

Medizinische Policey in den habsburgischen Ländern der Sattelzeit: Ein Beitrag zu einer Kulturgeschichte der Verwaltung von Gesundheit und Krankheit. By Lukas Lang. Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2021. pp. 336.

Lukas Lang's significant contribution to the field of medical history in the East Central European region, focusing on health care administration in the Habsburg Monarchy in the so-called "saddle period" (*Sattelzeit*), a period of transition from early modern to "modern" structures between the 1780s and 1820s, is based on his dissertation, which he defended at the University of Graz in 2017. Centered around a core problem of the age, which was rooted in the Enlightenment paradigm of the "pursuit of happiness" and the value of a healthy population viewed as a safeguard of stability and eventually progress, Lang's volume deals primarily with *medizinische Policey* (which literally translates as "medical police"), a field strongly related to the comprehensive *Polizeywissenschaft* or "police science" concerned primarily with the internal order of the community, as well as the mechanisms and configurations of order and the ideals of order in an administrative-historical perspective on health and disease in four chapters, analyzing the different areas and levels of the discourse. Due to the abundance of texts and the diversity of health care regulations in the different regions of the Habsburg Monarchy, Lang wisely chose to limit his focus to the province of Lower Austria and the imperial residence city of Vienna. Instead of offering a general overview of the topic, he opted for an in-depth study of local affairs, revealing the dynamics of health care policy in the region but also successfully embedding the identified problem areas, discourses, and unique approaches to local policy in the transformations accelerated by, for example, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.

The introduction focuses on the relevant historiographical traditions, the current state of research, and the potential methodological and conceptual tools with the help of which one can explore the administrative-historical dimension of health care in the *Sattelzeit* in a dynamic framework, taking not only the theoretical, prescriptive aspect of the examined treatises on medical police into consideration but also the influence of theoretical works on medical policymaking and the successes and setbacks of the process through which such laws were implemented and evolved into "self-evident customs" (p.99). Lang provides a wide tableau of the different approaches to *medizinische Policey* and medical policymaking in general, beginning with the famous concept introduced by George Rosen, considering the health policy of the German-speaking

territories and its theoretical background “narrow, conservative, and particularist in spirit” (p.15), a view challenged substantially by historians of medicine since the 1950s.

Lang also includes Michel Foucault’s conceptual framework, which exerted a strong influence on Germanic historiography until the 1990s, inspiring research revolving around the concepts of biopolitics, governmentality, and medicalization. Lang does not dismiss the latter concept (he uses the term *Medikalisierung* throughout the volume), but he does “recalibrate” it by considering the practical feasibility of the concept of “medical socialization” introduced by Francisca Loetz and highlighting the dualism between academic medicine and lay medicine, as well as their reciprocal dynamics and negotiation processes, which seem to be particularly suitable for his analysis, along with other methodological concepts focusing on dynamics and negotiations instead of rigid structures and top-to-bottom approaches to administration, among them the cultural techniques of administration (*Kulturtechniken der Verwaltung*) introduced by Peter Becker and Stefan Haas or the analysis of *Ordnungskonfigurationen* (configurations of order) introduced in medieval studies by Stefan Weinfurter and Bernd Schneidmüller.

The levels of discourse examined in the volume are shaped by the groups of sources chosen by Lang for his analysis: moving from the sphere of theory to the practical implementation of health regulations, he discusses the most significant contributions to the genre, including Johann Peter Frank’s comprehensive six-volume work on the system of medical police (posthumously amended by three further volumes), along with the treatises by Zacharias Gottlieb von Huszty, Franz von Steininger, Joseph Bernt, and Marquard Joseph von Kotz. The second level of Lang’s analysis deals with health legislation based on Johann Nepomuk Freiherr von Hempel-Kürsinger’s *Handbuch der Gesetzkunde im Sanitäts- und Medicinalgebieth* (1830–1832), with a focus on Lower Austrian regulations, containing ca. 3000 ordinances from the period between 1230 and 1821. In the third, empirically-based analytical chapter, Lang delves into unpublished sources from the holdings of the police authorities of the Habsburg Monarchy from the years between 1783 and 1814 kept in the Austrian State Archives. Based on these texts, Lang was not only able to offer a comprehensive view of each individual level, but the sources also enabled him to convey an integral image encompassing the three levels and to fulfil his initial objective of offering a differentiated interpretation of how the different discourses and arenas of medical policymaking and the implementation of different regulations influenced and shaped each other.

