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Maximilian's Chaplains and Their Benefices – *Memoria* and Money*

Benefices – foundations established to pay for liturgical services carried out by clergy, either in person or by a vicar, for the salvation of the founder's soul – may not seem a promising subject for the study of court life. However, an examination of the benefices founded and promoted by Maximilian brings together two perennial themes in the study of his person and his court: *memoria* and money.

Maximilian understood the importance of reputation and memorialisation (*memoria, gedechtnus*) in the self-fashioning of a ruler. In his fictionalised, ghost-written autobiography, Maximilian's avatar, the White (or Wise) King, explains the importance of self-memorialisation to a powerful nobleman who accused the young ruler of squandering money on such projects: "Whoever creates no memory for himself during his life has no memory after his death, and is forgotten after the last bell tolls [at his funeral and memorial services]. For this reason, the money I spend on memorialisation is not wasted, but the money that is skimmed in my memorialisation works to suppress my future memory. And whatever I do not complete towards my memorialisation during my lifetime will be honoured neither by you nor by anyone else."¹

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1 Marx Trautzsaurwein, in the name of Maximilian, *Weißkunig*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 3032, fol. 124^v–125^r: "Wer jme in seinem leben [fol. 125^r] kain gedachtnus macht der hat nach seinem todt kain gedächtnus vnd desselben menschen wirdt mit dem glocken don vergessen vnd darumb so wirdt das gelt so jch auf die gedechtnus aus gib nit verloren Aber

For Maximilian, the culture of memorialisation, inherited from classical antiquity and promoted by humanistic scholars, combined seamlessly with the Christian idea of eternal life (both in heaven and on the lips of future generations) as a reward for virtue.² Rulers routinely established ecclesiastical foundations to speed their souls from purgatory, to promote piety, to display their own magnificence, and to establish their own *memoria*, just as the White King recommended. The young Maximilian had observed the ways in which his father, Frederick III, had perpetuated his own memory by building churches and marking them with his device ‘AEIOV’, by founding monastic and secular chapters, and by lobbying the papacy for the foundation of three new dioceses: Ljubljana/Laibach, Wiener Neustadt and Vienna. Maximilian considered it part of his duty to keep alive the memory of his ancestors’ activity as founders of ecclesiastical institutions and observances: “Wherever a king or prince had endowed a foundation which had fallen into oblivion, he restored that founder with his *memoria*, which otherwise would not have happened.”³ Accordingly, many of the documents relating to foundations issued by Maximilian simply confirm and perpetuate the rights and provisions of foundations made by his biological or legal ancestors. While Maximilian’s foundations were modest in comparison to those of his father – a few chapels, votive paintings, sculptures, and altar services – these were well-chosen and exquisite, and some included an explicitly musical element.

Maximilian realised the potential of his chapel to project his own magnificence and contribute to his *memoria*, and used all legal and financial means available to him to promote its members. As ruler of lands stretching from the North Sea to the Adriatic, Maximilian held the right to present candidates to hundreds of benefices in historically significant and strategically important churches. In this article we will see how Maximilian used this right to reward and promote singers in his chapel, and also assigned administrative benefices to reward secular instrumentalists. By placing men who enjoyed a certain proximity to and even intimacy

das gelt das erspart wirdt in meiner gedächtnus das ist ain vnndertruckung meiner kunftigen gedächtnus vnd was jch in meinem leben in meiner gedächtnus nit volbring/ das wirdt nach meinem todt weder durch dich oder ander nit erstat.”

2 Jan-Dirk Müller, *Gedächtnus: Literatur und Hofgesellschaft um Maximilian I* (Munich, 1982); Berndt Hamm, *Religiosität im späten Mittelalter: Spannungspole, Neuaufbrüche, Normierungen*, ed. Reinhold Friedrich and Wolfgang Simon (Tübingen, 2011), pp. 63–65.

3 Weißkunig (cf. fn. 1), fol. 123v: “Vnnd wo ain kunig oder furst Etwo ain Stift gethan hat des vergessen worden ist/ So hat Er denselben Stifter widerumb mit seiner gedächtnus erhebt/ das sonst nit beschehen were.”

with himself into positions of some administrative importance, Maximilian could more easily observe and administer his sprawling territories at a distance.

