

# Editorial Introduction

*Power, the State, and Belonging in Central Europe*

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Welcome to the 2020 volume of the *Central Europe Yearbook*. I along with the other editors—Cathleen Giustino, Darin Hayton, Howard Louthan, Timothy Olin, Lisa Scott, and Brian Vetruba—are excited to showcase the interesting and dynamic work being done on this region by students from both North America and Europe.

In this introduction to the volume, we wanted to draw your attention to some of the features and themes of this volume. The issue opens with a forum on Empress Maria Theresa (1740-1780), which contains a book review, available in both English and German, of Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger's recent biography, *Maria Theresia: Die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit (Maria Theresa: An Empress in Her Time)* and an interview with the author. It also features an article about the empress's use of art to bolster her imperial power. This theme of propaganda and power is also central to a digital project featured in the issue, which examines how Emperor Maximilian I (1493-1519) crafted a legend about himself in *Theuerdank*, an epic poem described by some literary scholars as the greatest book of the German Renaissance.

Of course, art was not the only way that emperors and empresses sought to consolidate their power, and another article in this issue looks at how a different Holy Roman Emperor, in this case Rudolf II (1576-1612), used alchemy to solidify his power and sought to bring harmony to a divided empire. This article on Rudolf is part of a thematic section in the volume on "Alchemy in the Holy Roman Empire," which also features an interview with Professor Tara Nummedal about her work on alchemy and her recent book, *Furnace and Fugue: A Digital Edition of Michael Maier's "Atalanta fugiens" (1618) with Scholarly Commentary*.

Our second thematic section takes us forward around three hundred years and discusses an ostensibly much different topic, sexuality in Central Europe, but themes in earlier sections, namely the means employed by rulers to strengthen their power, resonate in this section. We see how states and leaders not only sought to solidify power through patronage of arts and alchemy but through the control of people's behavior and actions. This theme is explored in an article about efforts to control youth sexuality in the Third Reich and in an interview with Dr. Christiane Brenner on her work on prostitution and vigilance in Socialist Czechoslovakia.

In addition to these two thematic sections, the forum, and digital project, this volume contains articles on a range of topics, from pietism in Prussia to South Slav-Russian relations to dueling and masculinity to debates about Israeli sovereignty over Jewish cultural production in Central Europe. These articles, like the other components in this volume, reflect on questions of power and the state and particularly issues of belonging: Who is included, and who is marginalized? How does this change, and why?

As we hope you can glean from this brief overview, the issues and questions raised in this volume are not ones consigned to the past but resonate strongly in our present moment.

We hope you enjoy exploring this issue of *Central Europe Yearbook*. We are always looking for submissions for our next volume. We welcome a variety of features—including book reviews, digital projects, interviews, and research articles—and accept submissions in English and German. If you are interested in submitting to the *Yearbook* or know of someone who might be, you can see the [website](#) for more information, including the [submission guidelines](#), or contact us at [ceuy@umn.edu](mailto:ceuy@umn.edu).