd Marshal (Staatsection) Stables	<b>HOFSTAAT</b> Gd Master of the Court Hunting Falconry Court Building Gd Chamberl. Gd Marshal	<b>HOFSTAAT</b> Chamber Gd Marshal Stables Hunting Falconry	<b>HOFSTAAT</b> Gd Chamberl. Gd Marshal Music Stables Hunting
STATE section	STATE section	MILITAIR-ETAT		STATE section WAR COUNCIL	CIVIL-ETAT MILITARY-ETAT			CHANCELLER/ COUNCILS	MILITAIR-ETAT

Fig. 1 - Comparative table of almanacs' organization. The example of the courts of Bavaria, Hesse-Cassel, Saxony, Vienna, and Württemberg.

At this point, it should be noted that divisions into households (*Hofstaat* or *Hof-Etat*) are relative different from one court to another. Sometimes, we systematically find an *Oberstallmeister* (Master of the Stables), an *Oberhofmarschall* and a *Oberjägermeister* (Master of the Hunt). Some courts gave primacy to an *Oberhofmeister* (Master of the Household in Vienna or Munich) which did not exist in most of the other Germanic centres of power. The court was placed under the authority of the *Oberhofmarschall*, whose function could be shared with a *Hausmarschall*, a position that existed in Munich and Dresden and appeared at the court of Württemberg in the 1750s. The

<sup>34</sup> For a political analysis of the position of the court in the Habsburg monarchy: Robert J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550-1700: An Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1979).

<sup>35</sup> On the political configuration of the Holy Roman Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: Karl Ottmar von Aretin, *Das Alte Reich 1648-1806*, vol. 3: Das Reich und der österreichisch-preussische Dualismus (1745-1806), (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1997).

<sup>36</sup> Vienna: *Staats- und Standeskalender*, then *Hof- und Staatsschematismus der Haupt-und Residenzstadt Wien*, 1701-1702-1806; Bavaria: *Hofkalender und Schematismus*, 1727-1738-1802; Saxony: *Hof- und Staatskalender*, 1728-1806; Württemberg: *Jetztlebendes Württemberg*, 1736-1806; Hessen-Cassel: *Staats- und Adresskalender*, 1764-1806. The intermediate date is the moment of the first yearbook's publication.

*Oberkämmerer* (Grand Chamberlain) could be independent of the *Oberhofmarschall* or alternatively placed under his authority. In the same way, the artistic elements, for example the music, were not placed under the responsibility of the same grand officer. Depending on the court, it could be the *Oberhofmeister*, the *Oberhofmarschall* or the *Oberstallmeister*. They could even be split, as in Munich, where vocal music depended on the *Oberhofmeister* and instrumental music on the *Oberhofmarschall* up to the 1750s<sup>37</sup>. These elements also changed over time.

These evolutionary trends can be explained by a reshaping of the structure of the households, by specialization and splitting apart of charges or by merging. Another explanation could be geopolitical changes. This is the case, when the Electorates of Bavaria and the Palatinate were joined under the same prince. In 1777 the Elector Palatine Karl IV Theodor inherited the Electorate of Bavaria on the death of his distant cousin Maximilian III Joseph, head of the younger branch of the House of Wittelsbach. Then, several changes in the two households' structures can be observed. For instance, the service of the Grand Falconer was absorbed within the department of the Master of the Hunt at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Above all, these yearbooks highlight a very clear expansion of the role of the administration. Perhaps due to the greater need for government at a distance<sup>38</sup>, whereas the Bavarian almanacs before the merger had shown a certain stability for more than 30 years.

Honorary offices are interesting too. The practice of making them an inclusive group from within the nobility seemed to spread under the influence of the Viennese court<sup>39</sup>. The Emperor actually used the charge of chamberlain to retain the loyalties of the nobilities of his several Crowns<sup>40</sup>. Few of these types of officers really served. The majority only took the title as a favour that connected them to the Habsburg court, which in this sense became a virtual court that symbolically emphasized the Emperor's prestige. Other Germanic princes notably took up the same strategy to pit themselves against the prominent Imperial court. In this way, the number of Chamberlains grew at several courts: e.g. in Munich: 264 in 1738, 324 in 1754; in Dresden: 36 in 1736, 111 in 1765; or in Stuttgart: 10 in 1736, 115 in 1775.