Foundations and ecclesiastical endowments

The late middle ages saw a sharp increase in the number of endowed foundations. This rise coincided with an intensified focus on the doctrines of purgatory and the spiritual efficacy of the mass, and a heightened awareness of human fragility in the wake of the Black Death and subsequent outbreaks of epidemic disease.⁴ Memorial foundations prescribed a range of activities believed to benefit the soul of the founder, from distributions of charity, payment for artistic works such as paintings, vestments or bells, to the provision of liturgical services. These might range from private masses said in virtual silence by a priest, perhaps attended by a deacon and subdeacon or a pair of acolytes, to solemn requiems sung by an entire chapter of canons. From the fifteenth century onwards, liturgical foundations often specified the performance of a named antiphon, such as *Salve regina*, or a particular votive mass. In the absence of further specification it was assumed that such services would be sung in chant, which might be sung 'straight' or with some polyphonic elaboration. Some more luxurious foundations explicitly demanded the use of polyphony (usually without specifying whether this was to be written or improvised), or the involvement of an organist. The establishment of a liturgical foundation generally included a capital donation of rural lands – or of rental properties in cities – which generated the income that paid for the clergy who fulfilled the terms of the foundation.

Although Maximilian's liturgical foundations were more limited than those of his father Frederick, they displayed his discernment. Amongst the surviving artworks he probably commissioned are a lime wood statue of Mary sheltering Maximilian, Bianca Maria, Florian Waldauf and his wife, still kept in the chapel that Maximilian built at Frauenstein in Upper Austria.⁵ A superb embroidered panel displaying Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian, likewise huddled under the

4 Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London, 1996).

5 See Angela Mohr, *Die Schutzmantelmadonna von Frauenstein in Oberösterreich* (Steyr 1983). On this and the other foundations mentioned in this paragraph, see further Grantley McDonald, "Liturgical Foundations from the Court of Maximilian I and the Hope of Salvation," *Lutheran Music Culture: Ideals and Practices*, ed. Mattias Lundberg, Maria Schildt and Jonas Lundblad (Berlin, 2021), pp. 69–79.

Virgin's cloak, is preserved in the cathedral treasury at Aachen.⁶ In 1483, Maximilian issued – in the name of his son Philip – a charter ratifying the memorial foundation for Mary of Burgundy in Our Lady's church in Bruges, which she had laid down before her death. This foundation provided for the daily celebration of a mass by the succentor of Our Lady's church and four boys, joined on feast days and Marian feasts by an organist. The foundation also made provision for bell-ringing and silent masses.⁷ In 1494, Maximilian and Philip issued another charter in which they prescribed an even more sumptuous musical elaboration of Mary's memorial, involving two daily masses: one a said requiem, and the other a mass of Our Lady, sung in polyphony by three canons of the church, with the participation of an organist on Sundays and feast days.⁸ In 1498, Maximilian augmented the Waldauf foundation in Hall in Tirol by assigning properties to fund the provision of polyphony and organ music there.⁹

When Maximilian wished to attract a singer to his chapel or to reward singers already attached to his personal chapel, he could present him for a benefice. Thus even foundations whose charters do not mention music could be pressed indirectly into musical service. Those who established liturgical foundations generally possessed the right to collate candidates, that is, to present them for consideration to a bishop, abbot or dean and chapter of a collegiate foundation, expressly identifying them as their preferred candidate. This right of presentation (*ius praesentandi*) was generally hereditary. As heir to vast territories across Europe, Maximilian also inherited the right to present candidates to benefices initially endowed by his legal predecessors, sometimes centuries earlier.

If accepted by the bishop or chapter and duly installed, the incumbent was theoretically expected to perform the liturgical services required by the foundation. However, if the incumbent could not do this personally, he could appoint a vicar to do so, and share the income generated by the foundation with him. Since court chaplains were expected to attend the court at least part of the time, such

6 Karl Faymonville, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Rheinprovinz*, vol. 10: *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Aachen*, 1: *Das Münster zu Aachen* (Düsseldorf, 1916), p. 256, Ill. 192.

7 Bruges, Rijksarchief, Kerkfabrick Onze-Lieve-Vrouw (Brugge), Oud archief, 0/196 (O 1330).

8 Ibid., Oud archief, 0/197 (O 1022). Further, see Reinhard Strohm, "Die Brügger Messenstiftung Marias von Burgund und ihre Bedeutung für die Habsburger," *Kaiser Maximilian I. (1459–1519) und die Hofkultur seiner Zeit*. Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft 17, ed. Sieglinde Hartmann and Freimut Löser (Wiesbaden, 2009), pp. 247–60.

9 Hall in Tirol, Pfarrarchiv, Urkunde 437. Further on the Waldauf Foundation, see most recently Grantley McDonald, "The Waldauf foundation at St. Nicholas' church, Hall in Tirol," <https://musical-life.net/node/3554> (30/12/2021).

arrangements were unavoidable. Furthermore, many clergy, including members of Maximilian's chapel, possessed several benefices simultaneously, even though such 'pluralism' was theoretically forbidden in canon law. The right to present his chaplains to benefices and to promote them by presenting them to ever more lucrative or prestigious ones allowed Maximilian to externalise some of the financial burden of maintaining a chapel. By paying his musicians indirectly through benefices, Maximilian merely needed to pay them a nominal daily wage and their expenses when they attended his court. The income of individual court chaplains thus comprised the revenue from their benefices, shared with a vicar, and the expenses and emoluments received while they were present at court.

