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"Let it be known" – New Perspectives on Broadsheets and Political Communication at the Time of Maximilian I

As a patron of the arts, Maximilian I was fond of printing – the so-called "black art".[1] His ambitious projects, such as the *Triumphal Arch* made entirely out of paper, attracted much attention in the past.[2] The emperor also instructed a printer to create a new, majestic font which would present a stark difference to Roman fonts. Later this font would become the well-known Fraktur, which was from then on used for German text and survived well into the twentieth century.[3]

Maximilian's ambitions regarding print stretched beyond illustrated works as he also supported the production of books. He and his court gave many privileges to printers for certain publications.[4] A recently compiled census of the imperial privileges granted to people involved in the book trade shows just how varied the patronage of Maximilian was.[5] Yet, there is much more to discover: In 1494/5, for example, Maximilian provided an unknown printer in Graz with a privilege, although the first known press in this city only started operating some 60 years

1 Warm thanks to Falk Eisermann for his many insightful studies on broadsheets, his continuous support of my own work on ephemeral material and his feedback on this chapter.

2 Thomas Schauerte, *Die Ehrenpforte für Kaiser Maximilian I. Dürer und Altdorfer im Dienst des Herrschers*. Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien 95 (Munich, 2001), p. 111. The sheer size of the arch becomes especially clear in a video of the British Museum which shows the challenges of conserving the large item: www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEK26P6r6xo (30/12/2021). See also Jan-Dirk Müller's influential study: *Gedechtnus. Literatur und Hofgesellschaft um Maximilian I*. Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur 2 (Munich, 1982).

3 Heinrich Fichtenau, *Die Lehrbücher Maximilians I. und die Anfänge der Frakturschrift* (Hamburg, 1961).

4 Karl Schottenloher, "Die Druckprivilegien des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 8 (1933), pp. 89–110: p. 89.

5 *Die kaiserlichen Druckprivilegien im Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien. Verzeichnis der Akten vom Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des Deutschen Reichs (1806)*. Buchwissenschaftliche Beiträge aus dem deutschen Bucharchiv München 75, ed. Hans-Joachim Koppitz (Wiesbaden, 2008).

later.[6] No copy of the privileged book – a gospel concordance and extract of the Old and New Testament – survived; only the privilege itself reminds us that even after centuries of scholarship we still do not know the full extent of Maximilian's involvement with the print business.

Another understudied area is Maximilian's use of print for administrative purposes. The printing press enabled rulers to reach out to their subjects much quicker than ever before and Maximilian seized this opportunity from early on. He made ample use of the press and began to publish documents as early as 1478.[7] During his entire rule, Maximilian used print to spread information on recent events, battles and – most importantly – his victories. According to Stephan Füssel, Maximilian was the first emperor to use every advantage of the printing press for his governance.[8] It has also been suggested that Maximilian could be seen as "his own public relations manager".[9]

Despite Maximilian's frequent use of the press, scholars have paid little attention to the many official documents, especially those published in the later years of his reign. Analysing the production and distribution of these intriguing documents, however, provides us with great insights into political communication around 1500. On the following pages, I will present interesting findings for official print, focussing in particular on broadsheets (broadsides).[10] A close examination of these documents as well as other contemporary sources shows, for instance, how long it took to inform subjects about Maximilian's orders. It also reveals that Maximilian, his court and his chancellery had sometimes little to do with the print production of these documents. This study will therefore shed more light on those illusive figures in the background that were actually involved in the production of the documents. Similarly, it is a mistake to assume that all documents were printed immediately after they had been issued. In some cases, years or even

6 Falk Eisermann, "The Gutenberg Galaxy's Dark Matter. Lost Incunabula, and Ways to Retrieve Them," *Lost Books. Reconstructing the Print World of Pre-Industrial Europe*. Library of the written word 46/The handpress world 34, ed. Flavia Bruni and Andrew Pettegree (Leiden, 2016), pp. 31–54: pp. 41–42.

7 Idem, "Buchdruck und politische Kommunikation. Ein neuer Fund zur gedruckten Publizistik Maximilians I.," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch 77* (2002), pp. 76–83.

8 Stephan Füssel, *Johannes Gutenberg*, 6th ed. (Reinbek, 2019), p. 130.

9 Gerhard Benecke, *Maximilian I (1495–1519). An Analytical Biography* (London, 1982), p. iii.

10 The terms "broadside" and "broadsheet" are used synonymously. For a discussion of terminology, see Flavia Bruni, "Early Modern Broadsheets between Archives and Libraries: Toward a Possible Integration," *Broadsheets. Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print*. Library of the written word 60/The handpress world 45, ed. Andrew Pettegree (Leiden, 2017), pp. 33–54: p. 43.

decades could pass until a document under Maximilian's name actually appeared in print.

General Remarks

Broadsheets are documents printed on one side only.[11] In contrast to books and pamphlets, this ephemeral material is difficult to trace down. For the well-studied incunabula era (1450–1500), the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* (GW) at the Berlin State Library as well as the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC) at the British Library lists such items.[12] Thanks to the indefatigable energy of Falk Eisermann, who has worked extensively with broadsheet material from the fifteenth century, we have great insights into many aspects of broadsheet production, distribution and use. Eisermann also created an extremely rich bibliography of all known broadsheets produced within the German-speaking areas until 1500.[13] Yet, we still don't know the full extent of Maximilian's publication efforts: Unknown broadsheet editions are found regularly, especially in archives which are often neglected by book historians.[14] However, for broadsheets printed after 1500, the bibliographical situation is difficult: the items are not documented in the national bibliography for the sixteenth century, the *VD16*.[15] This rather odd choice was presumably made because several catalogues on illustrated broadsheets were

11 Ursula Rautenberg, "Warum Einblattdrucke einseitig bedruckt sind. Zum Zusammenhang von Druckverfahren und medialem Typus," *Einblattdrucke des 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhunderts. Probleme, Perspektiven, Fallstudien*, ed. Volker Honemann, Sabine Griese, Falk Eisermann and Marcus Ostermann (Tübingen, 2000), pp. 129–42.

12 Both are searchable online, www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/ and www.bl.uk/catalogues/istc. (30/12/2020). The latter allows you to search for broadsheets with the terms: "format: Bdsde".

13 *Verzeichnis der typographischen Einblattdrucke des 15. Jahrhunderts im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation. VE 15*, ed. Falk Eisermann, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden, 2004); hereafter VE15.

14 Falk Eisermann, "Archivgut und chronikalische Überlieferung als vernachlässigte Quellen der Frühdruckforschung," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 81 (2006), pp. 50–61. Some of his recent finds include two broadsheet editions in the Landesarchiv NRW at Duisburg, see idem, "Fifty Thousand Veronicas. Print Runs of Broadsheets in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries," Broadsheets, ed. A. Pettegree (cf. fn. 10), pp. 76–113: p. 100. These recent finds are added continously into the *GW* database.