These practices could also be compared to other groups of courtiers such as *Juncker* (equerries), which allowed the prince to increase his means of fostering the loyalty of the nobility. The distinction between several groups inside the household, even if they were mainly honorary, played on the insatiable thirst of the nobility for recognition and promotion possibilities without requiring a regular presence at the

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<sup>37</sup> On the organization of Music at German courts, see: Samantha Owens, Barbara M. Reul and Janice B. Stockigt, eds., *Music at German Courts, 1715-1760: Changing Artistic Priorities* (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2011), 1-14.

<sup>38</sup> Although the Elector now lived mainly in Munich, no longer in Mannheim, both principalities retained their own administrations, thus creating duplication of offices.

<sup>39</sup> Mark Hengerer, *Kaiserhof und Adel in der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Eine Kommunikationsgeschichte der Macht in der Vormoderne* (Konstanz: UVK, 2004), 35 and ss.; Andreas Pecar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre. Höfischer Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI.* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004), 29-31.

<sup>40</sup> Hassler, *La cour de Vienne*, 33-53.

court<sup>41</sup>, or even without any participation, except having one's name mentioned in the yearbook. This was the case for the Württemberg court from the 1730s, which tried to imitate the great courts of the Empire by overdoing the number of staff. According to Bauer, the Stuttgart court had 1,800 people in 1760, a figure close to the 2,000 to 2,500 people listed at the great courts of Vienna and Munich in the middle of the century<sup>42</sup>.

For example, in the Court of Württemberg the number of *Kammerjuncker* (Chamber equerries) increased fivefold between 1736 and 1765, and then stabilized (fig. 2). They were surpassed by *Hofjunckere* (Court equerries) from 1755, whose number also increases fivefold over a shorter period. This increase is partly explained by the complexity of each group as they are divided into sub-categories. In 1745 12 effective (*wirklich*) *Kammerjunckere* distinguished themselves from the other ones, probably only honorary; in 1755 the latter are called “*titular*”; and in 1775 the same dissociation process can be observed in the *Hofjunckere*. The inflation of officers thus obliged the prince to identify among them those who really performed the service.

	1736	1745	1755	1765	1775
Kammerjuncker (of whom titular)	13	26 (12)	27 (6)	70 (5)	70 (3)
Hofjuncker (of whom titular)			9	24	56 (2)

Fig. 2 - Quantitative evolution of corps of equerries in the Court of Württemberg (1736-1775).

On the other hand, the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel did not engage in this type of expansion and the number of chamberlains remained around 5-6 throughout this period. This is not necessarily the case of other small courts, such as the Court of Ansbach. The almanac of the Margravian Court of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Culmbach shows massive recruitment practices like in Württemberg (fig. 3)<sup>43</sup>:

	1770	1774	1780	1782
Kämmerer	62	76	84	85
Kammerjuncker	37	30	32	27
Hofjuncker	25	34	27	31

Fig. 3 - Quantitative evolution of the corps of chamberlains and equerries at the Court of Brandenburg-Ansbach (1770-1782).

<sup>41</sup> On Vienna: Hengerer, *Kaiserhof*, 78-80; Eric Hassler, “Measuring Regular Noble Presence at Court: The Example of Vienna, 1670–1740”, *The Court Historian* 22/1 (2017): 38-52.

<sup>42</sup> Bauer, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, 90-91.

<sup>43</sup> *Hoch-Fürstlich Brandenburg-Onoltzbachischer Adress- und Schreib-Calender* (Ansbach, 1737-1791).