Primariae preces

For a period after a ruler came to power, he or she had the customary right to collate the next candidate for a benefice in every church in his or her territory. Such special collations are known as *primariae preces* (or *erste Bitten* in German). Maximilian used this right to present hundreds of candidates to benefices far and wide. Two lists of *primariae preces* exist from Maximilian's reign.¹⁰ The first extends from 1486 until about 1495, and records preces issued in conjunction with his coronation as King of the Romans. It includes members of Maximilian's Burgundian chapel – most of whom stayed in the Low Countries when Maximilian ceded Burgundy to his son Philip – as well as members of his Austrian chapel. The other list of preces is not dated, but was clearly drawn up following Maximilian's proclamation as Emperor Elect in February 1508. We can perhaps estimate the favour in which a given singer stood through the number of *primariae preces* he received. While most singers only received one or two, Nicolas Mayoul, choir-master of Maximilian's Burgundian chapel, received three. Bianca Maria also presented a *primaria prex* to least one member of Maximilian's chapel, the alto

10 Leo Santifaller, "Die preces primariae Maximilians I. Auf Grund der maximilianischen Registerbücher des Wiener Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchives," *Festschrift zur Feier des zweihundertjährigen Bestandes des Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchivs*. Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs. Ergänzungsband 2, ed. idem (Vienna, 1949), pp. 578–661. More generally, see Hanns Bauer, *Das Recht der ersten Bitte bei den deutschen Königen bis auf Karl IV* (Stuttgart, 1919); Hans Erich Feine, "Papst, Erste Bitten und Regierungsantritt des Kaisers seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, Kanonistische Abteilung 20 (1931), pp. 1–101; and Susanne Gmoser and Ulrich Rasche, "Archivalische Quellen zur Praxis des kaiserlichen Rechts der 'Ersten Bitten' (Jus primarium precum) im Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Wien," *Zwischen Archiv und Heraldik. Festschrift für Michael Göbl zum 65. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 2019), pp. 165–90.

Georg Vogel, soon after she married Maximilian in 1494, after she had been, as the document describes it, “borne aloft through divine favour to the peak of royal sublimity” (“nuper divinis auspiciis ad regalis sublimitatis apicem provecta”).¹¹

Good relations between Maximilian and his chaplains demanded that he follow through with these promises. On 25 August 1489, Maximilian sent Albert of Saxony, his regent in the Netherlands, a roll (*rotulus*) of the ecclesiastical benefices to which he had appointed his “chaplains, singers, secretaries and servants,” so that “they might keep themselves in better estate with us and in our service.” He had done this, he continued, according to ancient custom. He kept a copy of the roll for himself and sent copies to his chancellor in Burgundy, his chancellor in Brabant, and to Albert.¹² (The list in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna is evidently a fair copy of this roll, made in 1495 or soon thereafter.)¹³ He asked Albert to ensure that whenever one or more of the benefices on the list fell vacant, a sealed letter of presentation should be sent on behalf of the candidates named on Maximilian’s roll, in preference to any other person.

There also existed another kind of *primaria prex*, analogous to the papal custom of demanding annates, that is, the first year’s income after a bishop’s appointment. Once an abbot or other prelate was elected and installed, Maximilian sometimes presented a candidate for a benefice in the gift of that abbot or prelate. For example, when Maximilian formally approved the election of Jan Cauwerburch as abbot of St Peter’s in Ghent in 1490, he requested that Cauwerburch appoint his court chaplain Fernande Boutins to the first vacant benefice in the abbey’s jurisdiction.¹⁴

The archives of ecclesiastical institutions around Western Europe contain many of the letters with which Maximilian presented candidates for benefices, and these sometimes hint at the rich networks of information that flowed back to the court. For example, the archive of St Peter’s in Ghent contains a letter from 1481 in which Maximilian presents Jan de Hont, chaplain to the infant Philip the Fair, to the abbot of St Peter’s, Ghent; Maximilian requested that De Hont be

11 Augsburg, Staatsarchiv, Fürststift Kempten, Archiv Urkunden 1475 (1494 IV 24).

12 Dresden, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Bestand 10024, Loc. 8497/2, Nr 45: “Wir haben nach altem Herkommen ain Rotl vnserer geistlichen Gotsgab für vnser Caplen Singer Secretari vnd diener gemacht fürgenomen vnd ainem yeden seine stat vnd Gotsgab angezaigt damit Sy destatlicher sich bey vns vnd in vnserm dinste Ennthalten mugen Dieselb vnser Rotl der angezeigten benefici haben wir bey vns behalten vnd derselben abgeschrieben durch vnsern Secretari gezeihent. Aine vnserm Canntzler/ in Burgundi die annder vnserm Canntzler in Brabannt vnd die drit schicken wir deiner lieb ...”.

