Irish kings and Carinthian dukes: John Lynch revisited

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Twenty years ago, Katharine Simms, my supervisor and mentor, challenged me incidentally with a very continental European phenonemen, an odd Carinthian inauguration rite, mentioned by John Lynch in 1662. I have often asked myself what gave her the idea. I suppose it was because I came from continental Europe. However, I got hooked on this very topic, which since has marked a significant direction of my research, focusing on the history of power, that is to say, on political rituals of status elevation. Katharine's hint to have a closer look initiated a long-term project. Starting from the well-known inauguration of the Irish king of Tír Conaill (Donegal) – a marginal example from the Celtic fringes – she directed my attention to the Carinthian ceremony, away from the Celtic fringes to the very centre of medieval Europe. In this essay, I will first briefly recapitulate the Irish case and then move on to present an overview on the source of the Carinthian inauguration.

IRISH KINGS

Gerald of Wales (Giraldus Cambrensis) reports the following story about the inauguration of the kings of Tír Conaill in his *Topographia Hibernie*:

> A new and outlandish way of confirming kingship and dominion: […]
> There is in the northern and farther part of Ulster, namely in Kenelcunill, a certain people which is accustomed to appoint its king with a rite altogether outlandish and abominable. When the whole people of that land has been gathered together in one place, a white mare is brought forward into the middle of the assembly. He who is to be inaugurated, not as a chief, but as a beast, not as a king, but as an outlaw, has bestial intercourse with her before all, professing himself to be a beast also. The mare is then killed immediately, cut up in pieces, and boiled in water. A bath is prepared for the man afterwards in the same water. He sits in the bath surrounded by all his people, and all, he and they, eat of the meat of the mare which is brought to them. He quaffs and drinks of the broth in which he is bathed, not in any cup, or using his hand, but just dipping his mouth into it round about him. When this unrighteous rite has been carried out, his kingship and dominion have been conferred.[1]

1 Gerald of Wales [Giraldus Cambrensis], *The history and topography of Ireland*, trans. John J.

The procedure is well known, but nevertheless quite disturbing: we are told that the king of Tír Conaill, at the day of his inauguration in front of his future subjects, embraced a white mare (*jumentum candidum … ad quod ille … bestialiter accedens*), which was then killed, boiled in water and eaten by the whole assembly. The king-to-be in the meantime took a bath in the broth.

Historians disagree on the historical value of Gerald's account. Like other antiquarian elements, it was and is read as a piece of evidence testifying to the very roots of civilization, to archaic ideas surviving in the Celtic fringes of Europe.[2] On the other hand, the reliability of the source has often been questioned, and the passage in the *Topographia* has been dismissed as a piece of Anglo-Norman propaganda: Gerald, like other conquest historians in the twelfth century, was collecting arguments to justify the conquest, for example by documenting the barbarism of the subjected people. Even though Beryl Smalley treats Gerald as the most learned among the so-called 'conquest historians', we should still keep in mind that we owe our knowledge about the archaic Tír Conaill inauguration to its force as a political argument, an argument brought forth as an agent of a conquering people.[3] Gerald probably never visited the north of Ireland, and thus reports the Tír Conaill inauguration by hearsay. That said, there are many parallels to the account that can be found in the rituals of other Indo-European people, which suggest that such practice not implausible.[4]

The Tír Conaill inauguration inspired modern scholarship to look to comparative Indo-European anthropological studies from the nineteenth century onwards. Thus, the involvement of a horse has been identified as one of the most prominent features in inauguration ceremonies among Indo-European peoples. A prototype might be traced back to the Indian Asvamedha, the ritual sacrifice of a male horse in the course of the ascension of a new king to the throne.[5] The fact that a mare and not a stallion is involved in the Irish case gave rise to a discussion about whether or not the custom was of Indo-European origin. The ritual intercourse of the king-to-be with the mare would then refer to the ritual understanding of territorial sovereignty as female goddess or queen. In order to conquer the land, the future king had to conquer and to lie with her. This tradition mingles with that of the ceremonial sacrifice: ritual slaughter of the horse, which is subsequently boiled and consumed by the whole people, and thus