While the corps of chamberlains grew steadily, as did the court, which already reached nearly 1,700 people in 1734<sup>44</sup>, the contrasting evolutions of the two other groups highlight the inconstancy of the court numbers over a short period of time, in a small court whose attractivity was relatively limited. On the other hand, the number of courtiers is close to that of much larger courts, such as Württemberg, in the image of the architectural and palatial ambitions of these small princes of the Holy Roman Empire, mocked by Frederick II in his *Réfutation du Prince de Machiavel*, when he wrote that the smaller prince “builds his Versailles, he screws his Maintenon, and he maintains his armies”<sup>45</sup>.

A precise analysis of the lists found in the almanac, especially of those groups of chamberlains or equeries (looking at their origins<sup>46</sup> and *curriculum vitae*) can offer a very interesting barometer of the attractiveness of each court on different scales: on a local scale, for the German and imperial nobility, and even beyond. Moreover, it could allow a comparison of the different German courts to understand how they structured the territorial space of the Holy Roman Empire.

## TO PUT THE COURT IN ORDER

Basically, these yearbooks were extensive lists of the Court, and a reflection on how the Court should be ordered. In addition, as printed and public documents, these lists produced an annual overview of the Court institution that lasted longer than the lists did, since almanacs were recorded by the State Archives or preserved by private readers. The articulation between the servants of the princely households, and the political, administrative (central and local), and military institutions, is also a testimony of the evolution of the court inside the state apparatus in which the almanacs took shape (fig. 1).

German yearbooks used different methods to put the Court in order. The Vienna almanac first encompassed the whole state from the outset. In a later edition, the princely household was ordered according to hierarchical dynastic precedence (Emperor, Empress, King and Queen of the Romans, other Archdukes and relatives of the House). Other almanacs initially only considered the princely households. The Munich almanacs at first only considered the dynastic order of chivalry and political promotions, from 1737 onwards the members of the state apparatus and finally in 1738 the princely households. If we consider the wide range of German almanacs, 12

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<sup>44</sup> Herms Bahl, *Ansbach: Strukturanalyse einer Residenz vom Ende des 30jährigen Krieges bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Ansbach: Historischer Verein für Mittelfranken, 1974), 346 and ss.

<sup>45</sup> Theodore Besterman, ed., *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1958), vol. V, 231.

<sup>46</sup> On the difficulties of determining the geographical origins of the nobility in the Habsburg monarchy, see the remarks in: Petr Mařa, “Der Adel aus den böhmischen Ländern am Kaiserhof 1620–1740. Versuch, eine falsche Frage richtig zu lösen”, in *Šlechta v habsburské monarchii a císařský dvůr (1526–1740)*, eds. Václav Buzek and Pavel Kral, a special issue of *Opera historica* 10 (2003), 191–203.

yearbooks list orders of chivalry<sup>47</sup>, the majority of them were placed at the beginning of the volume. In addition to the prestige that these local orders gave to the prince<sup>48</sup>, those lists of knights also served to highlight another extensive group of courtiers, such as the lists of chamberlains or equeries, and was probably also a reminder of the feudal dimension of the Holy Roman Empire.

The order of the yearbook did not necessarily favour the court (fig. 1). The Viennese almanac began with the alphabetically arranged state apparatus (*Ämter, Banco, Cammer/Buchhalterey, Canzleyen, Consistorien, Gerichtern, Raths-Collegien...*), with the *Hofstaat* then occupying the second part. In Munich and Dresden, the *Hofstaat* was detailed before the political organs. Meanwhile, the almanac of the court of Württemberg did the same in the 1730s, before placing politics at the start from the 1740s onwards. Indeed, the elements listed in the yearbook were often unstable. We can still perceive overlaps and hesitations in the arrangement of services when it comes to listing them. These developments also highlight the growing importance of the militarism in some German states at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel placed the military at the top of his almanac in 1791<sup>49</sup>. One wonders whether this was due to the importance of the military careers of several minor German princes, who served other sovereigns or who felt threatened by revolutionary France.