13 Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereafter HHStA), Reichsregisterbuch EE.

14 Ghent, Rijksarchief, Sint-Pietersabdij, charters, n° 1634.

installed to the benefice and chaplaincy in the church of St James in Ghent should the incumbent of the benefice, Jean Morraen, succumb to the illness with which he was afflicted at that time.¹⁵ This letter suggests that Maximilian possessed detailed knowledge of the current situation of even minor benefices, information that had been either passed up through the ecclesiastical hierarchy, or communicated by his agents on the ground. Maximilian's right to present members of his chapel to benefices throughout his territories thus had a further benefit: when his chaplains visited their benefices, they could serve as his eyes and ears all around the empire.

Lay prebends and secular benefices

Presentation to an ecclesiastical benefice generally presupposed that the incumbent was eligible for the office. For example, a benefice that involved the celebration of masses was only supposed to be held by a priest, although an incumbent who was not in holy orders could depute the liturgical duties of the foundation to a duly ordained priest. Exceptionally, some benefices in ecclesiastical institutions might be held by a layperson. For example, in 1489, Maximilian, invoking the ancient right of emperors and Kings of the Romans to nominate any person they deemed suitable for a 'lay prebend' in an ecclesiastical institution in the empire, where they were to be fed and provided for at the institution's expense, presented Augustin Stainbacher at Heilig Kreuz in Augsburg.¹⁶ The prior resisted the appointment, and asked the local bishop to lobby Maximilian to withdraw his presentation.¹⁷

More frequently, instrumentalists and those few singers in the chapel who were not in holy orders might receive secular benefices such as positions in the court administration. These could likewise be administered by a vicar when the instrumentalist was present at court. For example, in 1504, Maximilian appointed

15 Ghent, Rijksarchief, Sint-Pietersabdij, Tweede reeks, 1654, Nr. 23.

16 Augsburg, Staatsarchiv, Augsburg Hl. Kreuz, Urk 511 (1489 XI 20); see also Vienna, HHStA, rrb EE, 3^v.

17 Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Don. 660, 24^{r-v}, ed. in Theodor Dreher, *Das Tagebuch über Friedrich von Hohenzollern, Bischof von Augsburg (1486–1505), historisch erläutert und zum Lebensbilde erweitert* (Sigmaringen, 1888), p. 220. Thanks to Nicole Schwindt for drawing Dreher's edition to my attention. Hohenzollern states that the individual in question was one of Maximilian's trumpeters ("fistulator vulgo trometer regis"), though Stainbacher's name is not otherwise found amongst Maximilian's trumpeters.

his trombonist Jobst Nagel as collector of tolls on livestock in Vienna.¹⁸ In 1513, Maximilian proposed to appoint Paul Hofhaimer as collector of tolls over the Inn at Windshausen, near Kufstein, in place of the current incumbent.¹⁹ However, the government and treasury at Innsbruck argued that the position had to be carried out by someone on site, who could build up a personal relationship with those who regularly used the crossing. In any case, they added, Hofhaimer received quite enough from the pension paid out from the salt works at Hall.²⁰ This exchange shows that government authorities might resist an absentee incumbent, possibly because the vicar's income would be insufficient, or because they considered the proposed candidate unsuitable. It also shows that Maximilian's will was not boundless, but had to be negotiated with his advisors and administration.

Maximilian also promoted members of his court chapel though other kinds of honours. For example, he granted the singer and chaplain Georg Hafner a doctorate in civil law, and Lorenz Weißberger a doctorate in canon law, as well as elevating him to the nobility.²¹ He rewarded the singer Jean Lauwier with a grant of heraldic arms.²² He rewarded Hofhaimer by elevating him to the rank of knight, and then by making him a companion of the joust.²³ Frederick III rewarded one of Maximilian's singers, Philippe du Passage, by legitimating him.²⁴ The documents recording these grants routinely emphasise the long and faithful service rendered by each of these men to the sovereign. They thus served to strengthen and display bonds of patronage, as well as creating relationships of trust and dependence.²⁵

The extravagance of these displays may be seen in the documentation recording the bestowal of the right to bear heraldic arms. One document, a large vellum charter dated 1 January 1515, records Maximilian's grant of arms to Paul Hofhaimer and his brothers Ambrosius and Florian. The grant emphasises the faithful service that the brothers had rendered both to Sigmund and – something not

18 Vienna, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv (hereafter FHKA), AHK GB 13, fol. 298b–299a (296^{r-v}); GB 14, fol. 88b (91^r); Vienna, HHStA, AUR 1504 II 20.