O'Meara (Mountrath, 1982), 109f.; for the Latin original, see, *Giraldus Cambrensis Topographia hibernica et expugnatio hibernica*, ed. J.F. Dimock (London, 1867), p. 169. **2** Kenneth Jackson, *The oldest Irish tradition: a window to the Iron Age* (Cambridge, 1964). **3** Beryl Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages* (London, 1974), pp 121–57; Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales, 1146–1223* (Oxford, 1985), pp 158–77, 187–94; Brian Scott, 'Introduction' in *Expugnatio Hibernica. The conquest of Ireland; by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. idem and F.X. Martin (Dublin, 1978), pp xii–xxxiii. **4** Katharine Simms, *From kings to warlords: the changing political structure of Gaelic Ireland in the later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 22. **5** Franz Rudolf Schröder, 'Ein altirischer Krönungsritus und das indogermanische Rossopfer', *ZCP*, 16 (1927), 310–12; Julius Pokorny, 'Das nicht-indogermanische Substrat im Irischen', ibid., 123–5; Wilhelm Koppers, 'Pferdeopfer und Pferdekult der Indogermanen.

all share in the sovereignty of the land, which can then be transferred onto the candidate.

Another element is the temporary placing of the future king right in the vessel with the broth. Pontfarcy interpreted the bath as the completion of the ritual mating between the future king and the mare, the return into the cosmic uterus and eternal rebirth.[6] The cauldron that boiled the sacrificial meat to be eaten at the victors' feast figures as a symbol of sovereignty and has a prominent role in Pindar's account of the horse competition at the Olympics of 476BC.[7] Another line of enquiry leads to the concept of the ritual bath, which is transmitted from early modern Madagascar.[8]

These components of the royal inaugurations have also been identified as 'liminal elements' in the *rites de passage* described by Arnold van Gennep and further developed by Victor Turner.[9] They described rituals of status elevation in a threefold scheme of 'separation', 'margin' and 'reaggregation', or else 'pre-liminal', 'liminal' and 'post-liminal' phase. Humiliation of the candidate is a ritually prescribed action for the central liminal phase and is followed by final rites of empowerment in the phase of reaggregation. Gerald's 'new and outlandish way of confirming kingship and dominion' in Tír Conaill would thus find an explanation as liminal characteristics in the transformative process of van Gennep's *rites de passage*. An early prototype has been found in the annual humiliation of the Babylonian kings, in the 'Akitu' celebrated in the first millennium BC. On the fifth day of this twelve-day ritual, the sovereign, upon being introduced to the temple, was stripped of all his royal insignia, was slapped across his face and was forced to kneel in front of the divine statue.[10] After

Eine ethnologisch-religionswissenschaftliche Studie' *Die Indogermanen- und Germanenfrage. Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, 4 (1936), pp 279–411; Jaan Puhvel, 'Aspects of equine functionality' in *Myth and law among the Indo-Europeans: studies in Indo-European comparative mythology* (Berkeley, CA, 1970), pp 157–72; idem, *Comparative mythology* (Baltimore, MD, 1989), pp 267–76; Johannes C. Heesterman, *The ancient Indian royal consecration* (The Hague, 1957); Kim McCone, *Pagan past and Christian present in early Irish literature* (Maynooth, 1991), pp 117–20; Yolande de Pontefarcy, 'Two late inaugurations of Irish kings', *Études Celtiques*, 24 (1987), 203–8; Andrej Pleterski, 'Die Kärntner Fürstensteine in der Struktur dreier Kultstätten' in *Der Europäische Fürstenstein im europäischen Vergleich. Tagungsbericht Symposium Gmünd 20. bis 22. September 1996* (Kärnten, 1997), 84; see also Elizabeth FitzPatrick, *Royal inauguration in Gaelic Ireland, c.1100–1600: a cultural landscape study* (Woodbrigde, 2004).   **6** Pontfarcy, 'Inaugurations', 204.   **7** Gregory Nagy, 'Sovereignty, boiling cauldrons and chariot-racing in Pindar's *Olympian 1*' in *Kingship* (Cosmos 2), ed. Emily Lyle (Edinburgh, 1988), pp 143–7.   **8** Maurice Bloch, 'The ritual of the royal bath in Madagascar: the dissolution of death, birth and fertility into authority' in David Cannadine and Simon Price (eds), *Rituals of royalty: power and ceremonial in traditional societies* (Cambridge, 1987), 271–97.   **9** Arnold van Gennep, *Les rites de passage. Etudes systématique de rites de la porte et du seuil, de l'hospitalité de l'adoption, de la grossesse et de l'accouchement, de la naissance, de l'enfance, de la puberté, de l'initiation, de l'ordination, du couronnement, des fiancailles et du mariage des funérailles des saisons etc.* (Paris, 1909); Victor Turner, *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure* (New York, 1995).   **10** Lindsay Jones, *Encyclopedia of religion, 1* (Detroit, MI, 2005), p. 221.

assurances that he had not been negligent of Babylon, the gods and the citizens, he would have been reinvested with the signs of power.[11]