This question can also be raised as if the yearbook could be adapted by its authors to the political context and to geopolitical re-compositions, as it happens in composite monarchies. For example, the Saxon almanac does not show any differences in the organisation of the Court between the period of the dynastic alliance with Poland in the earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century and after 1763, when the Elector of Saxony lost the crown of Poland-Lithuania. Except for specific mentions to that last kingdom (orders of chivalry, political bodies etc.). The case of Bavaria is also interesting. Elector Karl Albrecht of Bavaria was elected emperor in 1742 and moved the imperial court from Vienna to Munich -virtually, since he was soon driven out of Bavaria by the Austrian Army-, which could theoretically have led to changes in the contents of the Bavarian almanac. But the detailed account of 1743, entitled *Kaiserlicher Hofcalender*, does not contain a yearbook of the Bavarian Court. Unlike what happened on the previous year, it only published lists of diplomats and promotions, in particular those to the Emperor's corps of chamberlains. The organisation of the newly 'imperial' household is therefore only visible through these promotion lists, but not in the form

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<sup>47</sup> Bauer, *Repertorium*, vols. I-III. Mainly powerful states: Austria, Baden-Durlach, Bavaria, Brandenburg-Ansbach, Brandenburg-Bayreuth, Hesse-Cassel, the Palatinate, Prussia, Salzburg, Saxony, Saxe-Weimar, Württemberg.

<sup>48</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, European courts competed by creating dynastic orders of chivalry. These orders clearly appeared as a sign of sovereignty, which may explain their multiplication in the several German principalities. Published lists of knights highlighted the power of attraction of each court on local, regional, and even international nobility. See: Jörg Nimmergut, *Handbuch Deutsche Orden* (Saarbrücken: Heinz Nickel Verlag, 1989).

<sup>49</sup> This was the case with Landgrave Wilhelm IX of Hesse-Cassel (1743-1821), *Feldmarschall* to the King of Prussia, who was characterized by a bellicose policy towards his neighbors and participated in the coalition against the French Republic in 1792.

of the regular organization chart<sup>50</sup>. In this way, how can we interpret this lack of publications about the composition of the household? Is it linked to a difficulty in recomposing the Bavarian court after 1742 as an imperial court? It is not clear. Taking on the imperial crown did not necessarily lead to a new curial organization. If we look at the example of the Viennese court, we see that it was more that of an Austrian Archduke than that of an Emperor, since the officers of the *curia major* (who took part, for instance, in the imperial coronation, normally in Frankfurt) did not intervene in Vienna. Here the emperor was served only by the *curia minor*, that is, that of an Archduke of Austria<sup>51</sup>. The other crowns of the monarchy (Bohemia, Hungary, Tyrol, Styria etc.) had their own officers who were “in sleep mode” until a Habsburg prince established himself in one of these realms. Another possible explanation of the absence of a publication about the Imperial-Bavarian households is based on that the Bavarian almanac reflects the disturbances at the court during the war period. Which would confirm that these sources were intended to be an accurate account of the court, and not just a theoretical publication envisioning a virtual ideal.

This listing also combined rigidity and flexibility. On the one hand, the yearbook presents an apparent rigidity simply because the very act of listing obliges mental classification. The different sections should thus be well delineated to be readable. The typography should give an impression of order. The court staff is strictly ordered. And, in some cases, the sections are even numbered (fig. 4).

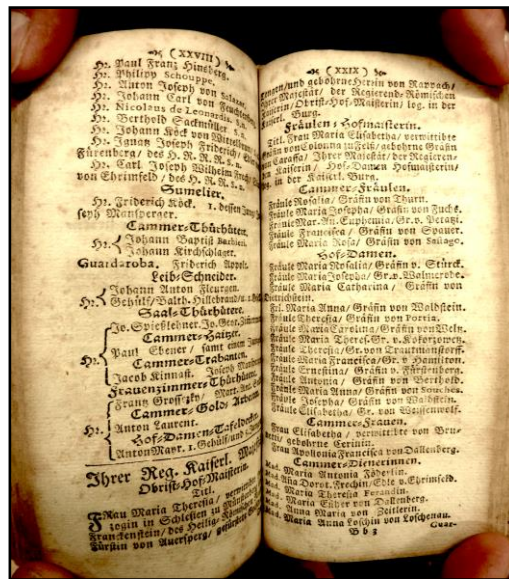


Fig. 4 - The Beginning of the listing for the Empress's Household: *Kajserlicher Und Königlicher wie auch Ertz-herzoglicher Und Dero Residentz-Stadt Wienn Staats- und Stands-Calender* (Wien, 1736), Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, D.184.220.