19 Innsbruck, Tiroler Landesarchiv (hereafter TLA), Urkunde I 4242; Kunstsachen I, 730.

20 Innsbruck, TLA, Maximiliana XIII/451, fol. 145^r–146^v; oö Kammer-Kopialbuch 61, Entbieten und Befelch 17 (1513), fol. 410^r.

21 Vienna, HHStA, rrb GG, fol. 97^r; Vienna, HHStA, rrb LL, fol. 44^r.

22 Vienna, HHStA, rrb GG, fol. 67^{r-v}.

23 St Gallen, Kantonsbibliothek, Vadianische Sammlung ms 30, fol. 60.

24 Vienna, HHStA, rrb V, fol. 60^r.

25 See Jan Hirschbiegel, *Nahbeziehungen bei Hof – Manifestationen des Vertrauens. Karrieren in reichsfürstlichen Diensten am Ende des Mittelalters*. Norm und Struktur 44 (Cologne, 2015).

otherwise documented – to Frederick III. Unfortunately the illuminated illustration of the heraldic arms has been cut out, probably by a later souvenir-hunter.²⁶

The location of benefices

When presenting chaplains for benefices, Maximilian often ensured that at least one of their benefices was close to their home. For example, Eberhard Senft, an influential member of Maximilian's chapel, came from Weismain, a small town in Franconia. Accordingly, he was appointed to several benefices at St James' church in Bamberg, the nearest city.²⁷ The chaplain Nicodemus Kilwanger came from Kaufbeuren, and was presented for chaplaincies in his home town.²⁸ Georgius Slatkonja was presented as canon and provost of the cathedral in Ljubljana, his native city.²⁹

Such appointments in the native locality of the candidate suggest two things. Firstly, it implies the chapter of a cathedral or collegiate church might be more likely to honour the presentation of a local candidate. It also suggests that these chaplains, even if often represented by a vicar, personally served their benefices when they were not present at court, at least occasionally. Numerous examples show that priests often maintained links with their home towns, and many returned after they retired from active service at the court. For example, in 1480, Frederick III informed Maximilian that the singer Arnold Picard, documented in the emperor's chapel from the 1460s, wished to return to Maximilian's territories in the Burgundian Netherlands, and requested that Maximilian arrange a convenient benefice for him there.³⁰

26 Prague, National Archives of the Czech Republic, CGL 753 (L II 635).

27 Summarised in Johannes Kist, *Die Matrikel der Geistlichkeit des Bistums Bamberg 1400–1556*. Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft für Fränkische Geschichte, Reihe 4: *Matrikeln fränkischer Schulen und Stände* 7 (Würzburg, 1965), p. 383.

28 Kaufbeuren, Stadtarchiv, B 1/1 (olim Cod. 118), fol. 51^v–52^r.

29 Vienna, HHStA, rrb JJ, fols. 166^r, 172^r, 250^r; Ljubljana, Nadškofjski Arhiv, Urbarji, št. 1, fols. 79^v, 112^v; Sankt Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsarchiv, Urkunden Stift Eberndorf 64. See also the inscription recording Slatkonja's installation as provost of Ljubljana in Boniface VIII, *Liber sextus Decretalium* (Venice: Andreas Torresanus, 1482 [GW 4871]), Ljubljana, National Library of Slovenia, 16236 VI H e; Alfonz Gspan and Josip Badalič, *Inkunabule v Sloveniji. Incunabula quae in Slovenia asservantur*. Dela 10 (Ljubljana, 1957), pp. 314–15, Nr. 138 (reproduction and defective transcription); Lilijana Žnidaršič Golec, *Duhovniki kranjskega dela ljubljanske škofije do tridentinskega koncila*. Acta ecclesiastica Sloveniae 22 (Ljubljana, 2000), p. 108 (corrected transcription).

30 Vienna, HHStA, RK Maximiliana 1 (alt 1a), Konv. 1, fol. 21^{r-v}.

A candidate could only take possession of a benefice if it were vacant. Such a vacancy could occur if the incumbent died, resigned or was removed. Occasionally Maximilian persuaded an individual to cede a benefice in favour of someone else. It was also possible that two chaplains might agree to exchange benefices with each other, a process known as permutation. This might allow a priest to concentrate multiple benefices in one area. We can observe the dynamics of benefice politics in the career of Hans Kerner, a key figure in Maximilian's Austrian chapel in the 1490s, who has until now attracted only passing attention.