A more recent example seems to indicate that ritual humiliations might have been imposed on the candidate with such vigour and at such length that he did not survive to see his accession to power. It is a non-European example, namely the inauguration of the kings of Sierra Leone in the seventeenthth/eighteenthth century and it is reported by James Georges Frazer, whose observations must of course be read and used with great caution:

> The savage Timmes of Sierra Leone, who elect their king, reserve to themselves the right of beating him on the eve of his coronation; and they avail themselves of this constitutional privilege with such hearty goodwill that sometimes the unhappy monarch does not long survive his elevation to the throne. Hence when the leading chiefs have a spite at a man and wish to rid themselves of him, they elect him king. Formerly, before a man was proclaimed king of Sierra Leone, it used to be the custom to load him with chains and thrash him. Then the fetters were knocked off, the kingly robe was placed on him, and he received in his hands the symbol of royal dignity, which was nothing but the axe of the executioner. It is not therefore surprising to read that in Sierra Leone, where such customs have prevailed, except among the Mandingoes and Suzees, few kings are natives of the countries they govern. So different are their ideas from ours, that very few are solicitous of the honour, and competition is very seldom heard of.[12]

CARINTHIAN DUKES

Long before the Tír Conaill inauguration inspired modern scholarship to comparative Indo-European anthropological studies from the nineteenth century onwards, it had already provoked search for comparable material. In 1662, the exiled Irish Jesuit John Lynch published a three-volume work, dedicated to the task of refuting the 'calumnious charges against the Irish people, princes and kings', brought forward by Gerald of Wales.[13] Lynch dismissed the assumption

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11 Svend Aage Pallis, *The Babylonian Akitu Festival* (Copenhagen, 1926); Julye Bidmead, 'The Akitu Festival: religious continuity and royal legitimation in Mesopotamia' (Diss., New York U, 2004), pp 77–86; Claus Ambos, 'Weinen aus Demut: Der babylonische König beim Neujahrsfest' in idem et al. (eds), *Die Welt der Rituale. Von der Antike bis heute* (Darmstadt, 2005), pp 38–40; idem 'Das Neujahrsfest zur Jahresmitte und die Investitur des Königs im Gefängnis' in Doris Prechel (ed.), *Rest und Eid. Instrumente der Herrschaftssicherung im Alten Orient* (Würzburg, 2008), pp 1–12; Mark E. Cohen, *The cultic calendars of the ancient Near East* (Bethesda, MD, 1993). **12** James George Frazer, 'The burden of royalty' in idem, *The golden bough: a study in magic and religion*, 12 vols, ii (*Taboo and the perils of the soul*) (London, 1966), 18. **13** John Lynch, *Cambrensis eversus, seu potius historica fides in rebus hibernicis Giraldo Cambrensi abrogate*, ed. and trans. Matthew Kelly (3 vols, Dublin, 1848), i, p. 111.

that there was a historical core to the story about the kings of Tír Conaill. He did
so in arguing that none of the holy bishops of Tír Conaill would possibly allow
such a pagan rite to be practised in his diocese. Furthermore he is convinced that
no country in the world would use such a disgusting way to install its kings –
although, he says there are some customs in other parts of Europe that are not
less ridiculous. And here he brings forth a most peculiar mode to install a ruler,
said to be in practice in Carinthia:

> When a new prince is about to assume the reins of government in
> Carinthia, a singular ceremony is observed, unknown in any other state. A
> marble stone is erected in a wide meadow. When the inauguration is to take
> place, a peasant, to whom the office belongs by hereditary right, stands up
> on the stone, having at his right hand a black cow in calf and at his left a
> lank and half-starved mare. The people are all around, and an immense
> concourse of peasants. The candidate, surrounded by a band clothed in
> purple, advances towards the stone; the insignia of his office are borne
> before him, and the whole train of the procession except himself is
> gorgeously dressed. He comes in peasant's dress, with a cap on his head,
> shoes on his feet, and a shepherd's crook in his hand, and looks more like
> a shepherd than a prince. As soon as he appears in sight, the man on the
> stone cries out in the Illyrian tongue, 'Who is he that cometh on so
> proudly?' 'The lord of the land is coming', answer the surrounding
> multitudes. 'Is he a just judge?', he asks. 'Seeks he the good of his country?
> Is he a free man? And worthy of the dignity? Does he practice and promote
> Christian piety?' 'He does and he will', answers the crowd. The man then
> resumes, 'Pray tell me by what right can he deprive me of this seat'. The
> master of the ducal palace answers: 'The place is purchased from you for
> sixty denarii: these cattle', he says, pointing to the cow and mare, 'shall be
> yours; you shall have the clothes which the duke puts off, and you and your
> whole family shall be free from tribute'. After this dialogue, the peasant
> slightly slaps the candidate's cheek, orders him to be a just judge, and after
> receiving the money, retires from his position. The duke then ascends the
> marble; brandishes his sword as he turns round and round; addresses the
> people, and promises that he will be a just judge. They say, too, that he
> drinks water which is presented to him in a peasant's cap, as a pledge of his
> future sobriety, &c. It is the princes of Austria that are thus installed: they
> are styled the archdukes.[14]

