rules of land ownership, which combined individual and communal rights, were bewilderingly complex, and Kálnoky does a great job sifting through this fascinating material. The book ends with the royal decree of 1562, while the conclusion—written in the form of an epilogue—offers a few remarks on the gradual curtailment of the juridical and fiscal privileges of the Szeklers thereafter. The book's main argument is reiterated a few times across the chapters and is probably best expressed in the conclusion: "The more the juridical customs of the Szeklers came under pressure . . . the more the community was intent to protect them by consignment to writing . . . [which] served to accentuate the community's consciousness of its particularism." (171)

The book includes a number of useful annexes: a glossary, two translated resolutions from 1505 and 1506, a chronology, and a complete list of Szekler villages with their Hungarian, German, and Romanian names. The index includes personal and place names as well as topics, and the bibliography has a supplement directed at readers of English and French. The book also includes numerous tables and diagrams, which are particularly helpful as they illustrate the more complex themes discussed in the book, such as inheritance rules.

Like all works of high complexity, this book contains a few points that could have been stronger. The English translation from the original French is generally of high quality, although the occasional unclear sentence and French spelling of proper nouns can still be found in the text. A few isolated typos in the years of some voivodes' reigns (for instance István Báthory, 1571–1575) may create some confusion, and a few lyrical remarks about the character and fate of the Szeklers perhaps could have been avoided. In the introduction, the reader would have benefited from a clearer discussion of the state and fate of the original archival material on which this work is based, and a few of the digressions into historiographical debates are occasionally muddled by unnecessary details. More importantly, the book could have benefited from being placed in a wider European context, which would have made its relevance easier to grasp for readers who are not particularly familiar with Transylvania. The Szeklers were not the only community in medieval and early modern Europe to maintain a separate legal system within a larger political unit, and occasional references to other such groups (for instance the Jewish community in Poland-Lithuania) would have given more depth to the work. However, these weaker points do not subtract from the value of Kálnoky's book, which will likely remain the reference work on medieval Szekler law for some time to come.

Felicia Roșu
Leiden University
doi:10.1017/S0008938921001175

Associative Political Culture in the Holy Roman Empire: Upper Germany, 1346–1521. By Duncan Hardy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xvii + 302. Cloth £79.00. ISBN 978-0198827252.

In this engaging, perceptive, and at times iconoclastic study, Duncan Hardy takes a fresh look at the Holy Roman Empire at the close of the Middle Ages. Rather than the consolidation of territories, embarkment on a *Sonderweg*, or an entrenched dualism between king and the emerging German nation, he perceives interconnected components operating in accordance

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938921001072 Published online by Cambridge University Press

with shared values and customs at all levels of the polity, from local and (supra-)regional exchange right up to matters involving the empire as a whole. Fundamental building blocks included propensities toward multilateral agreements, commitment to mutual assistance in times of need, conflict resolution through negotiation or arbitration, and subscription to ideals such as the pursuit of peace, the rule of law, and the promotion of the common good. On a practical level, political life involved the conclusion of temporary—occasionally even eternal—treaties (authorized through the appended seals of all parties), the swearing of oaths (binding representatives to each other as well as God), the sale or pledging of commodified rights of lordship, and regular coordination at so-called *Tage*, meetings of delegates to discuss matters of general concern and/or engage in para-jurisdictional activities.

Hardy emphasizes the universality of these principles, not only among electors, princes, prelates, knightly societies, imperial cities, and other immediate units, but also the emperors themselves, many of whom—given their inability to guarantee good government alone—proactively encouraged closer ties between estates. One 1461 league, for example, encompassed the Count Palatine, archduke of Austria, margrave of Baden, bishop of Strasbourg, abbot of Murbach, counts of Lupfen and Lichtenberg, lords of Bussnang and Rappoltstein, and various towns in Alsace and the Black Forest (163). In similar fashion, the preambles of fourteenth-century alliances used language resembling that of a series of *Landfrieden* promulgated during the 1400s or the *Reichsreform* ordinances passed on the eve of the Reformation, while small-scale regional assemblies followed procedures not dissimilar to those of Imperial Diets, the largest and most august gatherings of all.

