

Was There a South-West German City-State Culture?

BJÖRN FORSÉN¹

“Le città di Alemagna sono liberissime, hanno poco contado, et obediscano allo imperatore, quando le vogliano, e non temeno né quello né altro potente che le abbiano intorno: perché le sono in modo fortificate, che ciascuno pensa la espugnazione di esse dovere esser tediosa e difficile. Perché tutte hanno fossi e mura conveniente, hanno artiglierie a sufficienzia: tengono sempre nelle canove publiche da bere e da mangiare e da ardere per uno anno; et oltre a questo, per potere tenere la plebe pasciuta, e senza perdita del pubblico, hanno sempre in comune per uno anno da potere dare loro da lavorare in quelli esercizi, che sieno el nervo e la vita di quella città, e delle industrie de’ quali la plebe pasca.”

In Chapter 10 of his *Il Principe*, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) describes the German cities as totally free, with small territories, and as obeying the Emperor only when they want to. According to him the cities do not fear the Emperor or any other potentate in their neighbourhood, because they are so well fortified (with walls, moats, artillery and food supplies) that everyone considers besieging them as a tedious and difficult undertaking. Moreover, he explains that the cities, in order to maintain the common people without public expense, always have enough raw materials in storage to keep the people engaged in those occupations essential to the life of the city.

On the basis of Machiavelli’s description of the German cities, it is clear that he considered them to be similar to contemporary cities in northern Italy. The concept of a city-state is a modern invention,² but Machiavelli’s description includes the main characteristics of a city-state put forward by Mogens Herman Hansen in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* (Hansen [2000a] 17-19). Each city was a self-governing micro-state consisting of a fortified city with its immediate hinterland. The politically privileged part of the population was apparently small and excluded the common people, who specialised in different sorts of production, on the basis of which the existence of the city depended. Thus, Machiavelli’s description can be used as a proof that

there existed German city-states in the early 16th century.

Apart from clarifying the definition of a city-state Hansen has also coined the expression “city-state culture”. A city-state culture is defined as a cluster of city-states in a region inhabited by people who speak the same language and share a common culture. Although war between the single city-states is endemic, the city-states interact politically during peace by having close diplomatic contacts, by concluding alliances, and by forming leagues or federations, often of a hegemonic type. City-states tend to occur in such clusters, but there are also occasional cases of “isolated city-states”, such as for instance modern Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino.³

On the basis of the criteria put forward by Hansen, Martina Stercken in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* considers the Swiss cities Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Luzern, Schaffhausen, Solothurn, St. Gallen, Zug and Zürich to form a city-state culture from the 14th/15th century until 1848.⁴ According to Peter Johanek, who in turn contributed an article on German cities to the same publication, the imperial cities (*Reichsstädte*) and free cities (*Freie Städte*) came closest to the definition of a city-state (Johanek [2000] 295-319, esp. 308). Imperial cities are towns which either were founded by the Emperor or had grown up on imperial territory, and thus owed no obedience to local or regional overlords. Free cities again were mostly cathedral cities, in which the citizens had managed to take over the control of government of the city from its lord (a bishop or archbishop). The imperial and free cities were thus politically equal in status to the duchies, counties, bishoprics and abbeys of the Holy Roman Empire.⁵

Machiavelli’s description of German cities must refer primarily to the imperial and free cities, which together with a few of the territorial cities, had the largest degree of autonomy. Thus Machiavelli clearly regarded the German imperial and free cities as similar to the north Italian city-states. As far as I know, nobody has objected to considering the German

imperial and free cities as city-states – even Johanek, who is critical of using the term city-state in Germany, admits that they come close to the definition of city-states.⁶ However, as they were not gathered together in a single continuous region with adjoining territories, but rather were interspersed among princely territories, and played no prominent role in the constitutional structure of the Empire, nor had any decisive influence on the Empire's policy-making, Johanek concludes that they cannot be considered to form a city-state culture, but rather constitute a special case of their own in the history of city-states (Johanek [2000] 308).

