Introduction

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The interiors of late mediaeval and early modern courtly residences attest to the important history of feudalism in Europe and beyond, when such spatial settings were essential for the creation of an appropriate princely image and for claiming the entitlements that went with it.[1] While attempts to understand and analyse these phenomena date back all the way to the 1960s, it was only during recent decades that the functional layout of the early modern residential palace started to prompt comprehensive studies with a comparative approach.[2]

The central rooms of such palaces, as well as those of less palatial structures, were usually carefully designed and richly decorated. The present volume, therefore, aims to present new ways of addressing this topic as the result of our improved understanding of the overall functioning of a palace.

The activities of governing in conjunction with a representative ceremonial, with special events and with everyday princely duties required a special architectural and decorative setting. Such three-dimensional spatial settings indoors largely codified human interactions by a firm set of ceremonial rules. The etiquette, in return, influenced the plan and design of the residential interiors. Art, architecture, decoration and furnishings of court residences formed, therefore, embodiments of power in their functional context.[3] Well-preserved exemplars of this type of embodiment now belong to the most precious elements of European heritage, even though their original meaning has mostly been lost. To the informed, contemporaneous observer, however, palace and interior represented appropriate settings for cultural exchange, multiple connotations of which may still be read to this day.

Unfortunately, many of the original interiors have long disappeared. Palaces and residences of mediaeval and pre-modern times have experienced serious modifications over the past two to eight centuries. Sometimes, the special purpose of a setting lost its sense after a particular event; sometimes, subsequent owners changed the overall concept or used only parts of the original plan. The individual history of specific palaces, including their transformation from residence to hunting lodge to dower house etc. (or vice-versa) and the consequent fluctuation of rank and number of inhabitants, led to phases of transformation. Refurbishing not only changed the style of the rooms' appearance but also resulted in the loss of the material traces of the original functional context.

Therefore, it is even more important that building archaeologists' campaigns record and evaluate the objects preserved. Evidence needs to be gathered and studied in detail of temporary screens and of architectural structures such as baldachins at residential buildings and halls. Often the architectural structures with or (more frequently without) the rich former decoration are preserved, while many objects are stored out of context in museums and depots and nothing but written sources testify to the losses.

Decoding this system of signals can only be made possible by the building of virtual reconstructions and models of the interiors and by the re-enactment of the social intermingling and political networking that once took place therein. One may also think of such reconstructions as a means of visualizing the moving of objects over time: arrival, integration as part of the interior design and, finally, departure.

In the end, the digital modelling of rooms and of ceremonial routes will influence the ways, in which works of art originating from a context of palatial and residential architecture are presented in their functional context.[4] Otherwise, a very specific group of objects, essential for European heritage, will lose its historical impact as well as its cultural opulence.

To understand the relationship between the concept of princely magnificence and the continuous artistic display, early modern palace buildings and the orderly setup of their interiors must be analysed as a means and product of princely self-expression. There is little sense in reducing residential culture to mere architectural space or the decorative arts to an autonomous genre. As a result, years ago, the attention of related fields of research shifted from the outside and from the façades of palaces to the interiors and from stylistic analysis towards functional aspects in conjunction with the formal layout and with the design of palatial interiors. Nowadays, once barren spaces have become rich examples of courtly chambers through the visual reconstruction of their formerly existing decorative schemes and furnishings. Their meaning is underpinned by descriptions of ceremonial events and everyday scenes from the written sources. Conversely, such written descriptions of events, of objects and of works of art no longer in situ gained in meaning by the reconstruction of their original architectural and decorative framework, of their spatial setting and of their ceremonial function.

It is the aim of this publication to embed a range of phenomena concerning the setting, meaning and construction of residential interiors and of their diverse elements into an inter-regional and comprehensive historical narrative. It is based on the international PALATIUM colloquium The Interior as an Embodiment of Power—The Image of the Prince and its Spatial Setting (1400–1700), held 4-6 October 2013 at Bamberg and organized by the editors.