<sup>50</sup> Bauer, *Repertorium*, vol. I, 142-145.

<sup>51</sup> Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 32-34.

On the other hand, the yearbook was not always very rigorous in the use of fonts or separations between sections, which indicated the passage from one department to the other. The great complexity of the organisation of some courts, which was not always made clear by the typography, makes it difficult to understand which subsections depended on a certain higher officer. This is for example the case in Dresden in 1736, while the same court's almanac of 1777 showed more of a concern with establishing a clear hierarchy between the departments. In several courts it is not always clear, for example, whether Hunting and Falconry were autonomous or placed under the *Oberstallmeister's* authority. The persistence of the problem suggests that it was not just a formatting issue related to the creation of a new almanac. Particularly, the Viennese model offered a relatively clear and reusable organization for smaller courts.

This raises the fundamental question of whether the Court was ever considered in its entirety before it was put in order in the almanacs. Due to its size and constant demographic or functional evolutions, could the court institution really be perceived as a whole? or was it only comprehended through the practice of organizing the liturgy of the sovereign's daily life or the ceremonies that summoned more courtiers and staged the court, not in its entirety, but on a larger scale? Certainly, there were Court ordinances and rules (*Hofordnungen*) governing and reforming the general organization of the institution -by departments or grand officers- and possibly interacting within a hierarchical staff<sup>52</sup>. Each section of the household must have had a relatively complete picture of its internal organization, even if its growth did not make this easy. But was this the case of the entire court before the publication of the yearbook? This also raises the question of how the almanac was made. Even if the almanac was produced on a departmental basis, was there ever an overall review? In the late issues of the Vienna almanac, “double” agents -who appear in several sections because of simultaneous jobs- were identified by a *wie oben* (as before) which avoided repeating their address. This indicates that a global re-reading could have been done by the editors.

In any case, the element that always governed the listing of the court was rank. In addition to the departments order, within each section of the department (the kitchen, the cellar, the wardrobe, etc.), individuals were ranked hierarchically according to their office or, if they all held the same charge, according to a criterion of precedence based on seniority. This arrangement on the court was not without its own problems because it froze in time an institution whose flexibility historians have frequently noted and whose only master was the prince<sup>53</sup>.

This issue was particularly critical when the nobility was involved. According to the almanacs, the number of noblemen in the princely households was seemingly scarce. They only occupied a dozen or so major offices, and a little bit more in the most prestigious courts. Especially those who quadrupled the number of the

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<sup>52</sup> Notflascher, “Ordonnances”, 59-75.

<sup>53</sup> Fanny Cosandey, *Le rang: préséances et hiérarchies dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Gallimard, 2016).

aristocrats possessing these offices, by dividing them into quarters. But the nobility was in fact very present due to their possession of honorary offices, such as chamberlains, equerries, or pages, which required the production of long lists in the yearbooks. The noblesse was of course concerned about its rank and may have considered such a hierarchy by seniority as demotivating or downgrading. According to the principle of seniority, barons could sometimes appear before counts or counts before princes. Indeed, the system of hierarchization by antiquity implied an ordering of the court which did not necessarily consider the existing noble hierarchies, in favour of the sole relationship between the courtier and his service to the prince. This was especially evident when the great offices that took precedence were not systematically attributed to the most prestigious nobles, as happened with princes in the Viennese court<sup>54</sup>. This situation was repeated constantly in composite monarchies (Habsburg Monarchy, Saxony-Poland, Brandenburg-Prussia...) where the court had to aggregate nobility from different territories, each with its own noble hierarchy. Drawing up lists of courtiers, in the case of chamberlains or equerries, forced one to make visible, on paper, what was otherwise only virtual, as long as this hierarchy had not been put into practice, for example, during ceremonies. However, these acts always permitted individuals the possibility of not appearing, a way of getting around the problem. Also, an exhaustive list of chamberlains made this distortion of the nobility's rank visible and permanent. This may be an explanation for the fact that several almanacs listed chamberlains grouped by collective promotion and not in a simple and continuous list, which somewhat mitigated the visual character of hierarchical ranking. As an easy solution, the Viennese almanac no longer published an exhaustive list of chamberlains in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in favour of a simple paragraph indicating that they were “very numerous”. This was to protect from the susceptibility of the princes of the Empire, who were more numerous at the Viennese court, following the new promotions under Empress-Queen Maria Theresa<sup>55</sup>.