15 www.VD16.de; the exclusion of single sheets is frequently lamented by scholars, especially since the German bibliographies for both the fifteenth (*GW*) and the seventeenth century (*VD17*, www.vd17.de) include them, as well as other national bibliographies, such as the *Short Title Catalogue Flanders* (*STCV*) for the Low Countries, see e. g. James Raven, *Publishing Business in Eighteenth-Century England*. People, markets, goods 3 (Woodbridge, 2014), p. 42.

already compiled or planned to be published in the future.[16] It, however, leaves scholars with no comprehensive bibliographical survey of all single-sheet items printed in the sixteenth century. The *Universal Short Title Catalogue* (USTC) project addressed this deficiency and during my stay in St Andrews I have added numerous broadsheets published under Maximilian's name to the online database; but there is still much to discover.[17]

Depending on the length of the text, broadsheets could consist of one or several sheets, which were pasted together to create a long placard.[18] One of the most prominent examples for such a lengthy broadsheet (though by far not the only one or the longest) is the famous *Edict of Worms* which, in 1521, was printed on four individual sheets.[19] These long broadsheets show how well the printers worked in the early modern period: The various sheets were put together very precisely, rendering the borders of the individual sheets nearly invisible. The entire text, over 200 lines, is legible without any interruptions. This work was done directly in the print shop for which the printer received extra money, as we can see from entries in account books and printers invoices.[20] During Maximilian's

16 Jürgen Beyer, "How complete are the German National Bibliographies for the Sixteenth and the Seventeenth Centuries (VD16 and VD17)?," *The Book Triumphant. Print in Transition in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Library of the written word 15/The handpress world 9, ed. Malcolm Walsby and Graeme Kemp (Leiden, 2011), pp. 57–77: p. 58.

17 So, for instance, the Sammlung *Einblattdrucke* in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München; the holdings of the Staatsbibliothek Berlin; several collections of official print in the Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, the Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, the Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen, the city archive of Cologne, the Deutsches Historisches Museum as well as bibliographies of individual printers.

18 On formats of broadsheets in general, see Paul Needham, "The Formats of Incunable Broadsides," *Buch – Bibliothek – Region. Wolfgang Schmitz zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Christine Haug and Rolf Thiele (Wiesbaden, 2014), pp. 127–44.

19 Despite the edict's importance, the production and dissemination of the broadsheet editions which were exhibited in public have not received much attention. The original edict was most likely produced in Worms, see Karl Schottenloher, "Hans Werlich, genannt Hans von Erfurt, der Drucker des Wormser Ediktes (1518–1532)," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 2 (1927), pp. 53–67: p. 62. However, Schottenloher does not list a broadsheet which comprises over 200 lines (only one with 18 lines). After the Diet of Worms, the edict was reproduced locally in various cities. Two editions have been digitised: Berlin, Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1988/808, online: www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/S3FU6RXMYKGRENMWMTZPYF6XY56DCA32 (30/12/2021); Worms, Stadtbibliothek, -Mag- W 2° Ki 3.3 (facsimile), online: nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0128-5-2738.(see page [3]) (30/12/2021). Weller does not list these editions in his repertory, only a "Abschrift", see Emil Weller, *Repertorium typographicum. Die deutsche Literatur im ersten Viertel des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Nördlingen, 1864), no. 1683.

20 In 1480, the printer Peter Schöffer was paid for glueing together the sheets for 104 copies of an official announcement, see Falk Eisermann, "Die Einblattdrucke Peter Schöffers," *Wolfenbütteler*

lifetime other authorities used similarly long broadsheets. In 1503, for example, the Archbishop of Cologne published a contract with the city of Cologne, which was printed on three individual sheets.[21] A few years later, 1514, the Duke of Württemberg also had a lengthy broadsheet produced which comprised an explanation of his drastic action during a revolt.[22] Another broadsheet, printed under the name of the Bishop of Volterra, even covers the impressive height of 2,7 metres and comprises no less than 638 lines of text.[23] This lengthy publication contains several important documents addressing a legal dispute between the city of Riga and the Teutonic order.[24]

Broadsheets were used for a variety of purposes. They include indulgences; calenders; devotional texts; official announcements; advertisements and invitations to shooting contests.[25] From the sixteenth century onwards, news, songs and especially broadsheets addressing aspects of the Reformation were printed increasingly.[26] Their format made broadsheets ideal for display. Many of them were pasted on walls or doors in key places – at churches, town halls, market places or city gates.[27] Frequently, broadsheets were also used to communicate new legislation. Such ordinances were sent out to recipients and read out to subjects.

Notizen zur Buchgeschichte 42 (2017), pp. 9–20: p. 15. In an account book from 1541, we see that a printer received the payment of 29 Groschen to paste together parts of a coin mandate, which he had printed in 700 copies (12 October 1541), see Georg Buchwald, "Kleine Notizen aus Rechnungsbüchern des Thüringischen Staatsarchivs (Weimar)," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 31 (1934), pp. 192–218: p. 211.

21 GW 10 Sp.685a.

22 Two copies have survived which have both been digitised: Stuttgart, Hauptstaatsarchiv, A 45 Bü 9, online: http://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=1-1211671-58; Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HBFC 5, online: http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/purl/bsz476681200. For more information on the astonishing broadsheet, see below.

23 GW 10293; VE15 F-53.

24 Falk Eisermann, "Bevor die Blätter fliegen lernten. Buchdruck, politische Kommunikation und die 'Medienrevolution' des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Medien der Kommunikation im Mittelalter*. Beiträge zur Kommunikationsgeschichte 15, ed. Karl-Heinz Spieß (Stuttgart, 2003), pp. 289–320: p. 290.

25 Volker Honemann, "Neue Medien für die Stadt. Einblattdrucke, Flugblätter und Flugschriften 1450–1520," *Residenzstädte der Vormoderne. Umrisse eines europäischen Phänomens*. Residenzenforschung Neue Folge: Stadt und Hof 2, ed. Gerhard Fouquet, Jan Hirschbiegel and Sven Rabeler (Ostfildern, 2016), pp. 349–70: pp. 352–53.

26 Ibid., pp. 355–59.

27 Falk Eisermann, "'Vil grozer brefe sint angeslagen'. Typographie und öffentliche Kommunikation im 15. Jahrhundert," *Literatur – Geschichte – Literaturgeschichte. Beiträge zur mediävistischen Literaturwissenschaft. Festschrift für Volker Honemann zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Nine Miedema and Rudolf Suntrup (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), pp. 481–502: pp. 489–91.

For the printers, official orders were lucrative business. As broadsheets could be produced relatively easily, they promised quick returns for the producers, allowing them to embark on more costly projects. In Gutenberg's print shop, for instance, indulgences for the church were produced as early as 1454.[28] Printers were keen on these jobs: the whole print run was paid for by one single client. This way, the producer did not have to face the usual risks of producing items for a commercial market.

Depending on the number of copies, the production could be very swift. The printer Peter Schöffer remarked in 1497 that he could produce 150 copies of a broadsheet within only one day.[29] A larger order would also have been manageable within the same time frame. Around that time, a single press could be used for up to 1,000 impressions per day.[30] Thus, a broadsheet that only consisted of one sheet could be printed in hundreds of copies within the space of one single working day.