After a both historiographically and methodologically convincing introduction, Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical discourse of *medizinische Policey* based on the works of the abovementioned authors, whose texts, though theoretical in nature, were by no means disengaged from earlier attempts and discourses on the issues and most important tasks of (medical) police. Drawing on earlier regulations and medical expertise, the authors aimed to create the discursive foundation of normative principles for state health policy and administration and establish the academically trained physician as a medical expert, whose political engagement is vital for achieving the political, economic, and social objective of ensuring a healthy population. Lang in this chapter surveys the historical background and theoretical underpinnings of *medizinische Policey* ingrained in general police science (*Policeywissenschaft*) and cameralist economic theory, as well as the goals and structure of the works, the most important problem areas (population discourse, the relationship of the medical profession and state administration, and the correlation of theory and practice), and the significant discursive shift towards the importance of prophylaxis. Lang also discusses the mediality of works on medical police, highlighting that the typographical layout and structure, the “utilitarian” language, the different methods of dissemination, and the introduction of *medizinische Policey* in medical education at the universities of the Habsburg Monarchy were all imperative in establishing a widely received normative discourse.

Chapter 3 deals with the direct influence of this normative discourse on the legislation: as argued by Lang, this influence was by no means linear, and, as mentioned earlier, there had already been some interplay between theory and norm production, with the authors of *medizinische Policey* strongly drawing on older police and health regulations. Lang’s exhaustive and elaborate chapter focuses on several problem areas related to medical regulations in the Lower Austrian territory, surveying, for example, the distribution and development of Habsburg sanitary laws, the types of laws and their temporal and regional distribution, the most important subjects (e.g., disease control; the inspection of foodstuffs, hospitals and pharmacies; veterinary science and practices; hazard prevention; treatment practices; health administration; medical education; public hygiene; quackery; burial customs), the administrative organization and its most important bodies and actors. As in the previous chapter on the mediality of treatises on medical police, in this part Lang also focuses on the dissemination (publication, announcement) of legal knowledge, as well as the implementation

processes illustrated with case studies, demonstrating how normative knowledge was received and used in society.

Chapter 4 focuses on case studies. It deals with three specific problem areas, pointing at the significance and stakes of thorough medical regulations and the stricter surveillance of society. According to Lang, this part is a “testing ground” for the general ideas presented in the earlier chapters of the volume and aims to show how the different norms, discourses, and legislative practices were set to work in certain cases, involving the conflicts of authorities, social norms and customs, and in some cases, human nature. The problem areas discussed are marriage and sexuality; prostitution and sexually transmitted diseases; and quackery. Lang claims that controlling the marital habits and sexuality of individuals are areas that have strong implications for both morality and for ensuring a strong, healthy, and growing population, while the battle against unlicensed healers and quacks on the diverse medical market in the Habsburg Monarchy at the time was imperative for achieving thorough state control and for enabling academically trained physicians to establish themselves as par excellence medical experts and a determinative force in health administration.

In sum, Lukas Lang’s comprehensive work on the changes, ruptures, and continuities in health administration in the Habsburg Monarchy in the decades between the 1780s and 1820s is a noteworthy contribution to medical history writing in the region, fulfilling a significant lacuna in the secondary literature. Though the text itself would have needed more input from the editors in correcting typos (a notable example is Huszty’s surname, which appears in three different forms) and unedited charts and in smoothening the sometimes overly repetitive and didactic argumentation, the book is still an important read for any historian of medicine, as it provides an important basis for understanding the most important theoretical underpinnings, discourses, and practices through which health administration evolved in the province of Lower Austria, providing an important example for the other regions of the Habsburg Monarchy as well. In the future, an English edition (and not a mere translation of the current German version) would be useful, as it would make the volume more widely accessible.

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