The source named by Lynch is a certain *Joannes Auban*, otherwise known as
Johannes Boemus, John of Bohemia, who in turn cites Eneas Silvio Piccolomini,

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[14] Lynch, *Cambrensis eversus*, iii, pp 344–7.

the private secretary and diplomatic adviser of the Habsburgian emperor Friedrich III, who later made a career as Pope Pius II (1458–64). Piccolomini reports about the installation of the dukes of Carinthia in *De Europe* written in Austria in 1458. He in turn quotes the work of a certain John of Viktring.

John, Cistercian abbot of Viktring (d. 1345/7), is known as the author of the *Liber certarum historiarum*, 'Book of certain stories' or 'Book of authentic stories', a chronicle for the years between 1217 and 1342. Two recensions, a draft dating to the year 1339 and a neat copy completed in 1343 are preserved.[15] Both give detailed accounts about the peculiar inauguration rite in use in Carinthia: one referring to the year 1286, when Duke Meinhard II of Görz Tirol was installed as duke of Carinthia; another under the year 1335, when reporting on the installation of Duke Albrecht II (Albrecht the Lame) and Otto the Jovial, and again in the year 1342, when Albrecht, this time together with his nephew, repeated the ceremony.

John, the author, was a well-known and influential figure in early Habsburgian Austria.[16] In 1341, the abbot was promoted to the position of private chaplain of Albrecht the Lame, duke of Austria, and from 1335 onwards also duke of Carinthia. Albrecht mainly resided in Vienna. It seems that John, the abbot, wrote most of his chronicle during his time as chaplain under the patronage of Albrecht. The 'Book of certain stories' is dedicated to this duke, who, in 1335, became the first of the Habsburg dynasty to be installed as duke of Carinthia. In fact, it was Albrecht's brother Otto the Jovial who took the ceremony instead of Albrecht, because of the latter's handicap. It seems plausible that as abbot of Viktring, John was personally present at that inauguration of Albrecht and Otto. What he describes as having happened in the year 1286 might have been much inspired by what he saw on 2 July 1335.

An earlier account of the ceremony and presumably one of the main sources used by John of Viktring is *Ottokars Reimchronik* ('Ottokar's metrical chronicle') written some thirty years or so prior to the 'Book of certain stories'.[17] The author of this work, Otacher ouz der Geul (Ottokar from Gaal), was a member of the lesser Styrian nobility and lived as a vassal of Duke Otto II of Liechtenstein at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. His chronicle of contemporary German and Austrian history is written in Middle High German verses and contains nearly ten thousand stanzas. Ottokar died some time before the year 1321. We know that he travelled to France and Germany, and that he, like John of Viktring, for some time during the years 1314–17 was in the service of the Habsburgian rulers Albrecht the Lame and Friedrich the Beautiful of Austria.

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15 Fedor Schneider (ed.), *Johannis Abbatis Victoriensis, Liber certarum historiarum* (2 vols, Hannover, 1909). **16** Claudia Fräss-Ehrfeld, *Geschichte Kärntens. 1: Das Mittelalter* (Klagenfurt, 1984), i, pp 344–5. **17** *Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik*, ed. Joseph Seemüller, ed. 1890 (2 vols, Hannover, 1890); Maja Loehr, Der steirische Reimchronist: her Otacher ouz der Geul' in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichte*, 51 (1937), 89–130.

He reports on the Carinthian tradition when dealing with the events of 1286, when Meinhard II was inaugurated.[18] Whether Ottokar was himself present at the inauguration ceremonies remains unclear.