Soon many printers tried to secure orders of official broadsheets from religious and secular authorities. Among them were many prolific printers, such as Christopher Plantin and his heirs in Antwerp. Plantin was a diligent businessman and he kept a copy of nearly every ordinance produced for authorities in his print shop.[31] This remarkable collection survives in the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp and provides modern-day historians with unique insights into the workings of secular authorities. The many documents show that during times of economic and political crises, particularly in the 1580s, the printing press proved to be an important instrument of government for the city fathers of Antwerp.[32]

28 Janet Ing, "The Mainz Indulgences of 1454/5: A Review of Recent Scholarship," *The British Library Journal* 9 (1983), pp. 14–31. GW 06555 (VE15 C-14) and GW 06556 (VE15 C-15) (both have links to digital copies in GW). More recently, Günter Hägele, "Neue Quellen zum Druck der 30-zeiligen Mainzer Ablassbriefe und zum Vertrieb des 'Zypern-Ablasses' im Erzbistum Köln und in den umliegenden Gebieten," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 88 (2013), pp. 54–62.

29 F. Eisermann, Einblattdrucke (cf. fn. 20), p. 16.

30 Oliver Duntze, *Ein Verleger sucht sein Publikum. Die Straßburger Offizin des Matthias Hupfuff (1497/98–1520)*. Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens. Studien 4 (Munich, 2007), pp. 75–76. Reinhold Reith, *Lohn und Leistung. Lohnformen im Gewerbe 1450–1900*. Beihefte zur Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 151 (Stuttgart, 1999), p. 214.

31 Dirk Imhof, *Jan Moretus and the Continuation of the Plantin Press. A Bibliography of the Works Published and Printed by Jan Moretus I in Antwerp (1589–1610)*, 2 vols. Bibliotheca bibliographica Neerlandica. Series maior 3 (Leiden, 2014); Arthur der Weduwen, "Selling the Republican Ideal. State Communication in the Dutch Golden Age" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 2018), p. 60.

32 Saskia Limbach, *Government Use of Print. Official Publications in the Holy Roman Empire, 1500–1600*. Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte 326 (Frankfurt am Main, 2021).

Yet, such exhaustive collections are very rare. Single sheets generally have a low survival rate. Most of them, such as the many calendars and advertisements, were simply not collected for posterity. Exhibited copies were destroyed by the weather or simply thrown away after they had fulfilled their purpose. Fortunately, administrative documents, such as Maximilian's instructions, had a better chance of survival. They were often kept either by the sender or by at least one of the recipients.

This provides historians with a good overview of the documents issued in Maximilian's name up until 1500: Currently we know of 134 broadsheet editions.[33] This includes many variants where the text was slightly altered to correspond to the appropriate rank of the recipient (see below). Bibliographically speaking, when it comes to broadsheets such variants are all considered distinct items and hence are counted separately. Chronologically the production of documents varies significantly. Whereas there were many years in which seemingly no document was printed at all, the production rose in the 1490s, particularly in the latter years of the decade. The majority of the documents were issued in 1496, the year that immediately followed the Diet of Worms, which represents the peak of Maximilian's reforms.[34] In 1496, a total of 45 broadsheets appeared. Among them were not only invitations to the forthcoming Imperial Diet at Lindau as well as an account of the cancellation of an Imperial Diet in Frankfurt; there were also instructions and receipts for the financial contribution of a new tax (Common Penny), as well as other payments and several imperial bans on individuals, cities and communities.

In addition to that, Maximilian increasingly published broadsheets asking his estates to contribute money for his war against France and later for his conflict with Venice. The latter was a particular problem for Maximilian and he often used broadsheets to address his advances in Italy, especially between 1509 and 1511.[35] He even tried to reach out to the inhabitants of Venice. In April 1511, the emperor had a letter produced in Italian which he hoped would instigate the

33 https://gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/docs/MAXIMIL.htm (30/12/2021). Some items are known through bibliographical entries only and not through surviving copies; these items could include so-called "ghosts", i. e. editions which never existed but were recorded erroneously by bibliographers. If we count only those documents which are known through a surviving copy and are therefore verifiable, the total is 134. A special thanks to Oliver Duntze for his help in this matter.

34 Thomas A. Brady, Jr., "Maximilian I and the Imperial Reform at the Diet of Worms, 1495," *Maximilians Ruhmeswerk. Künste und Wissenschaften im Umkreis Kaiser Maximilians I.* Frühe Neuzeit 190, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller and Hans-Joachim Ziegeler (Berlin, 2015), pp. 31–56: p. 34.

35 Peter Diederichs, *Kaiser Maximilian I. als politischer Publizist* (Diss. Heidelberg, 1931, Jena 1932), pp. 112–14, listing several broadsheets addressing the conflict with Venice.

Venetians against their rulers.[36] For such endeavours, the Augsburg printer Erhard Öglin, who was also the first German printer to produce polyphonic music, supplied Antiqua letters so that Italian readers would be much more familiar with the design of the text (and would not be confused by German Gothic letters).[37] After the completion of the letter in April 1511, Maximilian had the publication smuggled into the city and had it possibly also bound on arrows to shoot the letters over the city walls.[38]

Many of the broadsheets issued in Maximilian's name survive in local or state archives. Other editions are only known from bibliographies, which list copies that once were in institutional collections, but were in later years destroyed, stolen or misplaced. In one case, for instance, we only know about the broadsheet edition because of an entry in the catalogue of a rare book dealer; another broadsheet is inferred from a contemporary invoice which shows the printer was paid for the production of the sheets, yet no copy has survived.[39] Thanks to the continuous efforts of the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* (*GW*), these hitherto unrecorded broadsheets are also found and subsequently added to the GW database.

Broadsheets published under the name of Maximilian I

The first document under Maximilian's name was published as early as January 1478.[40] A few months earlier, he had married Mary of Burgundy, which put him at the heart of Burgundy's military conflict with France. To campaign against France, Maximilian needed men, and by issuing the printed document, the new Duke of Burgundy asked the imperial estates to send troops. Once the soldiers arrived, Maximilian specified in the text, they would receive adequate payment according to their rank. Further details are given and the text ends with the typical details of when and where Maximilian gave this order; in this case on 18 January 1478 in "Andorpp" (Antwerp). Just a few days earlier, Maximilian had entered

36 Ibid., p. 113, no. 66.

37 Nicole Schwindt, "Erhard Öglin und die Anfänge des deutschen Notendrucks," *Reutlinger Geschichtsblätter* 58 (2019), pp. 57–84: p. 63.

38 S. Füssel, Johannes Gutenberg (cf. fn. 8), p. 130.

39 GW M21934 (VE15 M-18) lists the sales catalogue for an auction in 1939 and GW M2202120 (not in VE15) refers to an account book mentioned in Ferdinand Geldner, *Die Buchdruckerkunst im alten Bamberg 1458/59 bis 1519* (Bamberg, 1964), p. 135.