Of the German imperial and free cities the large majority (around 75%) was concentrated in a region consisting of the following modern countries and districts: Baden-Württemberg, Alsace (Elsass), the Bavarian districts (*Regierungsbezirke*) Schwaben and Mittelfranken, and a small part of south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz. Consequently, I am here going to test whether they theoretically could be seen as forming a specific south-west German city-state culture. While trying to answer that question I will proceed in the following way. First I am going to discuss whether the existence of adjoining territories between city-states has to be taken as a definite prerequisite for the identification of a city-state culture. Thereafter I will review the known cases of concluded alliances or formed leagues between the city-states in our study-area, as well as their role in the constitutional structure and policy-making of the Empire. Finally I will briefly discuss in which way the south-west German city-states relate to the Swiss and Italian city-states, and whether they could not all be seen as forming part of one and the same city-state culture.

Do the Single City-states in a City-state Culture Need to have Adjoining Territories?

According to the definition of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, a city-state culture consists of a region which for a long time is divided into single city-states. This is clearly one of the more important characteristics of a city-state culture, because it helps us to distinguish between city-state cultures and isolated city-states. The question is, however, whether the definition necessarily requires the single city-states to have adjoining territories, or whether a region densely dotted with city-states alongside areas belonging to the nobility and the church could also be considered as a city-state culture. One of the arguments used by

Hansen to exclude the mediaeval consulate cities in southern France as forming a city-state culture is that “they were scattered and lay between fiefs ruled by counts and bishops” (there are also other arguments, as for instance that all the consulate cities were vassals with a count or a bishop as their feudal lord) (Hansen [2000a] 24). Similarly, the fact that the German city-states were interspersed between principalities and episcopal states has, as we have seen above, been used as an argument against the existence of a German city-state culture.

Even though there is a clear concentration of imperial and free cities in our study-area, these do not have adjoining territories, but are rather interspersed among areas belonging to princes, bishops, abbeys, counts, knights and occasionally free peasants. Is this then a situation which rules them out as a city-state culture, or can we see similar traits for instance in the Swiss and/or Italian city-state cultures? It is a common mistake to see the map of at least the Italian city-state culture as consisting exclusively of powerful city-states with vast adjoining territories. According to Daniel Waley in his well-known book on the Italian city-states, it is “only necessary to blink one's eyes for this map to become one of wide feudal lordships, in the interstices of which communes struggle to maintain a fugitive independence” (Waley [1988] 159). It is only in Tuscany that the city-states managed to eradicate the feudal lordship, but not until the mid-14th century, at a time when the larger city-states already had started to incorporate the smaller ones, thus transforming into small territorial states or macro-states, a process which finally around 1400 led to the end of the Italian city-state culture (Epstein [2000] 287-89; Hansen [2000b] 602). In Lombardy the city-states had to compete with *seignorialism* all the time, and in the more peripheral and mountainous regions like Piedmont, parts of Veneto, Friuli and Romagna, the feudal power was always the dominant one, coexisting with the city-states.⁷

What about the Swiss city-states, then? By succeeding the nobility in their hinterland, these mostly obtained adjoining territories during the 15th century. However, Bern and Zürich never reached that stage, because part of the Aargau and Baden dividing them from each other was held in common by the members of the Swiss Confederacy. And St. Gallen, Rottweil and Mülhausen, all with the same status within the Swiss Confederacy (*Zugewandte Orte*, Rottweil only 1519-1632), always remained separated from the other Swiss city-states by abbeys or principalities. Bern and Geneva finally did not achieve adjoining

territories until the 1530s, when Bern occupied the Vaud.⁸ At this time Bern had a huge hinterland of 7,000 km², i.e. was actually too large to fit the definition of a city-state.⁹ After the occupation of the Vaud there were a total of 29 subjected towns in the Bernese hinterland, out of which the largest one, Lausanne, had a population of nearly the same size as Bern itself.¹⁰ Bern was from now on clearly not a city-state, but had rather, like the largest Italian city-states, developed into a small macro-state. Thus Bern and Geneva only achieved adjoining territories when Bern had outgrown the limits of a city-state.