Together these two early fourteenth-century sources give a detailed report of the happenings at the ducal stone in Carinthia, corresponding by-and-large to Lynch's convenient summary cited above. The duke comes along, finding the inauguration stone occupied by a peasant. He arrives in the company of his nobles, after having been dressed in the morning in grey, that is in peasant clothes, described invariably in great detail (grey trousers, red peasants' boots (*Bundschuhe*) with red straps, a grey robe, without a collar, reaching just a little below his knees, finally a grey coat without any decoration, and a grey hat – as they were lately fashionable in Carinthia, as Ottokar remarks). The duke brings along an ox and a young horse – later versions, like that quoted by Lynch, often have the peasant holding the cattle from the beginning – and he is led to the stone by the nobles of the country. There sits the peasant. The right to invest the duke runs in his family, and whenever a new duke is to be installed, the eldest has to perform the family duty, that is, he has to sit on the stone with his legs crossed, to talk, but in the Slavic language, and to interrogate the accompanying nobles (and the Carinthian people) about the ducal candidate. The nobles explain the duke's purpose and defend his good character and his qualities as regards rulership. The peasant is assured he will receive the ox and mare, plus freedom from tax for himself and his house, if only he gives way to the duke. Finally, the peasant agrees and clears his place but not without giving the candidate a slap in the face. Thereafter the duke eventually takes possession of the stone. According to Ottokar, he starts immediately to fulfil his ducal duty, which is to hold court and to enfeoff his vassals. According to John of Viktring, however, the duke first of all takes his sword and swings it in the four directions. He then takes a draught of water from a hat, and, as some say, fires are lit. Then the whole assembly proceeds to the nearby church at Maria Saal, where mass is solemnly celebrated. After a ceremonial meal, the duke holds court at a second monument, the so-called ducal chair, situated not far from Maria Saal. Both Ottokar and John end with a passage on the ducal privileges at the imperial court.

Not all the later 'Maria Saal details' are to be found in the oldest report on the ceremony as described in Ottokar's metrical chronicle. Ottokar, however, makes it very clear that the ceremony was hardly known at the time when it was performed in 1286. Almost as an excuse, he explains in the introductory part of his report that this mode of inaugurating a Carinthian duke is only performed in the event of dynastic death, that is, when a new dynasty takes possession of the Carinthian dukeship. When Ottokar wrote his chronicle, some time in the early fourteenth century, the last dynastic change in Carinthia lay beyond living memory. From 1122, the Spanheimer were the ruling dynasty in Carinthia. After

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18 *Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik*, ed. Seemüller, 264–6.

the childless death of Bernhard of Spanheim, in 1256, the Bohemian king Ottokar of Bohemia held the fief for some time, but he was never formally invested with the dukedom. After Ottokar's death in 1278, Meinhard II of Görz Tirol, a close associate and friend of the Habsburgian king Rudolf I, eventually was invested with Carinthia in the spring of 1286. The solemn inauguration took place in September 1286. It was, if we rely on Ottokar's theory, the first time in 164 years that the ceremony had been performed.

As the third main source, we have the so-called *Schwabenspiegel-Einschub*. The *Schwabenspiegel* is a slightly younger relative of the most famous German law collection in the vernacular, the so-called *Sachsenspiegel*, which was composed around 1225 by Eike von Repgow, juror at the court of the dukes of Anhalt, in the Elbe–Saale territory.[19] This collection, dealing with feudal and municipal law, was soon adapted to local usage all over Germany. The so-called Augsburgian *Sachsenspiegel*, a south German adaption, became the main source for the archetypal *Schwabenspiegel*, which was compiled shortly after the first Augsburgian municipal law was enacted in 1276. It seems Franciscans from the local convent had a share in the making of both law texts.[20] Only two of the over five hundred *Schwabenspiegel* manuscripts, most of them transmitting fragments of the law-collection together with other texts, include a passage dealing with the dukes of Carinthia.[21] One is a manuscript now kept in the University Library Gießen (Gießen UB Cod. 973), dated to the mid-fourteenth century, the other in the Stiftsbibliothek of St Gall (St Gallen Cod. 725) and belongs to the mid-fifteenth century.

In the *Schwabenspiegel Einschub*, the rite finds mention as a legal act, with no reference to the installation of a particular historical figure. The description differs in some details from that of Abbot John and Ottokar. The account gives a description of how the Carinthian free-tenants (*landsassen*) take the duke, already invested by the emperor, as their lord. They appoint a judge (*rihter*) who here bears the role of the peasant; that is, he interrogates the Carinthian people about the character and suitability of the duke. According to the *Sachsenspiegel-Einschub*, the peasants have the right to reject a candidate, to send him back to the realm and to demand another duke. Great stress is put on the ducal change of clothes, his new garment – although grey and shabby – is not explained as representing peasant clothes, but instead as the uniform of the duke, in his office as the chief hunter of the realm. The act of taking possession of the land is enforced by the duke riding on a very young horse (*veltpfaerit*) thrice around the stone. The symbolic deal between the peasant and the duke, the slap on his cheek as well as the swinging of the sword in the four directions, are not mentioned.