40 VE15 M-17; for details about the broadsheet, its content and its publication history, see F. Eisermann, Buchdruck (cf. fn. 7).

the city with much celebration.[41] The design of the text can be considered as prototypical for the many sheets that were printed thereafter: The text was set as a single block and gave a detailed account of recent events. The content of the 1478 document was also typical: Maximilian often prompted his estates to assist his conquest against France either financially or with military support.[42]

The printed text does not specify the target audiences; the text begins, "We, Maximilian, ... make it known to everybody who reads or hears this letter" ("Wir Maximilian ... Thun kund aller meniclich/ den diser vnser brief furkumbt oder verkundt wird"). This shows that Maximilian intended this order not only to circulate in writing but also that he expected it to be read out, which was a common practice at the time (see below).

Despite the potentially large group of recipients, however, the letter was most likely printed in just a few hundred copies. It was sent out to a fixed number of recipients, consisting of princes, religious authorities, cities and specific individuals. Hence the broadsheet was probably produced in 200 to 400 copies, judging by the number of estates usually invited to imperial diets.[43] This might appear a relatively low number, especially when compared to broadsheet indulgences, which were produced in several thousand copies.[44] However, Maximilian's documents were first and foremost directed towards local authorities, who then, in turn, were responsible to make the content known to their subjects.

Later documents underline this procedure: the printed documents were produced in slightly different versions to include various addresses (*Formularvarianten)*. The next recorded broadsheets, after Maximilian's first edition, were issued in July 1489, almost 12 years later.[45] In total, four different editions survive with noticeable variations at the beginning of the text which contains the greeting. This time it does not mention simply everybody. Two editions were produced for the nobility with a slightly different text, but the same address. Both broadsheets included the humble greeting: "noble and dear loyal subject". The other two editions differ in their tone, which is still respectful but simpler. Both are

41 Kim Overlaet, "The 'joyous entry' of Archduke Maximilian into Antwerp (13 January 1478): an analysis of a 'most elegant and dignified' dialogue," *Journal of Medieval History* 44.2 (2018), pp. 231–49.

42 Falk Eisermann, "Imperial Representation and the Printing Press in fifteenth-century Germany," *Multi-Media Compositions from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period*. Groningen studies in cultural change 9, ed. Margriet Hoogvliet (Leuven, 2004), pp. 61–74: p. 66.

43 F. Eisermann, Fifty Thousand Veronicas (cf. fn. 14), pp. 101–02.

44 Ibid., p. 87.

45 GW M21934 (VE15 M-18); GW M2193420 (VE15 M-19); GW M21935 (VE15 M-20); GW M2193520 (VE15 M-21).

addressed to cities; one with a more humble greeting of "honourable and dear loyal subject" and the other just "dear loyal subject". Such variants in the printed documents were quite common in the documents issued in Maximilian's name. In one instance, no fewer than seven variants of the same form were issued – for secular princes and religious authorities of different ranks. This included even one document solely produced for the seven electors, suggesting that this particular broadsheet was produced in only seven copies.[46]

The production of these many variants would ensure that the recipients were not offended by the wrong address. An incidence in January 1491 shows vividly how much an inappropriate greeting could damage a relationship. At the end of the month, the city council in Cologne discussed an imperial letter it had previously received (in manuscript form). To the dismay of the magistrates, the emperor only used the term "the honourable" ("dem ehrbaren").[47] In their answer, the officials who composed the letter then also left out the proper address, which, in return, disgruntled the emperor. In fact, the emperor was so upset about this inappropriate address that the negotiations he undertook on behalf of the city with the Archbishop of Cologne were in danger of ending abruptly. The council therefore decided to have other – more diplomatic – officials formulate future letters to the emperor.

Besides including the appropriate addresses, documents were also personalised with regard to another aspect. With the printed documents, issued on 29 July 1489, Maximilian asked the estates to send military support in the form of both footsoldiers and soldiers on horseback. In the printed text, two blank spaces were left to specify the exact numbers. Fortunately, in some local archives, copies survive in which the required numbers were filled in by hand. Hence we know that Maximilian expected the city of Colmar to send four mounted soldiers and eight footsoldiers, whereas the larger and richer Augsburg was asked to send 12 mounted soldiers and 45 footsoldiers and Strasbourg 20 mounted soldiers and 60 footsoldiers. All of them had to arrive in Cologne on 21 September at the latest – about two months after the issue date of the letter.

This was a relatively tight deadline. The letter sent to the imperial city of Überlingen at Lake Constance (asking for two mounted soldiers and eight footsoldiers) only arrived at the end of August – a whole month after the document had been

46 F. Eisermann, Fifty Thousand Veronicas (cf. fn. 14), p. 102; GW M22016 (VE15 M-86).

47 *Beschlüsse des Rates der Stadt Köln, 1320–1550*. Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde 65, ed. Manfred Groten and Manfred Huiskes, vol. 1: *Die Ratsmemoriale und ergänzende Überlieferung, 1320–1543* (Dusseldorf, 1990), pp. 752–53, no 2.

issued.[48] This time span is hardly surprising: First the document needed to be composed, handwritten in its final form, authorised, sent to the printer (in this case in Mainz) and then produced, proofread and authenticated by the authorities before it could actually be sent out. This procedure certainly took days, if not weeks. On top of that, Überlingen is about 300 kilometers from Mainz. A messenger on horseback could usually travel around 50–60 km per day.[49] This meant that the letter took at least a week to reach Überlingen, probably longer. After all, the messenger presumably did not take the direct route to Überlingen but visited other cities along the way to drop off the respective letters there as well.[50] Another letter, for instance, was distributed with the help of five messengers who visited a number of cities each.[51]

The time span of about one month between the issue date and the reception of the documents seems to have been relatively common at the end of the fifteenth century. Only rarely were documents delivered quicker than that – it took only 18 days until Maximilian's request for soldiers was presented to the Count of Nassau and Saarbrücken;[52] Nördlingen also received its copy slightly earlier: After 22 days the city council had not only received the request but already sent an answer.[53] Naturally cities close to the place of printing could be informed more quickly: A later mandate issued in Überlingen and printed in Mainz arrived in Frankfurt only eight days after the issue date.[54] But this seems to have been the exception. In another instance, a mandate printed in Mainz also took about a month before it reached Frankfurt.[55] Similarly, when in 1494 Maximilian sent out invitations to the Diet in Worms, the documents were both issued and

48 VE15 M-20; on the letter's back it was noted that it was presented to the council on 27 August.

49 Robert Walser, "Lasst uns ohne nachricht nit. Botenwesen und Informationsbeschaffung unter der Regierung des Markgrafen Albrecht Achilles von Brandenburg" (Diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 2004), https://edoc.ub.uni-muenchen.de/2796/ (30/12/2021), p. 164.

50 The messengers instructed to deliver a broadsheet printed by the city council in Regensburg visited at least 6–14 cities each, see F. Eisermann, Vil grozer brefe (cf. fn. 27), pp. 489–91.