Mediaeval and Early Modern city-states in Central Europe existed side by side with feudal lordships. Adjoining territories were often not achieved until a late stage, when the largest city-states already had expanded so much that they had been transformed into small macro-states. Thus, the existence of adjoining territories cannot, in my view, be used as a main prerequisite for defining city-state cultures in mediaeval and Early Modern Central Europe. Therefore I would suggest that Hansen's criterion of a city-state culture as a region which for a long time is divided into single city-states should instead be seen as fulfilled when a majority of the cities in a region developed into city-states.

How large a percentage of the cities in our study-area developed into city-states, or rather into free and imperial cities? Thanks to the impressive publication *Deutsches Städtebuch* we have a good picture of the urban development in Germany in the late mediaeval or Early Modern period. Unfortunately Alsace is not included in the *Deutsches Städtebuch*, but if we concentrate on modern Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken we still get a representative picture of our study-area.¹¹ As shown in Table 1, there were in the mid-16th century a total of 294 towns in modern Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken, of which 37 had the status of imperial cities (none was a free city). This does indeed represent quite a low percentage,¹² but on the other hand one should note that nearly two-thirds of the towns had a population of less than 1,000 inhabitants (many of them only a couple of hundred) and were, in spite of the fact that they had received town privileges, hardly more than small villages, and should perhaps be excluded from further consideration.

The percentage of towns that had imperial rights increases among the larger towns. Roughly one-third of all towns with a population over 1,000 were imperial cities, whereas two-thirds of the towns with a

Population	Cities	<i>Reichs-</i> <i>städte</i>	Percentage
>12,000	3	3	100%
6,000-12,000	6	3	50%
3,000-6,000	23	16	69.6%
1,000-3,000	79	11	13.9%
<1,000	183	5	2.7%
Totals	294	37	12.6%

Table 1. Number of imperial cities (*Reichsstädte*) as compared with the total number of cities in the mid-16th century within the borders of modern Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken. Based upon *Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.2 and V.1-2. Due to the varying quality of sources used by *Deutsches Städtebuch*, the number of cities belonging to the groups with 1,000-3,000 and less than 1,000 inhabitants, especially, should be taken as approximations.

population over 3,000 had that status (Table 1). All three cities with a population larger than 12,000 were imperial cities, whereas the percentage of imperial cities among the second largest towns is reduced slightly by the fact that Stuttgart and Heidelberg, two residential cities of princes, belong to the towns sampled (Table 2).¹³ In any case, the sample clearly shows what an important role in the urban and economic life of our study-area the imperial and free cities played.

In conclusion, I would argue that our study-area almost fulfils the criterion of a city-state culture as consisting of a region divided into single city-states, or rather according to my definition, of a region in which the majority of the cities develop into city-states. Let us now turn to look at whether the city-states of our region dominated the political agenda by collaborating with each other.

Did the South-west German City-states Form Leagues with Each Other?

Starting in the 13th century, but above all in the 14th and 15th centuries, the German towns formed leagues (*Städtebünde* or *Landfrieden*), either together with territorial princes, or only among themselves.¹⁴ There were different reasons for these leagues, which typically were formed for a short time, usually a couple of years. In the 13th century, when the institution of imperial cities had hardly been established, the leagues concentrated upon protecting the safety of trading routes. Leagues with this as their main goal also included those ruled by princes and bishops, and