The complexity of the matters discussed made it necessary to assemble international scholars from a broad range of fields of research and engaged in diverse projects. As a result, the historical background, the planning and execution as well as the intended and achieved messages imparted by the final appearance of diverse interiors, whether they were well preserved or simply described in writing, could be reconstructed by the colloquium. The evidence included written

sources, archaeological research, art historical analysis, objects preserved as well as fragmentary remains.

The synthesis provides a Europe-wide overview over the typical layout of spaces and rooms as well as over their respective functions as ceremonial passages. The reader thus gains an insight into the meanings of decoration, furnishings, paintings and other works of art as images of power and into practical issues such as the financing, planning and organization of rich interiors. In conclusion, matters of influence and competition between different regions, courts, people and periods become visible.

Obviously, international exchange is a key to the cosmopolitan aristocratic society and its architectural projects. Similarities and diversities of the spatial and ornamental settings of interiors attest to the existence of historical boundaries and help to distract from a modern view focused on the nation, deeply rooted in most scholarly disciplines. An international network of scholars, dealing with residential architecture, needs to overcome such heterogeneity of standards to arrive at a shared level of discourse.

Traditional rules of interaction, contemporaneous trends, individual concepts and financial means together determined the shape of interior settings and decorations of late mediaeval and early modern courtly residences. The issue of the setup and decoration of residential interiors is therefore very close to the central issue of locating princely power within the typical dichotomies of the legal and symbolic and of the practical and artificial. The contributions in this volume are ordered chronologically, yet they build several thematic groups.

Several contributions introduce the typical orderly sequence of spaces and rooms as well as their respective functions with examples of different periods. Typologies of floor plans linked to written sources disclose the meaning of particular rooms as spaces to achieve the symbolic and practical implementation of power at the time. An overview over the Burgundian-Habsburg court residences in Flanders (Krista De Jonge) discloses the ground-floor pattern developed for Burgundian court ceremonies and successfully exported to many other European courts. The case of Neuburg am Inn (Nicole Riegel) focuses on the complex system of architectural and decorative framework, which became the norm in Central Europe around 1530, following Italian role models and merging them with regional customs and requirements. The essay underlines the fact that in many cases only a temporary division of larger, multi-purpose spaces could achieve the necessary number and diversity of rooms. An analysis of the distribution of rooms at the Polish royal residences during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Franciszek Skibiński) demonstrates an ideal programme of advanced residential building, comprising an all-encompassing artistic and thematic decoration. The transformations of the old palace at Warsaw attest to the compromises made necessary by adopting a more modern functional setting.

Taking typical elements and features of residential interior design from the late fifteenth to the eighteenth century into consideration, it becomes clear that in Europe and beyond the traditional aristocratic etiquette of regulating social interaction by special spaces and ceremonial

rules stayed the main factor to determine an embodiment of power. Since the spatial setting was vital for the prince and his family to fulfil representational needs, the relationship between social interaction and architectural setup was so close, that a textile environment could oftentimes fill architectural gaps of representation. Decoration provided the heraldic background, it raised decorum to an appropriate level and it sent out a calculated artistic effect to visitors who advanced along the ceremonial route towards their prince.

Another group of articles addresses the contemporaneous meaning and iconography of decoration, furnishings, paintings and other works of art within a given spatial context. The concept and aim of interior decoration was to underscore typical arrangements as well as to highlight the power and status of a particular ruler. Nonetheless, they might also refer to personal aspects, a special political background or a political meaning. The fourteenth-century residences of Karlstein and Prague (Annamaria Ersek), mid-seventeenth century Hungarian aristocratic residences (Ingrid Halászová-Štibraná) as well as many other palaces displayed genealogical portraits in their great halls or in special galleries, offering important heraldic and symbolic images. They displayed either full-size statues or the heads of Roman emperors, wearing laurel wreaths or crowns. Thereby they linked the household to the (ancient) imperial tradition so that the genealogy could be received into the prince's own family tree.