Hans Kerner

Hans Kerner, priest and singer, was patronised by both Frederick and Maximilian. On 15 October 1490, following the death of Matthias Corvinus and the expulsion of the Hungarian garrison, Frederick presented Kerner for the benefice of the altar of St Catherine in the castle chapel in Vienna.³¹ Soon after, Frederick promised Kerner the senior chaplaincy at the castle chapel as soon as it fell vacant.³² On 18 May 1491, Kerner, "chaplain of the Holy Roman Emperor and currently priest of the chapels of Our Lady and St John in the castle in Vienna" ("des Römischen Khäysers &c Capplan/ vnd diezeit Pharrer Vnserer lieben frawen/ vnd Sannd Johans Cappellen in der Purkh zu Wienn"), purchased a vineyard for the use of the chapel.³³ In February 1491, Kerner resigned the parish of Friedlach in favour of Valentin Hunger.³⁴ In return, Kerner was presented for the senior chaplaincy of the castle chapel in Vienna, which had been vacated through the death of Paul Strobmayr.³⁵ In 1492, Kerner was also appointed as priest of the wealthy parish of Altpölla in Lower Austria, which he held concurrently with his benefices in Vienna.³⁶ In 1494, Maximilian asked the parish priest of Pettau to cede this benefice in favour of Kerner.³⁷

In 1496, Kerner accompanied Maximilian's chapel to Augsburg, where it remained while he went on campaign in Italy. This campaign went badly, and Maximilian was forced to reduce his household. At the suggestion of his treasurer

31 Vienna, FHKA, Hs 44, fol. 164^v.

32 Vienna, FHKA, Hs 44, fol. 182^r.

33 Vienna, Stadt- und Landesarchiv, HA Urkunde 5409 (1491 V 18).

34 Vienna, FHKA, Hs 44, fol. 221^v.

35 Vienna, FHKA, Hs 44, fol. 269^r.

36 Vienna, FHKA, AHK NÖHA G 74/a/2, fol. 926^r.

37 Vienna, HHStA, AUR 1494 IV 10; later copy in Graz, Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv, hschgb II/4 (Hs I/20), p. 953.

Casius Hackenay, Maximilian instructed that the chapel's accommodation and expenses at Augsburg were to be paid; the singers should receive their allowance and then be dismissed. (They presumably returned at this point to their benefices until summoned again.) Six of the choirboys were to be laid off, and the rest taken to Vienna. The financial arrangements were to be handled by Hans Kerner, "our senior chaplain and singer," who was to take the boys to Vienna with Isaac and his wife, who probably acted as their teacher and 'nanny' respectively. It is worth noting that this document speaks of "paying the expenses" ("Auslösung") of the chapel, not its complete dissolution ("Auflösung"), an error that has bedevilled interpretations of this and similar documents.³⁸ In 1497, Kerner, described as "principal chaplain and choirmaster of the King of the Romans, priest and property manager" of the castle chapel ("Romischer Kuniglicher Maiestät Obrister Caplan vnd Singermaister Pharer vnd Gruntherr der Eegemelltn Stiff"), requested that the magistrate Stefan Een should clearly mark the properties owned by the castle chapel in the cadastre so that no one else would cultivate them or build on them.³⁹ This request for clarification was perhaps necessitated by the disorder caused by the Hungarian occupation in the 1480s. In 1497, Maximilian sent the priests Wolfgang Rauber and Hans Han from Innsbruck to Vienna, where Kerner reimbursed them for the journey. These two priests were charged with ensuring that the four *Mut* (about 7380 litres) of grain, due to the castle chapel per year through the provisions of a foundation, were duly delivered.⁴⁰ Kerner also administered the financial affairs of the clergy and four (adult) singers in the castle chapel.⁴¹ In 1498, Kerner was replaced by Georgius Slatkonja, whom Maximilian sent to Vienna as the new master of the singers in the castle chapel.⁴² Perhaps Kerner was too old to continue; perhaps he was too busy with his other duties; perhaps his musical abilities were limited: we simply do not know. Slatkonja by contrast would have a spectacular career in the church, rising to ever richer and more prestigious benefices, culminating in the bishopric of Vienna. Kerner died

38 For the confusion between "auflösen" and "auslösen", see Josef Mantuani, *Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, III.1: *Die Musik in Wien* (Vienna, 1907), p. 381. The 50 fl. owed to Kerner were still not paid on 8 September 1497, when Maximilian sent a reminder to the treasury in Innsbruck; see Innsbruck, TLA, oö Kammer-Kopialbuch 4, Geschäft von Hof 2 (1497), fol. 283^{r-v}.

39 Vienna, HHStA, HBP, 1497 III 13.

40 Vienna, HHStA, RK Maximiliana 7 (alt 4b), fol. 212^{r-v}. Thanks to Nicole Schwindt for drawing this document to my attention.