19 Ulrich-Dieter Oppitz, *Deutsche Rechtsbücher des Mittelalters* (4 vols, Cologne and Vienna, 1990), i, pp 21–32.   20 Peter Johanek, ‚Schwabenspiegel' in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon. Zweite, völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage,* 8 (Berlin and New York), 903.   21 Karl August Eckhardt, 'Deutschenspiegel' in *Studia iuris Teutonici*, Bibliotheca

Again, the rights and duties of the Carinthian duke at the imperial court are dealt with at some length. The duke has to appear at the court in his 'hunting gown', he has to bring a red deer for the emperor or king, and he has the privilege that after his enfeoffment he cannot be sued for any tresspasses, and he has only to respond to pleas brought before him in the Slavic language. Some scholars are convinced that the *Schwabenspiegel* version preserved the oldest traditions about the ceremony and that its scribes worked from sources dating back at least to the eleventh century.[22] Rauch argued for a very late dating in the mid-fourteenth century.[23] Both theories find a synthesis in the assumption that although a mid-fourteenth-century compilation, the *Schwabenspiegel* passage relies on much older, pre-twelfth-century sources.

To these three fourteenth-century sources we might add a slightly later testimony from the end of the century, the so-called *Chronik der 95 Herrschaften* ('Chronicle of the 95 rulers'), composed by the Augustinian hermit Leopold from the convent in Vienna. He again describes the enthronement of Meinhard II, mainly relying on the account of Ottokar. The author ends by stressing Ottokar's observation that many people laughed at the rite and thought it to be ridiculous.[24]

So far there is – to formulate a first result – solid historical evidence for Lynch's allegations regarding old-fashioned inauguration rites in Carinthia. A number of authentic and reliable sources testify to the rite being practised in the late thirteenth and in the first half of the fourteenth century. It was in particular the installation of Duke Meinhard II of Görz-Tyrol as duke of Carinthia in 1286 that inspired historiographers in the first half of the fourteenth century to comment on this custom.

The custom obviously refers to much older traditions, however, pre-dating the fourteenth century. A rather vague piece of evidence is to be found in the ninth-century *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, the *Gesta* or White Book of the archbishops of Salzburg, composed around the year 871. The *Conversio* is primarily a report on the archiepiscopal deeds, the most outstanding among them being the conversion to Christendom of the Carinthian people. As a result, the text supplies an early history of Carinthia and at one stage we find mention of the fact that in the mid-eighth century the Carinthian people *made* their

Rerum Historicarum, Studia 3 (Aalen, 1971), pp 127–48. **22** Bogo Grafenauer, *Ustoličevanje koroških vojvod in država karantanskih Slovencev (Installation of the Carinthian Prince and the State of the Carinthian Slovenes)*. Slovenska Akademija Znanosti in Umetnosti, Institut za zgodovino (Ljubljana, 1952), 74, 358f.; Georg Graber, *Der Eintritt des Herzogs von Kärnten am Fürstenstein zu Karnburg* (Vienna, 1919), pp 19, 50; Emil Goldmann, *Die Einführung der deutschen Herzogsgeschlechter Kärntens in den slowenischen Stammesverband. Ein Beitrag zur Rechts- und Kulturgeschichte* (Breslau, 1903), p. 96n. **23** Karl Rauch, 'Die Kärntner Herzogseinsetzung nach alemannischen Handschriften' in *Abhandlungen zur Rechts- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Festschrift Adolf Zycha zum 70. Geburtstag am 17. Oktober 1941* (Weimar, 1941), pp 173–232. **24** *Österreichische Chronik von den 95 Herrschaften*, ed. Joseph Seemüller

rulers, more precisely, that they made Cacatius, the son of the former duke, their ruler (*et illi eum ducem fecerunt*). Again, after the death of Cacatius, they gave the dukedom to his cousin Cheitmar (that is, Hotimir) in the year 752 (*populi ducatum illi dederunt*).[25] No further details are given, but this passage in the bishop's register is generally acknowledged as the earliest textual evidence for the archaic Carinthian inauguration ceremony. However, in the light of contemporary practice among other tribes and people the meaning of this passage, as highlighting a special Carinthian feature, seems to fade. In the seventh century, Langobardian nobles chose Arioald as their king (*in regnum elegunt sublimandum*), and made Rothari his successor (*sublimant in regno*), to cite only the north-Italian example.[26] This passage, as Puntschart has already pointed out, simply points to the fact that the Carinthian nobles chose their ruler, as did other tribes at the time.[27] No hints about a special ceremony are contained in this text.