A third group of essays addresses the practical issues of financing, planning and organizing such interiors. The textile chambers and chapels of the Burgundian dukes emphasized the importance of the availability of appropriate spatial settings and of their heraldic decoration (Katherine Anne Wilson). It is remarkable though – in particular to architectural historians – that textile sets in combination with wooden trestles fulfilled the necessary requirements for residential representation, almost independently of the building structures as such. To achieve the appropriate framework for aristocratic activity and representation, the act and the meaning of a place was more important than a permanent building fabric.

Nonetheless, full-size interior decorations were often the most costly part of the residential architecture. Both planning and construction required special skills and considerable amounts of money. The construction of generic architectural features contrasted with the often highly sophisticated and sometimes very individual interiors. For example, in the case of his residence at Ludwigsburg, the prince was probably not very interested in the style or in the details of the decoration, but ensured that his architect received the best education available at the time (Ulrike Seeger). He, therefore, was given free access to the latest fashions current at Paris, Prague, Vienna and Augsburg. The variety of examples discussed here makes it clear that, while most features of residential interior design may be considered as typical, there was also an occurrence of individual, unique and even personal inventions. Most rulers were then very much involved in issues of concepts of interior designs and personally decided whom to commission with the projects.

A fourth set of articles refers to the cultural transfer of architectural and decorative concepts for residential interiors, since they defined the ceremonial spaces and mirrored the person-

ality and role of the monarch. It is important to understand the sources of such ideas for interior concepts and to be able to prove whether monarchs intentionally chose specific forms and features on purpose. Princes knew contemporaneous publications that could be used as pattern books for interior design from which a potential client could choose. They were not necessarily specific and not exclusively connected to a court or to aristocratic culture – at least during early modern times. While the decorative scheme may at times have been determined by circumstances, the location of its dedicated space was of great symbolic and practical importance to the prince. Henry VIII of England had started at his palace at Whitehall with a conventional English pattern for his private rooms, but during his rule he rearranged the setting so that it would reflect the changes in his social relationships to his closest followers and to intimate members of his court (Astrid Lang). In the final stage, he no longer physically resided in his 'privy chamber', yielding this closed-off space to an unoccupied throne and to a wall painting set behind it to advertise his omnipresence and power.

It seems that Mary Stuart was no less concerned about an appropriate spatial environment (Alexandra Nancy Johnson). Mary´s rooms at Holyrood included all necessary features to declare her sovereignty. Taking into account the change of her function and status, the interior fully equipped for a queen was in itself a political statement. If the architecture was more than just the image of a prince, one could also draw real power from the interior setup.

The rather sad story of the self-representation of Duchess Auguste Dorothea of Schwarzenberg through her eighteenth-century dollhouse showed to the contrary to what extent the idea of the life and power of a monarch was connected to spatial settings (Annette C. Cremer). The setting and the decoration reflected an ideal world consisting of hierarchies, in which everybody had his or her appropriate place. In the case of Auguste Dorothea, reality did not match the image she aspired to. Therefore, she had to create a parallel one by means of the interior of her dollhouse. There is a meta-discourse on this interior, literal and non-literal, still waiting to be disclosed.

As this volume reveals, there is an interesting psychological aspect linked to the interiors of courtly residences. Codified spatial settings together with traditions of etiquette and interaction have formed a long-lasting topos in people's minds over the centuries. The richly decorated and only partially accessible interior as an embodiment of power is a consistent part of our cultural memory. From this point of view, it would be interesting to investigate further the degree to which rulers and subjects experienced and thought about the palaces' interiors. Based on the vast typological, stylistic, architectural and historical studies about medieval and early modern court residences, it should be possible not only to gain a better understanding of the remains, but also of the people who bequeathed them to us.

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[1] Elias 2006, originally 1969; Girouard, 1978 and later.

[2] Guillaume 1994; Hoppe 1996; Satzinger 2014; Chatenet and De Jonge 2015.

[3] Hahn and Schütte 2006.

[4] Hoppe and Breitling 2016.