41 Innsbruck, TLA, oö Kammer-Kopialbuch 4, Geschäft von Hof 2 (1497), fol. 355^v.

42 Vienna, FHKA, AHK GB 1 (IV), fol. 83^v (190).

on 15 January 1501, and was buried in St Michael's church, just next to the castle in Vienna.⁴³

Maximilian's putative foundation of the Viennese chapel music in 1498

This overview of Kerner's career gives important profile to well-known series of documents from 1498, hailed in older historiography as the "birth date of the Viennese imperial court music".⁴⁴ On 20 July 1498, Maximilian's treasurer Balthasar Wolf informed Hans Harasser, chief financial administrator (*Habmeister*) for Austria, that Maximilian had decided to establish a chapel of singers at Vienna, comprising Georgius (Slatkonja) as cantor, Bernhard Meder and Oswald as basses, and six or seven boys, who were "to descant in the Brabant style" ("auff Brabantisch zu discantieren"). The total budget for this chapel amounted to 128 fl. annually, in addition to cloth for clothing and hats. In 1958, Othmar Wessely pointed out basic problems with the traditional interpretation of these documents as marking the foundation of the Viennese musical chapel. The chapel of a king or emperor was part of his private household, and was dissolved after his death. Any continuity from the chapel of one ruler to that of his or her successor was essentially limited to those members taken on when the chapel of the heir apparent was expanded following his or her accession to power, and to any musical repertoire that might be taken over into the new chapel. Only a handful of Maximilian's singers were absorbed into Ferdinand's chapel, so the degree of continuity between these two courts was limited.⁴⁵

We can go even further than Wessely in deconstructing the "myth of 1498". Firstly, masses and vespers were being sung in the castle chapel from its foundation, primarily in chant. The myth that Maximilian was the first to bring music into the castle chapel reflects a widespread later prejudice against chant as non-music. There are other reasons to consider Maximilian's decision in 1498 as a sign of continuity rather than of innovation. In 1455, Archduke Ladislaus Postumus

43 Kerner's epitaph in the Kreuzkapelle, St Michael's church: "Anno domini m ccccc ain iar am freitag vor anthonij ist gestorben der Erwirdig her hanns karnar Ro' ka' M' obrister Capplan vnd Cantor pharrer zw altnpolau vnd in der purck hie zw wienn dem got genadig Sey."

44 J. Mantuani, *Geschichte* (cf. fn. 32), p. 381. Mantuani's mistaken perspective is still encountered, for example Maria Benediktine Pagel, *Die kk (kuk) Hofsängerknaben zu Wien 1498–1918* (Vienna, 2009), p. 43–45.

45 Othmar Wessely, "Arnold von Bruck, Leben und Umwelt. Mit Beiträgen zur Musikgeschichte des Hofes Ferdinands I. von 1527 bis 1545," *Habilitationsschrift*, Universität Wien, 1958, <http://www.dtoe.at/Publikationen/Onlinepub.php> (30/12/2021), pp. 58–70.

had laid down that besides the spoken masses in the chapel, a mass of the Holy Spirit was to be sung every Tuesday, a mass of Our Lady sung every Thursday, and on every "specified" day, a "particular" mass was to be sung before the main mass of the day ("alle wochen an Eritag von dem Heyligen geiste vnd am phintztag von Gotzleichnam vnd am Sambstag von vnser lieben frawn/ an jedem benanten tag ain besunder ambt/ vor dem Rechten Ambt singen vnd ausrichten"). This last article is probably a reference to masses prescribed through testamentary foundations. Moreover, Ladislaus decreed that his own singers were to sing these services in the castle chapel, an obligation he passed on to his successors ("Dartzu sullen der obgenant vnser genedigister Herr seiner gnaden erben vnd nachkomen genedigklich fürsehen vnd bestellen daz Irer gnaden Cantores dieselben Ambt auch singen als andern gotzdinst").⁴⁶

When Matthias Corvinus took Vienna in June 1485 after a five-month siege, the Habsburg court – presumably including those singers in Frederick's service who were obliged to sing in the castle chapel – departed to Linz. After Corvinus' sudden death in April 1490, the Habsburgs re-established their presence in Vienna, even while Frederick remained in Linz. I suggest that the appointment of Hans Kerner, Frederick's court chaplain, to a chaplaincy in the castle chapel in October 1490 was an important step in re-establishing Habsburg presence in the castle in Vienna, and that Maximilian's assignment of a group of singers to the castle chapel was intended in part to honour the provisions of Ladislaus' 1455 decree. If so, this was not a new establishment, but a measure to restore the status quo after the Hungarian interlude.