More than 12,000 inhabitants Nürnberg Ulm Augsburg	3,000-6,000 inhabitants *Lauingen Reutlingen Schwäbisch Hall Rottweil Memmingen Heilbronn Ravensburg Kempten Donauwörth Kaufbeuren *Schorndorf	*Tübingen Schwäbisch Gmünd *Breisach Rothenburg o.d.T. Dinkelsbühl Biberach Windsheim Überlingen *Pforzheim *Wertheim Isny *Rottenburg am Neckar
6,000-12,000 inhabitants *Stuttgart Nördlingen Esslingen Konstanz *Freiburg i.Br. *Heidelberg		

Table 2. The largest towns within modern Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken during the mid-16th century in an approximate diminishing order of size. All towns apart from those marked with an * are imperial cities. Based upon *Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.2 and V.1-2.

were often proclaimed by the king. One of the oldest and largest leagues of this kind was the *Rheinischer Bund* (1254-57), which included cities, principalities and bishoprics, mainly along the Rhine, stretching all the way from Zürich to Lübeck.¹⁵

During the 14th century the leagues developed in two different ways. Firstly, there appear leagues formed only by imperial and free cities. Secondly, the treaties start to include paragraphs protecting the privileges of the cities and prohibiting or restricting the right of the king to mortgage the cities. These changes were due to the fact that in order to obtain funds the Holy Roman Kings and Emperors had started to mortgage imperial cities to princes, and some of the smaller cities that could not afford to buy their freedom lost their privileges once and for all. In this way several smaller imperial cities close to the Palatinate and in the Breisgau were turned into ordinary territorial cities (*Territorialstädte* or *Landstädte*).¹⁶ Other small imperial cities, for instance Offenburg, Gengenbach and Zell am Harmersbach, managed to regain their imperial rights after having been mortgaged for most of the 14th-16th centuries. However, it was not only small imperial cities that were mortgaged: in 1330 Lewis the Bavarian mortgaged Zürich, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen and Rheinfelden to the Habsburgs. The two largest of these cities, Zürich and St. Gallen, both with between 3,000 and 6,000 inhabitants, managed to annul the mortgage, but the realisation that now medium-sized imperial cities were also in danger must have come as a shock to the imperial cities.¹⁷

Among the first leagues consisting only of imperial and free cities were one between Konstanz, Zürich,

St. Gallen and Schaffhausen in 1312 (in 1315 enlarged to include Lindau und Überlingen),¹⁸ another one between nine lower Swabian towns in 1330¹⁹ and finally one between seven Alsatian towns in 1342.²⁰ These three leagues also represent the three different factions into which the south-west German imperial cities tended to split: the towns around the Bodensee, the Swabian towns and the Alsatian towns. The first treaty, which included paragraphs protecting the rights of the imperial cities, was the Swabian *Landfrieden* of 1331. It encompassed the sons of King Lewis the Bavarian and some princes, as well as 22 imperial cities, stretching from Zürich and St. Gallen in the south to Wimpfen, Schwäbisch Hall and Nördlingen in the north.²¹ Apart from the general paragraphs regarding safety on the roads, this *Landfrieden* includes a paragraph in which Lewis the Bavarian promised not to infringe any of the privileges of the towns or to mortgage any of them during the duration of the treaty.

Lewis the Bavarian's Swabian *Landfrieden* was renewed in 1340. The paragraphs included in this treaty were similar to the ones of 1331, but this time a larger number of princes were included.²² Konstanz, Zürich and St. Gallen were apparently not pleased with the new *Landfrieden* and only shortly afterwards formed a league among themselves, stating their intention to protect themselves and their rights against anyone threatening them, not even excluding the King.²³ A similar formulation was included in the Swabian league of 22 towns (not including Konstanz, St. Gallen and Zürich or any princes), which was founded shortly after the death of Lewis the Bavarian in 1347. If there were two rival candidates, the mem-

Fig. 1. The members of the Swabian and Rhenish town leagues in 1385 and the five Swiss towns with which an alliance was concluded in the same year



bers of the Swabian league would accept as king the one chosen by the majority of their *Bundesversammlung*. They promised each other to protect their privileges if the king tried to infringe them, but there was no need for it as the new King Charles IV already in 1348/9 accepted their privileges despite his apparent dislike for leagues consisting exclusively of towns. Thus, in 1350 he abolished a new league of 1349 consisting of 25 Swabian towns (including Konstanz and St. Gallen, but not Zürich) and promulgated instead several consecutive Swabian *Landfrieden* treaties, which apart from imperial cities also included the principalities of the area. In the Golden Bull of 1356 he even forbade by law the formation without his consent of leagues consisting solely of imperial cities.