The question arises as to what extent the yearbook was nothing more than a distorting mirror of the court. First, because the almanac played with quantitative aspects for political reasons. One of its aims was to show a court in its entirety, which never existed in this form, to demonstrate how numerous and powerful was the court of the prince. For example, through the exaggeration that could be seen for honorary groups. It can also be considered a distorting mirror because this listing was arbitrary by nature. We can know the curial institution through sources that produce an image of it. Here an extremely hierarchical image comes into being, because of the necessity to put the organization of the institution on paper. But this image also depends on those who conceived it. Why would its authors present or prioritize information in one way rather than another? This brings us to the problem of the uses and destinations of the almanac.

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<sup>54</sup> Ivan Žolger, *Der Hofstaat des Hauses Österreich* (Wien and Leipzig: Deuticke, 1917).

<sup>55</sup> Eric Hassler, “De la nécessité de ne pas dresser de liste : le cas des chambellans de l’empereur à la cour de Vienne, 1670-1740”, in *Le temps des listes, XV<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, eds. Gregorio Salinero and Miguel Angel Melón (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2018), 317-333.

## COURTS ON PAPER: WHAT ARE THE USES OF THE ALMANAC?

The functional character of the almanac can be seen in the practicality of its format. Most almanacs were only around 17 x 10 cm, with a thickness increasing from 3 to 5 cm<sup>56</sup> as the administrative staff grew – and was thus easily transportable (fig. 5).



Fig. 5a and b - A transportable book: *Kajserlicher Und Königlich-er wie auch Ertz-herzoglicher Und Dero Residentz-Stadt Wiens Staats- und Stands-Calender* (Wien, 1736), Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, D.184.220.

Most included an index at the end of the volume to allow the reader to use it quickly and easily. In addition, the current collections of several State libraries in Germany bear witness to the conservation practices of the almanacs in the Early Modern period. At that time, they constituted practical databases to be used by officials of the court<sup>57</sup>. It is interesting to note that several copies of the Bavarian almanacs dating from the 1730s (i.e., before the publication of a yearbook) and bearing the *ex-libris* of the Royal Library of Munich, include handwritten lists of chamberlains at the end of the volume. This could therefore be an anticipation of the publication of the

<sup>56</sup> The Hanoverian almanac is the littlest: 8x5 cm; the Viennese one is narrower: 15x7 cm; the Saxon and the Danish ones are larger: 19x11 cm and 21x18 cm.

<sup>57</sup> Bauer, "Hof- und Staatskalender", 88.

yearbook of the electoral house. It can also be a personal initiative, a factor that highlights the uses of the almanac and reading practices, since the purpose of the almanac evolved through these practices before it was institutionalized<sup>58</sup>.

The almanac should not be perceived as a simple functional tool, but as a mean of asserting the sovereignty of states. These publications were widely used as communication tools that ensured the public representation of the different courts within the Empire. As well as in a wider European space, notably once this was facilitated by a translation into French. This was the case for several Rhenish principalities such as the electorates of Cologne, Mainz or the Palatinate, but also for larger courts such as those of Vienna or Berlin. Moreover, through their circulation, they contributed to the close links between the German courts in an ‘imperial’ space that remained partly virtual, since it was largely decentralized and subjected to powerful centrifugal forces<sup>59</sup>.