Secondly, we have a twelfth-century letter, testifying to the fact that the Carinthians invested their duke at a special stone. It was written by Burchart of Cologne, imperial notary on a mission in Austria, Carinthia and Styria, from where he wrote a letter to the abbot of Siegburg, telling him among others that the Carinthians, in the presence of the bishop of Salzburg, installed their duke in the ducal seat (*ducis in sedem Karinthani ducatus intronizavi*). The letter is dated 1161. It is lost in the original and was edited from two copies made of it in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. According to a note in one of these, the letter originally formed part of the letterbook of the abbots of Siegburg.[28] The suspicion that sixteenth-century knowledge was acquired from the copies made of the notary's letter cannot be proved, but is not impossible.

Finally, we have a thirteenth-century source, a sermon of the Franciscan preacher Berthold of Regensburg (d. 1272). In one of his Latin sermons to monks and nuns (*ad religiosos*), he makes allusion to the fact that the duke of Carinthia used to come to the imperial court like a peasant, in plain and simple clothes, and that in doing so he risked being laughed at.[29] Berthold used the ceremony as an *exemplum* to enforce his argument that a true religious should be like a prince (*princeps*), and that he should behave as such, and not like a peasant, as the duke of Carinthia does in appearing in peasant clothes at the imperial court. Berthold is one of the most famous thirteenth-century preachers. He travelled a lot, and he might have been in Carinthia on his journeys within the

(Hannover, 1909), p. 140. **25** *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum. Das Weissbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien*, ed. Herwig Wolfram (Vienna, Colongne & Braz, 1979), p. 40. **26** Reinhard Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung im Frühmittelalter: Untersuchungen zur Herrschaftsnachfolge bei den Langobarden und Merowingern* (Stuttgart, 1972), pp 38, 40. **27** Paul Puntschart, *Herzogseinsetzung und Huldigung in Kärnten. Ein verfassungs- und kulturgeschichtlicher Beitrag* (Leipzig, 1899), p. 102; see also Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung*, p. 255f. **28** August von Jaksch, 'Die Kärntner Geschichtsquellen 811–1202' in *Monumenta Historica ducatus Carinthiae. Geschichtliche Denkmäler des Herzogtumes Kärnten* (Klagenfurt, 1904), iii, p. 387. **29** *Beati Fr. Bertholdi a Ratisbona. Sermones ad Religiosos XX*, ed. Petrus Hoetzl (Munich, 1882), p. 21.

southern parts of the German-speaking countries between 1250 and 1260. Moreover, he was often present in the Franciscan convent in Augsburg, and he might have taken an active part in the compilation of the law collections at the time.

To sum up the written evidence for the Carinthian rite: prior to the installation of Duke Meinhard II of Görz Tirol in 1286 there is little to be known about what actually happened. We have a late ninth-century hint to the effect that in the eighth century the Carinthian people 'made' their chief, or else 'gave' rulership to one of them; then there is perhaps twelfth-century evidence of a 'ducal stone' and there is a thirteenth-century hint to the effect that the duke of Carinthia attracted notice (and laughter) at the imperial court by being dressed in an unusual way.

In contrast to the Tír Conaill case, we still have some material remains pertaining to the Carinthian ceremony.[30] First, there is the so-called *Fürstenstein* (the ducal stone), a stone consisting of a Roman pillar turned upside down into the earth, so that its original base provides a traversable platform. We know that it was situated on the open field near Karnburg, an ancient imperial palatium, close to the Roman Virunum. Standing on this stone, the peasant interrogated the duke to be, and later the duke raised his sword, struck it into the four directions, and thus took possession of the land and its people.

A second piece of inauguration furniture was the ducal chair (*Herzogstuhl, sedes tribunalis*) situated some miles away near Maria Saal. It is explicitly mentioned as *sedes Karinthani ducatus* in the letter of the imperial notary Burchard of Cologne, dated 1161.[31] It apparently came into use once the elevation of the candidate to the dukeship was completed. It is a veritable throne consisting of two parts, one made from marble, and the other from sandstone. And certainly has all the appearance of a huge throne, with seemingly two seats. Here, the newly installed duke enfeoffed his vassals and passed jugdment on cases brought before him.