51 Falk Eisermann, "'Darnach wisset euch zu richten'. Maximilians Einblattdrucke vom Freiburger Reichstag," *Der Kaiser in seiner Stadt. Maximilian I. und der Reichstag zu Freiburg 1498*, ed. Hans Schadek (Freiburg, 1998), pp. 198–215: p. 210. For princes, deadlines for regional diets could also prove difficult to meet: In 1492, the dukes of Bavaria wanted to send out invitations to their subjects inviting them to a diet in Freising which was supposed to take place in two weeks' time. Yet, the printed documents arrived a whole month later so that the dukes had to set a new date for the diet, see F. Eisermann, Fifty Thousand Veronicas (cf. fn. 14), p. 99.

52 VE15 M-19, copy in Wiesbaden, Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Abt. 131 Nr. IVa 13.

53 VE15 M-21, copy in Augsburg, Staatsarchiv, Reichsstadt Nördlingen / MÜB 989, Prod. 19.

54 F. Eisermann, Darnach wisset (cf. fn. 51), p. 210.

55 Ibid.

printed in Antwerp on 24 November and the city councils in Basel, Frankfurt, Nuremberg and Strasbourg received the documents between 22 and 30 December.[56]

What happened after Maximilian's letters were received?

Depending on Maximilian's orders in the documents, the recipients had to make the content known to all their subjects. To this end, the text was proclaimed – as seen above – often in front of town halls.[57] An example from a slightly later point in time, i. e. 1523, serves to illustrate this procedure: When the city council of Cologne received an imperial privilege to confiscate dilapidated houses, it send the two burgomasters through the entire city to invite the inhabitants to the proclamation. Eventually, the proclamation took place in front of the town hall.[58] In some cases, the emperor instructed his recipients to read out the letter in church or have the subjects pray for his success.[59] If an issue was particularly important, Maximilian also demanded that his orders were exhibited. This was for instance the case in January 1516.[60] At that time, the emperor placed those German *Landsknechte* who were fighting for the King of France under imperial ban. To make it known as widely as possible, Maximilian instructed some cities to exhibit several copies of the document. To this end he sent 15 copies to Augsburg, 12 copies to Frankfurt and 5 copies to Regensburg.[61]

Occasionally, local authorities had the emperor's orders reprinted and then distributed widely within their territory, such as the order addressing the Common Penny. Maximilian introduced the new tax in 1495 which sparked the production of a number of broadsheets.[62] In the years following the initial publication, the king addressed the issue four more times, mostly because a number of his subjects refused to pay. These many letters prompted local authorities to have reprints produced, such as the city councils of Nuremberg and Basel.[63] The Dukes of Saxony, the Bishops of Bamberg and Augsburg and the Count Palatine of the

56 GW M21949 (VE15 M-36).
57 V. Honemann, Neue Medien (cf. fn. 25), pp. 363–64, lists several examples for Nuremberg.
58 *Repertorium der Policeyordnungen der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 6: *Reichsstädte*, 2: *Köln*, 2 vols. Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte 191, ed. Klaus Militzer (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), pp. 8–9.
59 F. Eisermann, Darnach wisset (cf. fn. 51), p. 210.
60 P. Diederichs, Kaiser Maximilian (cf. fn. 35), p. 30.
61 Ibid., p. 115.
62 F. Eisermann, Darnach wisset (cf. fn. 51), p. 204.
63 See for Nuremberg: GW M27312 (VE15 N-23); Basel: GW 03694 (VE15 B-28), the only surviving copy is available online: query.staatsarchiv.bs.ch/query/detail.aspx?ID=1116711 (30/12/2021).

Rhine also issued letters instructing their subjects to pay the tax.[64] Most local reprints are visually distinct from Maximilian's printed letters and include the names of the local authorities at the beginning. These are vital indicators showing us who commissioned the publications. But not in all cases can we find such helpful hints. This makes it sometimes impossible to find out more about the client who ordered the print production.

Official print exhibited at church doors, city gates and town halls did not always stay there for long. Sometimes the placards were vandalised.[65] In other cases, the printed sheets caused so much resentment that readers took out their anger on them, as merchants from Erfurt did in 1480. When they encountered an announcement by the Archbishop of Mainz directed against their home town, the merchants took down the placards and destroyed them.[66] Similarly, a few years later in Basel several people – including a municipal notary – tore down publications issued by the pope through one of his legates.[67]

To prevent such unruly behaviour, Maximilian issued an order which stated that none of his imperial broadsheets should be torn down or harmed in any way; the broadsheet was issued on 24 January 1508.[68] In the text, Maximilian even detailed the punishment: The offender had to pay the significant fine of 10 gold marks. Whether this warning actually helped to stop vandalism is, however, not known; after all, the papal bull exhibited in Basel also contained such a warning and even a notary tore it down.[69]

Yet, there were also certain orders which the recipients refused to communicate more widely. Some rulers rejected to tell their subjects about the emperor's wishes, especially if Maximilian asked for more money. In 1511, when Maximilian asked the estates to contribute to his war against France, the city council of Frankfurt answered that it could not follow the emperor's orders. After all, the city was going through a hard time already and the city fathers did not want to trouble the inhabitants of Frankfurt even more.[70] A peculiar case from 1486 shows that the public posting of official print could sometimes even be dangerous.[71] In 1486,

64 F. Eisermann, Darnach wisset (cf. fn. 51), p. 205.
65 Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News. How the World Came to Know About Itself* (London, 2014), p. 88.
66 F. Eisermann, Fifty Thousand Veronicas (cf. fn. 14), p. 103.
67 F. Eisermann, Bevor die Blätter (cf. fn. 24), p. 305.
68 E. Weller, Repertorium (cf. fn. 19), p. 52.
69 F. Eisermann, Bevor die Blätter (cf. fn. 24), p. 305.
70 P. Diederichs, Kaiser Maximilian (cf. fn. 35), p. 57.
71 The following is taken from F. Eisermann, Vil grozer brefe (cf. fn. 27), pp. 486–92.

the city of Regensburg made an extremely unusual decision: Due to financial difficulties the city gave up its status as Imperial City and instead became a subject of the Dukes in Bavaria, against the emperor's wishes. To justify this unusual step, the council had an explanation printed as a broadsheet and entrusted various messengers to deliver copies to the electors, princes and numerous cities in the empire. Upon their return to Regensburg, two messengers reported that they had been prohibited from exhibiting the broadsheets in several cities and that some people had even abused the messengers and threatened to kill them.

Official print under Maximilian's name

Already with Maximilian's very first printed broadsheet, the request for military support from 1478, we encounter a small but important detail. Although Maximilian issued the order in Antwerp, the document was not printed in a nearby print shop.[72] Despite the fact that Antwerp did not have a print shop at the time, the document could have easily been produced by a printer in cities close-by, such as Brussels or Deventer, or even a bit further away in Cologne or Mainz.[73] However, an analysis of the typographical material used for this document revealed that the broadsheet was published in Ulm, in the workshop of Johannes Zainer the Elder. This indicates that it was very probably not Maximilian himself who ordered the production and distribution, but rather Maximilian's father, Emperor Frederick III, or a high-ranking member of Frederick's chancellery. In previous years the city council of Ulm had helped to transport and disseminate imperial letters and requests for support among the imperial estates. As the estates were also Maximilian's target audience for this broadsheet Ulm was an ideal place to have it produced there.