Schwarzkopf did not hesitate to mock those small but pretentious German states that prided themselves on publishing an almanac to make themselves “bigger and more powerful”<sup>60</sup>. This self-promotion is tangible in the thickness of the paper, particularly luxurious for certain principalities such as the archbishopric of Salzburg, whose almanac is amplified by this material means. It is possible that the Bavarian publication of an almanac with a yearbook on the model of Austria, Prussia and Saxony was a physical manifestation of Bavarian claims to certain domains of the Habsburg monarchy in the 1730s, when it was taken for granted that Charles VI would not have a male heir. The marriage of the Elector to an Archduchess, the daughter of Emperor Joseph I, justified, from the Bavarian point of view, a partition of the Habsburg Monarchy and invalidated the cohesion of several crowns of the Habsburg Monarchy, like a *Totum* (Prince Eugene of Savoy)<sup>61</sup>, for the sole benefit of the eldest daughter of Emperor Charles VI, Archduchess Maria Theresa. The aim of the almanac was to give himself a political credibility, as a major princely figure, and to justify a Bavarian candidacy for the imperial throne. This relates the study of the function of the almanacs to the question of the role of the Archduchess Maria Amalia of Austria in sense of cultural transfer from one court to another<sup>62</sup>.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the use of the almanac-yearbook as a tool was sufficiently recognized by Joachim von Schwarzkopf. In the light of his legal and diplomatic experience, he acknowledged its central place in the sciences of the administration (*Staatenkunde*). An acceptance that shows the indispensable character of the almanac in curial administration. The institutionalization of the publication of the

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<sup>58</sup> On the link between political culture and cultural practice, see: Krems, *Die Wittelsbacher*, vol. II, 1 and 43-63.

<sup>59</sup> Bauer, *Repertorium*, vol. I, 56.

<sup>60</sup> Schwarzkopf, *Ueber Staats- und Adress-Calender*, 14.

<sup>61</sup> Alfred von Arneth, *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen* (Wien: Braunmüller, 1858), vol. III, 547, n. 13; Thomas Winkelbauer and Petr Mat, eds., *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1620 bis 1740: Leistungen und Grenzen des Absolutismus Paradigma* (Wien: Böhlau, 1995), 23.

<sup>62</sup> See the introduction “Bargaining Chips: Strategic Marriages and Cultural Circulation in Early Modern Europe”, in *Early Modern Dynastic Marriages*.

yearbook, which Joachim Schwarzkopf went so far describing it as an indispensable "Bible" for every minister, as well as for every diplomat or courtier<sup>63</sup>, thus corresponded to a fundamental evolution in curial public relations. It also delivers the rulers' own views and conceptions of their court as an institution and as a dynastic locus. By exposing the court in the sense that the skeleton of the curial institution and the state was entirely exposed to a readership that went far beyond court society, they produced a rationalized and administrative conception of the court. It was also a guarantee of the rationalisation of government practices<sup>64</sup>. This is demonstrated by the typology that Schwarzkopf produces about these almanacs, in the manner of reasoned treatises on political science<sup>65</sup>.

Nowadays, these yearbooks are read by historians and can shed light on the extent to which these publications were situated on the borderline between two theoretical mindsets of the curial institution. One participates in *arcana imperii* and therefore is resistant to a totally rational organizational system. The other is integrated into a rationalized and executive vision of the State which promotes administrative services such as accounting or logistics. The almanac was therefore conceived as a political tool that could demonstrate the prestige of the prince, through the publication of endless lists of servants, his organizational complexity, and the service of great names of the aristocracy. But it was also an administrative tool as much as a propaganda tool, which even specified the addresses of the agents and intended to demonstrate the good management of the curial institution. The publication of the entire staff of the accounts department of the Court of Vienna can be interpreted, for instance, as a desire to certify the probity of cameral finances of the House of Austria. However, the Habsburg Monarchy was periodically shaken by resounding cases of corruption that brought opprobrium to the *Hofkammer* (Aulic Chamber). This was particularly the case of Count Georg Ludwig von Sinzendorf, the president of the *Hofkammer*, who was disgraced after his trial in 1679-1680. It was closely monitored by the Emperor, who wanted rigorous judicial treatment so as to set an example. Moreover, this case revealed the great incompetence of a staff that was essentially recruited amongst the clientele of Sinzendorf and other heads of this department<sup>66</sup>. In the wake of this case, the Emperor clearly wished to strengthen the competence of his agents, as suggested by manuals addressed to the staff of the *Hofkammer*<sup>67</sup>.