Given that Maximilian was in Innsbruck and southern Germany at this time, he clearly had other motives in formalising the group of singers in Vienna than the desire to enjoy their singing himself. The documentation contains a few clues. Firstly, the explicit prescription of "discanting in the style of Brabant" (probably a reference to improvised polyphony on the basis of chant) underlines Maximilian's intention to project his own cultural tastes at Vienna, even in his absence. The "Brabantine" polyphony – evidently sufficiently unusual as to require specific identification – signalled Maximilian's assumption of Burgundian taste and sophistication. Its performance at his express command evoked his presence even in his absence, promoting his *memoria* even while he was alive. Secondly, Maximilian instructed the paymaster Hans Harrasser to see to it personally "that these same singers of ours should sing a mass every day, and you should give them clear

46 Vienna, HHStA, UR FUK 664.

instructions for whom and how they should sing it.”⁴⁷ This suggests that the singers were providing music for privately endowed mass foundations, each with a particular musical and liturgical form determined by the terms of the foundation deed (“how they should sing it”). Testamentary foundations often specified that those celebrating or attending the mass should remember the testator by name (“for whom ... they should sing it”). The ruler, as highest human representative of the law and executor of many hereditary foundations established by his ancestors by blood and office, was obliged to ensure that the terms of such foundations and bequests were carried out. Here again we encounter the theme of *memoria* – not that of Maximilian, but of those who had established liturgical foundations in perpetuity, and obliged their executors and their descendants to carry out their provisions.

In the decrees of 1498 we also encounter our other theme, *money*. Maximilian sent his singers to Vienna in the midst of financial crisis. In Vienna they would be paid from the income derived from the endowed services in the castle chapel and fed from the tithes of grain and wine due to the chapel as feudal landlord, thus removing them from Maximilian’s payroll at Innsbruck – apart from the unavoidable costs of expenses and livery – while retaining them in his service.

Maximilian’s chapel after his death

After Maximilian’s death, the question of benefices became even more urgent. The commissioners entrusted with winding up Maximilian’s court treated each of the administrative units of the court separately. On 12 September 1519, the commissioners wrote to Georgius Slatkonja, instructing him to dismantle Maximilian’s chapel and to dismiss the adult singers and choirboys. Moreover, he was to send the governors a list of those singers who were priests, so that they might be presented to benefices as they fell vacant.⁴⁸ Several letters of presentation issued as a result of this command have survived; many of them are for quite poorly-paid benefices, generally about 32 fl. a year, but in most cases these are expressly provided as stop-gap solutions until something better could be found.

Those singers without ecclesiastical benefices, or only poorly paid ones, were left in a difficult financial position. In 1519 or 1520, a group of former singers

47 Vienna, FHKA, AHK GB 1 (IV), fol. 83r (189r): “empfehlen wir dir Ernstlich, das du bey Inen daran seyest, damit diselben vnser Singer alle Tag ain ambt singen, da<v> du Inen auch für wen vnd wie sie das singen sollen, gut ordentlich anzaigen geben sollest”.

48 Vienna, FHKA, SUS HS 46 (= GB 19/1), Registratur De Anno 1519 bis 1520, fol. 96^v.

from Maximilian's chapel – Hans Vischer, Nicodemus Kilwanger, Michael Täschinger, Georg Vogel, Lucas Wagenrieder and Georg Bassitz – addressed a supplication to the new government of Ferdinand I, complaining about the difficult financial situation in which they now found themselves.⁴⁹ Those singers who had previously received the promise of a pension from the imperial treasury often found it difficult to collect this money after Maximilian's death. The singers Ludwig Senfl, Caspar Bircker and Michael Täschinger, and the organist Paul Hofhaimer all submitted supplications to Ferdinand requesting payment for outstanding pensions.⁵⁰

From the foregoing it is clear that the policy of granting benefices to singers to secure their presence at court was not simply about saving money. The system of benefices forged links between generations of the ruling family. It was a means of placing sympathetic individuals in strategic locations. It provided a measurable way to promote individuals within the court. And perhaps most importantly, it allowed a ruler such as Maximilian to establish himself at the top of a complex network of patronage and thus to project his own cultural ambitions, display his magnificence, and bolster his *memoria*, which was in his own estimation an essential responsibility for a prince.

49 Vienna, HHStA, HausA Familienakten 97-4, fol. 4^{r-v}.

50 Vienna, FHKA, NÖK Akten 10 (06.1530–12.1530) [r. Nr. 4], fol. 592^r–593^v; Vienna, FHKA, AHK NÖK Akten 8 [r. Nr. 3], Konv. 8.2, fol. 524^r–525^v, Nr. 321; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Mus.ep. Arigoni, F. Varia 1 (20).