In urgent cases, Maximilian did not lose valuable time and had his orders printed locally. In 1494, for instance, when the king stayed at Antwerp, he had the invitation to the Diet of Worms printed in a local print shop. A few years later, documents issued at the Diet of Freiburg were printed in the same city.[74] Apart from that, however, most documents issued in the name of Maximilian I were produced in either Mainz or Augsburg.[75] In the latter city, Maximilian had good relations with many citizens, such as the humanist Konrad Peutinger, whom

72 GW M2193310 (VE15 M-17).
73 F. Eisermann, Buchdruck (cf. fn. 7), p. 80.
74 F. Eisermann, Darnach wisset (cf. fn. 51), p. 204.
75 F. Eisermann, Einblattdrucke (cf. fn. 20), p. 19.

he entrusted to pass on an official document to the printer.[76] After all, the king was a frequent visitor to Augsburg.[77] Hence it is not surprising that of the 134 broadsheet editions printed up until 1500, no less than 36 appeared in Augsburg. The large majority were printed by Erhard Ratdolt, who also produced books and broadsheets for other authorities, such as the Bishop of Augsburg.[78] This sort of work signalled to the ruler that the printer could be entrusted with other official commissions, too. Although Ratdolt continued to run a print shop well into the sixteenth century, Maximilian started to work with the printer Johann Schönsperger from 1496 onwards. The king offered him the lucrative job as official printer for the astounding salary of 100 Gulden per year.[79] In 1509, the emperor even provided Schönsperger with a personal security guard, probably because the printer was in conflict with one of his business partners.[80] Similarly, Maximilian employed the Augsburg printer Erhard Öglin and it may very well have been him who produced the Italian letter to the inhabitants of Venice which was later smuggled into the city.[81] Nevertheless, both Schönsperger and Öglin soon realised that Maximilian was not as reliable when it came to his payments and Öglin even had to temporarily pawn parts of his printing material before he was reimbursed for his services to the emperor.[82]

Mainz, on the other hand, was the seat of the imperial chancery, overseen by the Elector-Archbishop of Mainz. From 1484 Berthold von Henneberg held this position and ordered the print production of many documents. Since Maximilian often moved from one city to the next, Henneberg remained at the heart of political communication in the chancellery, holding one of the most important positions in the realm.[83] Already in his first year as chancellor, Henneberg had a broadsheet published under his own name. After that, he entertained good relations

76 In 1518, Maximilian instructed Peutinger to have 300 copies of an imperial ban printed, see P. Diederichs, Kaiser Maximilian (cf. fn. 35), p. 26.

77 Georg Schmidt-von Rhein, "Maximilian aus der Sicht der Zeitgenossen," *Kaiser Maximilian. Bewahrer und Reformer*, ed. Georg Schmidt-von Rhein (Ramstein, 2002), pp. 290–303: p. 298.

78 Hans-Jörg Künast, "Der Augsburger Buchdruck im 15. Jahrhundert – Der Markt und seine Akteure," *Augsburg Macht Druck. Die Anfänge des Buchdrucks in einer Metropole des 15. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Günter Hägele and Melanie Thierbach (Augsburg, 2017), pp. 42–49: p. 42.

79 Hans-Jörg Künast, *"Getruckt zu Augspurg". Buchdruck und Buchhandel in Augsburg zwischen 1468 und 1555*. Studia Augustana 8 (Tübingen, 1997), p. 96.

80 Ibid., pp. 96–97.

81 Ibid., p. 98; *Konrad Peutingers Briefwechsel*. Humanistenbriefe 1, ed. Erich König (Munich, 1923), pp. 130–35.

82 Ibid.

83 F. Eisermann, Einblattdrucke (cf. fn. 20), p. 16.

with the printer Peter Schöffer. The printer often stands in the shadow of his master Johannes Gutenberg, despite the fact that Schöffer made quite significant achievements himself.[84] From the very beginning, the printer produced broadsheets, and soon he became the most productive producer of single-sheet items throughout the fifteenth century.[85] Up until 1500 he had printed over 140 editions: indulgences, almanacs, papal bulls and ordinances from local governments.[86] A great bulk of these many editions – more than 30 – were issued under Maximilian's name and presumably ordered by Berthold von Henneberg. Schöffer was very likely one of the most important 'employees' of the Archbishop in Mainz although he never received an official title or annual salary.[87]

Not all broadsheets were commissioned by the imperial court or the chancellery, though. This is an important aspect and one which is easy to overlook. In some cases, the documents were actually printed by the recipients. This was already the case when Maximilian's father was still in power.[88] It is, however, difficult to determine who paid for the print production, as the client is usually not mentioned in the text at all. In fact, official broadsheets usually just refer to the place of issue and date without providing any details on the place of printing or date. If we want to shed light on the production background of official broadsheets we need to, therefore, look beyond the printed texts for more evidence. In some cases we can find payment records or rely on the analysis of the typographical material. In other instances the watermarks on the paper help us to make astonishing findings.

Recipients of official letters published these as early as 1461. At that time, two contenders were fighting for the position of Archbishop of Mainz. In the process, a royal decree, several papal bulls and other official documents were published not by the issuers but by the rival parties.[89] Later, in 1498, the Swabian League had one of Maximilian's ordinances printed which addressed winemaking.[90]

Imperial bans were also often not printed by the king but by an interested party. We know of examples were the Bishop of Würzburg and the city council

84 Cornelia Schneider, *Peter Schöffer: Bücher für Europa*. Schriftenreihe des Gutenberg-Museums Mainz 2 (Mainz, 2003).
85 F. Eisermann, Einblattdrucke (cf. fn. 20), p. 10.
86 For example, GW 77 (VE15 A-39); GW 1304 (VE15 A-164); GW 4935 (VE15 B-65).
87 F. Eisermann, Einblattdrucke (cf. fn. 20), p. 16.
88 F. Eisermann, Imperial Representation (cf. fn. 42), p. 65.
89 F. Eisermann, Bevor die Blätter (cf. fn. 24), pp. 293–96.
90 The following is taken from F. Eisermann, Darnach wisset (cf. fn. 51), pp. 209–11; GW M22045 (VE15 M-117).

of Nuremberg published imperial bans.[91] One example from 1497 is particularly well documented and serves to illustrate the procedure. In that year, Ebolt Stieber breached the general peace (*Landfrieden*) by starting a feud with the Bishop of Bamberg and attacking one of his subjects. The bishop urged Maximilian to punish this injustice and the king had a handwritten document composed which placed Stieber under imperial ban. Once the Bishop of Bamberg received the manuscript, he had it printed in a local print shop, as an entry in the bishop's account book reveals. Finally, a notary authenticated the printed document by hand and the copies of the printed document were sent out, as another entry in the account book proves. Just as we have seen above, several messengers brought the copies to nearby cities.