Geographically, the focus is on Upper Germany with its highly fragmented political landscape, plurality of (semi-)autonomous actors, areas of overlapping lordship, and wealth of pertinent documentation. Prominent source genres include charters, *Abschiede* (resolutions agreed at *Tage*), chronicles, and correspondence (including *Absagebriefe*, declarations of war sent to those judged to have violated accepted rights and codes of honor). The argument reflects exhaustive perusal of twenty-three archives in five countries, intimate familiarity with Anglophone as well as German-language literature, expert handling of constitutional peculiarities, and an ability to distill general insights from thousands of disparate clues.

Structured in three parts, the book opens with the shared characteristics of political culture outlined above (across the jurisdictional, military, and administrative spheres), proceeds to a comparative study of alliances (as convenient institutionalized frameworks for exchange), and concludes with four case studies situated at successive points between the reigns of Charles IV and Charles V: the "Town War" of ca. 1376–1389, the reign of Sigismund in the early fifteenth century, the period of Burgundian rule on the Upper Rhine around 1470, and the age of imperial reform between 1486 and 1521. Readers also benefit from two maps, an index, and twelve illustrations depicting specific treaties, the swearing of oaths, and the holding of assemblies.

Moving to quibbles and queries, Hardy himself signals the possibility that "some of the more consolidated princely agglomerations in the northern and eastern areas of German-speaking Europe prevented those regions from being conditioned by . . . 'associative political culture' to the same extent as Upper Germany" (262). Traces of the underlying doctoral thesis shine through in frequent recapitulations of findings, somewhat summary dismissals of alternative interpretations (such as Otto von Gierke's seminal work on *Genossenschaften* or Peter Moraw's notion of a *gestaltete Verdichtung* [deliberate consolidation] of the Empire around 1500; 94, 215), and overstatements of the paucity of previous work (given substantial

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938921001072 Published online by Cambridge University Press

research on leagues, *Tage*, and political communication by Horst Carl, Michael Jucker, Rudolf Schlögl, Andreas Würgler, and others).

From a thematic perspective, is the picture presented here too harmonious; does it overemphasize horizontal over vertical ties? The political culture of the Holy Roman Empire was indeed associative to an often-underappreciated extent, but it also involved bloodshed, burning of crops, and riding roughshod over the rights of vulnerable members. Chapter 3, which deals with feuding, sits somewhat uneasily among the others. While the mobilization of allies and offers of arbitration fit the author's overall thesis, casual resorting to arms equally points to opportunistic use of power, that is, thinking along vertical lines of suppression. Furthermore, the inclusive vision of a network of interconnected "elites" (a term never actually defined in the book) rather underplays tensions between monarchical and republican orientations. Regardless of common rituals/procedures and mutual benefits of cooperation (e.g., against external threats), in the final analysis rulers joined leagues to cement sociopolitical conditions, while subjects like the peasants of Appenzell did so to promote change. Is it a coincidence that the most horizontal and most durable of all the associations, the network of treaties linking urban and rural communes in the Swiss Confederation, started to drift out of the imperial orbit precisely at this point?

Overall, Duncan Hardy's book offers a meticulously researched, bold, and thought-provoking reconceptualization of this most complex of premodern polities at a key transition stage. Beyond its impressively broad canvas, the book's great merit is the identification of an overarching framework for the myriad of transactions within and beyond its southwestern heartlands. Given contrasting elements and pending further research on other regions, it might best be welcomed as a timely corrective to teleological accounts—of polarization, territorialization, and state formation—rather than as another metanarrative vying for exclusive purchase.

BEAT KÜMIN
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
doi:10.1017/S0008938921001072

The Devil's Art: Divination and Discipline in Early Modern Germany. By Jason Philip Coy. Charlottesville and London: The University of Virginia Press, 2020. Pp. ix + 176. Cloth $35.00. ISBN 978-0813944074.

Diviners and fortunetellers are familiar to anyone who has dipped even casually into the world of early modern witchcraft, for the simple reason that they are seemingly everywhere. One finds late medieval hedge wizards telling fortunes from congealed molted lead in the *Malleus maleficarum*, girls looking for future husbands in a Venus glass two centuries later in Salem, and everywhere in between. Throughout the era of European witch-hunting, divination and diviners were deeply imbricated into the structures of belief about witches, yet at the same time they were for the most part kept clearly separate: fortunetelling was not witchcraft, and diviners were not witches. For this reason, despite the vast number of pages that comprise the ever-growing body of witchcraft scholarship, their roles have largely been neglected and investigated only as part of the more generic category of "superstition." We are fortunate, then, to greet the publication of Jason Coy's recent monograph, the first

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938921001072 Published online by Cambridge University Press