In addition to symbolic use, yearbooks published in court almanacs allowed those outside of the court to understand the curial institution and the composition of the princely households, by giving access to its exact composition at a certain time. These books are therefore a means of understanding how an individual princely court was organized and how it worked, but also how this information could be spread widely. They were not only courts of paper, but also transportable courts. Thanks to

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<sup>63</sup> Schwarzkopf, *Ueber Staats- und Adress-Kalender*, 35.

<sup>64</sup> *Hochfürstlich-Salzburgischer Hof-Kalender oder Schematismus* (Salzburg: Impr. F. Mehofer, 1723-1805).

<sup>65</sup> Schwarzkopf, *Ueber Staats- und Adress-Kalender*, 11.

<sup>66</sup> Hansdieter Körbl, *Die Hofkammer und ihr ungetreuer Präsident. Eine Finanzbehörde zur Zeit Leopolds I.* (Wien: Böhlau, 2009), 328-340.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, 374 and ss.

their minute format, they were easy to carry around and could be circulated in ways that have yet to be determined. The translation into French of the Viennese almanac under Empress-Queen Maria Theresa shows at any rate the sovereign's desire to reach beyond the borders of the Austrian Monarchy. The fact that the lists of non-noble servants were reduced to mere numbers reinforces the idea that this French version was only used as a political tool at a time when Maria Theresa sought to support the claims of the House of Austria to be among the foremost European dynasties. Thus, the Viennese court could be reduced to a strict organization, a succession of prestigious names and a plethora of servants to assert its prestige. No additional pomp was necessary. In addition, was the publication of similar almanacs in the Italian peninsula during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century came because of Austrian influence? At least, we can point that the model of the almanac-yearbook also spread beyond the German-speaking world. At the same time, the contents of these yearbooks were also disseminated because it was copied by authors who wrote about the courts, like Rinck<sup>68</sup>, Bormastino<sup>69</sup> and Küchelbecker<sup>70</sup>. These authors reproduced entire pages of the yearbook to explain how the Viennese court worked. In this regard, the almanacs which exposed the curial matrix became itself a matrix for court literature.

## CONCLUSIONS

The almanac mirrored the evolution of the court as an institution, as well as that of the whole modern state. It became more rigorous and denser as the curial institution grew and was progressively rationalised. While the key elements of the prince's households service remained, they were coupled with a state apparatus for the management and governance of the curial institution, which the almanacs exposed, reflecting its changing nature. Finally, it made the institution accessible in all its breadth to the reader whether he was someone dealing with the court, a courtier, a traveller, or diplomat who could thus become acquainted with the workings of the court and the great families who served the prince. In the end, one may wonder if the progressive standardization of almanacs, at least in limited geographical areas, was not also a factor in the standardization of courtly institutions during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as was the case with court portraits, court fashion or the princely architecture.

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<sup>68</sup> Eucharius G. Rinck, *Leopold des Grossen Röm. Kaisers wunderwürdiges Lebens und Thaten aus geheimen Nachrichten eröffnet* (Leipzig: Fritsch, 1708).

<sup>69</sup> Antonio Bormastino, *Historische Beschreibung Von der Kayserlichen Residentz-Stadt Wienn und ihren Vor-Städten... Description historique de la ville et résidence impériale de Vienne et de ses faubourgs, &c.* (Wien: Christophori, 1719).

<sup>70</sup> Johann Basilius Küchelbecker, *Allerneueste Nachricht vom Römisch-Kayserl. Hofe. Nebst einer ausführlichen historischen Beschreibung des Kayserlichen Residentz-Stadt Wien, und der umliegenden Oerter* (Hanovre: Förster, 1730).

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