The material components of the ceremony survived down to the present day. The ducal chair is still situated at its 'original' site, not far from Maria Saal.[32] Thomas Ebendorfer mentions some enclosures around the chair. In 1611, the provincal diet decreed that the monument be restored. In 1834, after Emperor Franz I had visited the chair in 1830, it was enclosed with an iron fence. The ducal stone, in contrast, had a less stable history. Knowledge about its original location was lost a long time ago. In 1862, the Carinthian Historical Society (Kärntner Geschichtsverein), at the instigation of the vicar of Karburg, bought the pillar pedestal from the farmer Jakob Urbal. The stone, then in a very bad state and deposited at the egde of a gravel quarry near the vicarage of Karnburg,

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30 Puntschart, *Herzogseinsetzung und Huldigung in Kärnten*, pp 11–30; Fräss-Ehrenfeld, *Geschichte Kärntens*, p. 349.   **31** Von Jaksch, 'Die Kärntner Geschichtsquellen 811–1202', no.

was transported to the Klagenfurter Landhaus, the provincial parliament. After a period in the local museum, it returned to the parliament in 2006.

Like the material parts of the ceremony, knowledge about it survived down to the present day. The last 'traditional' inauguration at the Fürstenstein took place in the year 1414, when Ernest the Iron (Ernst der Eiserne) was inaugurated.[33] His son and successor in office was Frederic, later Emperor Frederic III (1415–93). According to the seventeenth-century Carinthian historian Hieronimus Megiser, he did not want to be enthroned at the stone when he became duke of Carinthia in 1435, because he felt embarassed and found it difficult to combine the odd ceremony with his later carreer as emperor. Instead, we are told by Megiser, he issued a letter for the Carinthian nobility, a *Schadlosbrief*, declaring that the failure to observe the rite would have no negative consequences for the Carinthian people.[34]

The surviving evidence testifies to the late medieval political use of the Carinthian rite under the Habsburgian rulers from 1286 to 1414.[35] Thereafter, the ritual developed a literary afterlife in humanist cosmographic scholarship:[36] Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, the private secretary and advisor of Emperor Frederic III, quotes the Carinthian rite in detail in his *Cosmographia*, written after 1458. A century later, Jean Bodin, the French political philosopher, quotes the text in his *Les six livres de la République* (1576) as an example of sovereignty being transmitted by the people. Another century later, in 1662, John Lynch cited the Carinthian rite to refute Giraldus Cambrensis' 'calumnious charges against the Irish people, princes and kings' by pointing to continental analogies. It is my deep conviction that the archaic rite is not so much an indication of a society's archaic status as a useful tool in particular political contexts.

1031.   **32** Wilhelm Neumann, 'Der Kärntner Herzogstuhl im Wandel der Geschichte' in *Bausteine zur Geschichte Kärntens. Festgabe für Wilhelm Neumann zum 70. Geburtstag* (Klagenfurt, 1985).   **33** Fräss-Ehrfeld, *Geschichte Kärntens*, p. 346.   **34** „Diese löbliche Gewonheit / Freyheit und Gerechtigkeit / des Landes zu Khärndten / ist also von allen Fürsten festiglich gehalten worden /als offt es zum fall kommen durch der Ertzhertzogen absterben. Inmassen es dann auch Ottacker eines Königs in Böhem Sohn / und nach ihme Grafe Mainhardt von Tyrol / und sein Sohn Heinrich als sie Ertzhertzogen in Khärndten worden / gehalten haben / unnd gleichsfalls die volgenden aus dem Hauß Oesterriich bis auff Ernestum (inclusive) welcher ebener massen Anno 1414 auff dem Stuel gesessen und geliehen. Aber sein Sohn Keyser Friedrich wolt nicht auff dem Stuel leihen / umb des willen / daß er Römischer König war / doch gab er den Landleuten in Khärnten ein schadlos Verschreibung / under Dato S. Veit, Anno 1444. daß es ihnen / ihren Erben unnd Nachkommen an ihren Freyheiten und alten herkommen ohne schaden seyn und daran kein mangel solle bringen" (Hieronymus Megiser, *Annales Carinthiae, Das ist Chronica des löblichen Erzherzogthumbs Khärndte, fürnehmlich aus H. Gothardt Christallnicks Collectaneis zusammengetragen* (Leipzig, 1612), 479f.   **35** Annette Kehnel, '*toren spil* und Geltungsmacht. Die Geschichte der Symbole der Kärntner Herzogseinsetzung' in *Institutionalität und Symbolisierung. Verstetigungen kultureller Ordnungsmuster in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. Gert Melville (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2001), pp 477–91.   **36** Puntschart, *Herzogseinsetzung und Huldigung in Kärnten*, pp 72–9.

Princes, Prelates and Poets in Medieval Ireland

ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF KATHARINE SIMMS

Seán Duffy

EDITOR

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