Other interested parties also had imperial bans printed in the sixteenth century. One such broadsheet was produced in the course of the Poor Conrad revolt in 1514 in the Duchy of Württemberg.[92] The revolt was sparked by the duke's imposition of new taxes on the already suffering population. Many of the inhabitants in Württemberg vehemently opposed the prince's actions. Finally, Duke Ulrich brutally suppressed the revolt by torturing and executing many of his subjects. Nevertheless, hundreds of rebels were able to flee across the borders of the duchy. To trace down the fugitives, Ulrich had an astonishingly long broadsheet published, consisting of four sheets pasted together, which he wanted to have exhibited in neighbouring cities.[93]

Similar to the Bishop of Bamberg, the Duke of Württemberg asked Maximilian to place the offenders under imperial ban – in this case this meant banning over 100 individuals. Maximilian granted this request and sent the imperial ban in manuscript form.[94] In order to include the many names, the original manuscript was written on a large piece of parchment measuring 46 x 77 cm. Duke Ulrich had the text presumably printed in the workshop of Thomas Anshelm, who had also produced the large broadsheets along with individual cover letters for princes,

91 F. Eisermann, Bevor die Blätter (cf. fn. 24), pp. 299 and 301.

92 The revolt was accompanied by several printed documents from both the duke and the uprisers, see Saskia Limbach, "Propaganda im Druck – Politische Kommunikation beim 'Armen Konrad'," *Der 'Arme Konrad' vor Gericht. Verhöre, Sprüche und Lieder in Württemberg 1514,* ed. Peter Rückert (Stuttgart, 2014), pp. 40–47.

93 Ibid., p. 44. A copy in the Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart has been digitised, along with the individual letters for www.landesarchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=1-1211671-58.

94 Stuttgart, Hauptstaatsarchiv, A 45 U 3, www.landesarchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=1-1209896.

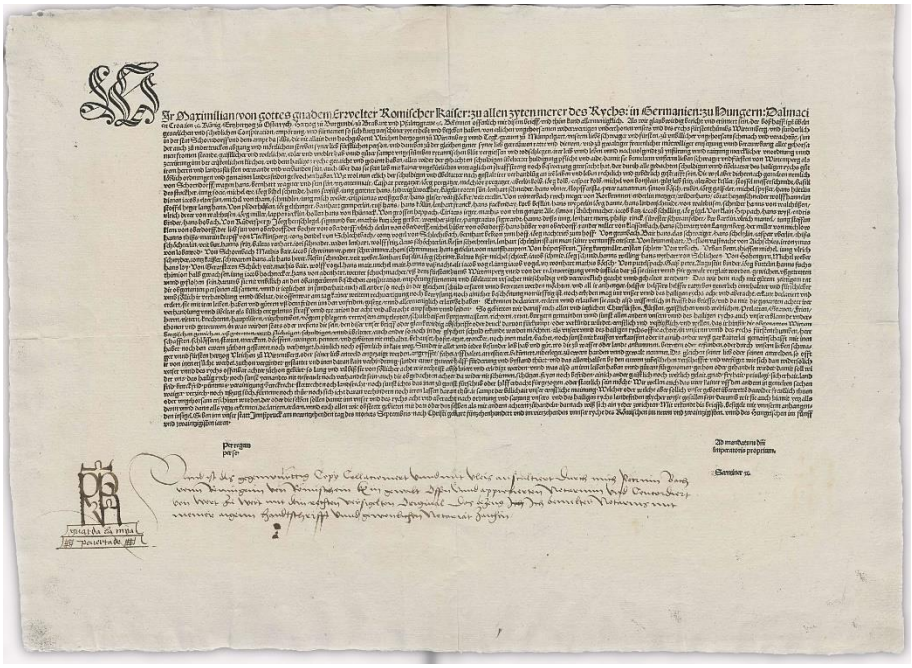

Figure 1: Imperial ban produced as a broadsheet with hand-written authentification. Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abt. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, A 45 Bü 11 Umschlag 5 Nr 1, www.landesarchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=1-1211672-10

bishops, abbots, city councils, knights and officials.[95] Just as in Bamberg, the printed ban was authenticated by a notary, stating that it was a word-by-word copy of the original manuscript (see Figure 1).

Numerous other imperial bans printed in the early sixteenth century invite us to do further research. In the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, for instance, we can find at least one more broadsheet banning individuals in Maximilian's name. The document was also authenticated by a notary.[96] Additionally, in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin there are three more documents in which Maximilian places individuals under the imperial ban. One was issued in 1511 and presumably printed in Worms;[97] another was printed in Cologne in

95 S. Limbach, Propaganda (cf. fn. 92).

96 Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, WLB, HBFC 120, digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/purl/bsz445899697.

97 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Einbl. 1511, 001 kl (printed in 1511).

1512.[98] The third document is particularly interesting: It is a proof copy on which the text was printed four times.[99] It seems very likely that all these printed documents were commissioned by an interested party and not by Maximilian.

Official documents and their printing dates

Similar to the elusive information about who ordered and paid for the print production of the document, the date of printing can also be very difficult to determine. Here, it is important to note that the printing date can differ quite decisively from the issue date given in the printed text. Maximilian's order to punish blasphemy was issued at the Diet of Worms, on 7 August 1495. Yet, it was only accepted by the estates at the Diet of Lindau, on 1 February 1497.[100] Only then could the documents be printed; yet they all show the issue date from 1495 in the printed text. Without a close examination of the typographical material and the material evidence, this small but important detail can easily be overlooked. Another example is even more striking. In 1469, Maximilian's father issued a document in which he asked the estates to recognise Gerhard as the Duke of Cleves. This document was only printed some 25 years later in 1495, when Maximilian had already succeeded his father.[101]

This gap between issue date and print date is often found for privileges. In Strasbourg, for instance, the brotherhood of St Eligius had a privilege printed which the local bishop had granted them in 1487; yet it was printed over ten years after the issue date in 1489.[102] Presumably at that point the brotherhood wanted to attract more members and hoped that the printed copies would help to advertise their charitable work; after all, the bishop had emphasised this work in the text.[103]

Imperial privileges were no exception. In the early sixteenth century, for instance, Maximilian issued two important documents concerning trade fairs in the rival cities of Leipzig and Naumburg. The first was a privilege granting Leipzig the right to hold fairs, the other a confirmation that Naumburg was allowed to move one of its fairs to an earlier date. Both documents were issued in April and

98 Ibid., Einbl. 1512, 002 m (printed in 1512).
99 Ibid., Einbl. 1504, 001 kl (printed in 1504).
100 GW M21952 (VE15 M-41), GW M21954 (VE15 M-42).
101 GW 10345 (VE15 F-61).
102 O. Duntze, Ein Verleger (cf. fn. 30), p. 261.
103 Frieder Schanze, "Inkunabeln oder Postinkunabeln? Zur Problematik der 'Inkunabelngrenze' am Beispiel von 5 Druckern und 111 Einblattdrucken," Einblattdrucke, V. Honemann et al., ed. (cf. fn. 11), pp. 45–122: p. 61.

May 1514 respectively, but after much dispute with Leipzig as well as the Duke of Saxony, Maximilian revoked the confirmation of dates for the Naumburg fair.[104] In the end, the city was not allowed to hold a competing fair at the same time as Leipzig. Interestingly, the documents were printed not during this dispute, but eight years later, in 1522. The typographical material clearly points towards Melchior Lotter as being the printer of both broadsheets.[105] Lotter had repeatedly worked for both the duke and the city council (for which he also supplied paper).[106] After the dispute erupted once again and the emperor (now Charles V) reissued the privilege for Leipzig, the duke or the city council ordered the print production of Maximilian's documents in an effort to end the conflict.[107] After that, the Leipzig privilege was printed again – this time with an even more significant time gap of 100 years between issue date and print date.[108] It seems that it was produced to celebrate the centennial in 1597. Yet there is no indication in the printed text and an observer who is not familiar with print history may easily overlook the fact that the document was produced this much later in time.

In the Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, we can find an even more peculiar example of privileges, which were printed at a later point in time. In the mid-1550s the Duke of Württemberg had several royal and imperial privileges published; all of them were produced as folio pamphlets consisting of only a few leaves.[109] The privileges were issued in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, with the earliest dating back to 1361.[110] Among them are three documents issued by Maximilian addressing Württemberg's jurisdiction.[111] At the Diet of Worms, Württemberg

104 Manfred Straube, *Geleitswesen und Warenverkehr im thüringisch-sächsischen Raum zu Beginn der Frühen Neuzeit*. Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Thüringen. Kleine Reihe 42 (Cologne, 2015), pp. 251–52.

105 Helmut Claus, *Das Leipziger Druckschaffen der Jahre 1518–1539. Kurztitelverzeichnis*. Veröffentlichungen der Forschungsbibliothek Gotha 26 (Gotha, 1987), pp. 187–88.

106 Mark Lehmstedt, *Buchstadt Leipzig. Biografisches Lexikon des Leipziger Buchgewerbes*, vol. 1: *1420–1538. Von den Anfängen bis zur Einführung der Reformation* (Leipzig, 2019), pp. 122–23.

107 See for a similar case in Erfurt, Falk Eisermann, "Erfurter Ephemeriden. Perspektiven eines vielseitigen Mediums," *Bücher und Bibliotheken in Erfurt*, ed. Michael Ludscheidt and Kathrin Paasch (Erfurt, 2000), pp. 29–46.

108 F. Eisermann, The Gutenberg Galaxy's Dark Matter (cf. fn. 6), p. 35.

109 S. Limbach, Government Use (cf. fn. 32).

110 Between one and five copies of each document are in Stuttgart, Hauptstaatsarchiv, A 251 Bd. 107 and A 238 Bü 1. Further copies are in Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HBFC 58, 59, 60, 61, 61a, 62, 62a, 63, 63a, 64, 65, 65a, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 105.

111 The texts of the original manuscript copies of the privileges have been reprinted in *1495: Württemberg wird Herzogtum. Dokumente aus dem Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart zu einem epochalen Ereignis*, ed. Stephan Molitor (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 77–79 and 91–94.

had been elevated from a county to a duchy. In this process, Maximilian granted the new duke the privilege that none of his subjects could be prosecuted by any court outside of his territory ("Befreiung von fremden Gerichten").

Yet, material evidence reveals that the documents were not printed immediately after the Diet of Worms. In fact, the watermarks prove that the privileges were published much later. In the 1960s, the renowned watermark specialist Gerhard Piccard himself analysed one of the watermarks, showing an arrow within a shield.[112] According to his analysis, the paper was produced in either Kirchheim unter Teck or Göppingen between 1554 and 1555.[113] After looking carefully through several collections in the archive and the neighbouring Württembergische Landesbibliothek, I was able to find a total of 16 different privileges which had survived in various copies. The many documents show the exact same watermark as Piccard had previously identified, revealing that the privileges were all printed at the same time in the mid-1550s.

It seems very likely that the duke had the documents produced in print to solidify his rule against the claims of neighbouring rulers and – most importantly – the Habsburgs. They were a constant threat and had even temporarily ruled the duchy in the early sixteenth century. The documents also offered security from ecclesiastical courts. For secular princes, such as the Duke of Württemberg, religious authorities posed a severe threat to their jurisdiction.[114] By producing the privileges in print, the duke could distribute them widely within his territory and beyond to reach as large an audience as possible. The printed privileges were thus another element in the duke's quest to strengthen his authority. However, this could have been easily overlooked if only the text had been read without assessing the material evidence of the printed documents.

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On 12 January 1519, the emperor died in Upper Austria. By that time many rulers in the empire had realised, just like Maximilian, that the printing press could be a very useful tool of government. Some authorities even had broadsheets printed on the occasion of Maximilian's death, instructing their subjects to commemorate the emperor. One was issued on 9 February, about a month after

112 Handwritten note of Piccard in Stuttgart, Hauptstaatsarchiv, A 238 Bü 1.

113 www.wasserzeichen-online.de/wzis/struktur.php?ref=DE8085-PO-123400 (Kirchheim, Teck); www.wasserzeichen-online.de/wzis/struktur.php?ref=DE8085-PO-123398 (Göppingen).

114 Christoph Volkmar, *Catholic Reform in the Age of Luther. Duke George of Saxony and the Church, 1488–1525*. Studies in Medieval and Reformation traditions 209 (Leiden, 2017), p. 237.

Maximilian's passing, in the name of both Frederick, Elector of Saxony and John, Duke of Saxony, and has recently been examined by Enno Bünz.[115] The other was issued slightly earlier by the Bishop of Konstanz (1 February).[116] These extremely interesting documents show us once again how and when orders could be passed on from authorities to subjects around 1500.

Whereas these two documents were printed close to the issue date, we must keep in mind, however, that this was not always the case. The privileges, especially those printed in Württemberg, clearly show that administrative documents could be printed even more than five decades after they had been issued. The printed items also remind us that it was not always the issuer, e. g. Maximilian, who ordered the print production of his documents. Interested parties could order the print production just as easily, especially when they would benefit from the emperor's decision, such as placing individuals under the imperial ban. Therefore it is vital to assess the material evidence and look for sources beyond the printed items, such as letters, manuscripts and payment records for the print production. There is still much to discover about political communication during Maximilian's reign: We know of dozens of broadsheets for the sixteenth century issued under his name.[117] Undoubtedly there are many more in archives, libraries and even museums. Such printed documents offer a great point of departure for further research on the possibilities and limitations of political communication around 1500.

115 Enno Bünz, "Der Kaiser ist tot. Wie das Ableben Maximilians I. 1519 in Kursachsen bekannt gemacht wurde," *Medien – Kommunikation – Öffentlichkeit. Vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*. Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Thüringen. Kleine Reihe 58, ed. Holger Böning et al. (Cologne, 2019), pp. 211–33, with a reproduction of the broadsheet on p. 233.

116 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Einbl. 1519, 001 kl.

117 P. Diederichs, Kaiser Maximilian (cf. fn. 35), pp. 110–15; *Einblattdrucke von den Anfängen der Druckkunst bis zum Tode Maximilians I., 1455–1519. Mit einem Vorwort von Konrad Haebler*. Antiquariat Jacques Rosenthal München. Kataloge 92 (Munich, 1931), listing another 17 broadsheets. There are only some overlaps between the two publications; together they list about 50 broadsheets.