In the 1370s the threat against the imperial cities increased again. In order to be able to influence the election of his successor, Charles IV, who had been crowned Emperor, persuaded the seven electors to choose his son Wenceslas as king in 1376, at a time when he himself was still alive. Persuading the elec-

tors was, however, expensive. Already in 1373 Charles IV tried in vain to mortgage Nördlingen, Donauwörth, Dinkelsbühl and Bopfingen. Unsuccessful in this endeavour, he instead mortgaged Donauwörth, Feuchtwangen and Weil der Stadt in 1376 and commissioned the count of Württemberg to collect more taxes from the remaining imperial cities. As a reaction, 14 Swabian imperial cities the same year formed a league with the aim of protecting their privileges against Charles IV.²⁴ When Charles IV failed to abolish the league and, moreover, it won a battle against the count of Württemberg in 1377, more towns wanted to join. In 1377 the number of members had grown to 27,²⁵ in 1381 to 34²⁶ and finally in 1385 to 40²⁷, then stretching from Basel in the west to Regensburg in the east, and from St. Gallen and Wil in the south to Schweinfurt in the north (Fig. 1).

The Swabian Town League broadened its influence in 1381, when it concluded an alliance with a new *Rheinischer Städtebund* consisting of imperial and free cities along the Rhine. In 1381 this league con-

sisted of only seven towns, but within a couple of years it had been enlarged to include a total of 14 towns.²⁸ Two years later, in 1385, the Swabian Town League concluded an alliance with the Swiss towns Zürich, Luzern, Zug, Bern and Solothurn.²⁹ Thereby a total of 59 free and imperial cities in the south-western part of the Holy Roman Empire, the largest number ever reached, were cooperating with each other (Fig. 1). Because of differing interests the cooperation between the Swabian Town League and the Rhenish and Swiss towns proved not to work very well. The Swabians, for instance, never sent help to the Swiss when the Habsburgs in 1386 once again threatened them. Nevertheless, the Swiss won the battle at Sempach, whereas the Swabians were thoroughly defeated by the count of Württemberg in the battle of Döffingen in 1388. In the peace negotiations in Eger King Wenceslas demanded that both the Rhenish and the Swabian league should be abolished.

The imperial cities around the Bodensee and in Alsace, which had formed small leagues of their own within the Swabian Town League, ignored Wenceslas' orders. Thus, a league of seven Bodensee towns and ten Alsatian towns (the so-called Dekapolis) continued to exist also after the *Egerer Landfrieden* in 1389.³⁰ As these seven towns were not punished in any way, the rest of the Swabian towns probably felt safe once again to form a league of their own. Already in 1390 a new Swabian Town League was founded, with its centre at Ulm and with 12 members.³¹ This new Swabian Town League continued to exist into the 1480s, although its composition kept changing, and although after 1450 it had lost most of its importance. The Bodensee towns, Augsburg, the Frankish towns Nürnberg, Windsheim and Weissenburg, as well as Heilbronn, Wimpfen, Esslingen, Reutlingen and Weil der Stadt mostly stayed out of the league. The Bodensee towns as well as the three Frankish towns formed leagues of their own, whereas Heilbronn, Wimpfen, Esslingen, Reutlingen and Weil der Stadt concentrated on keeping good relations with their closest neighbours, the Palatinate and the County of Württemberg. Thus the number of members in the Swabian Town League usually stayed around ten, although at times of crisis it swelled to around 20, with a maximum of 31 (Fig. 2).³²

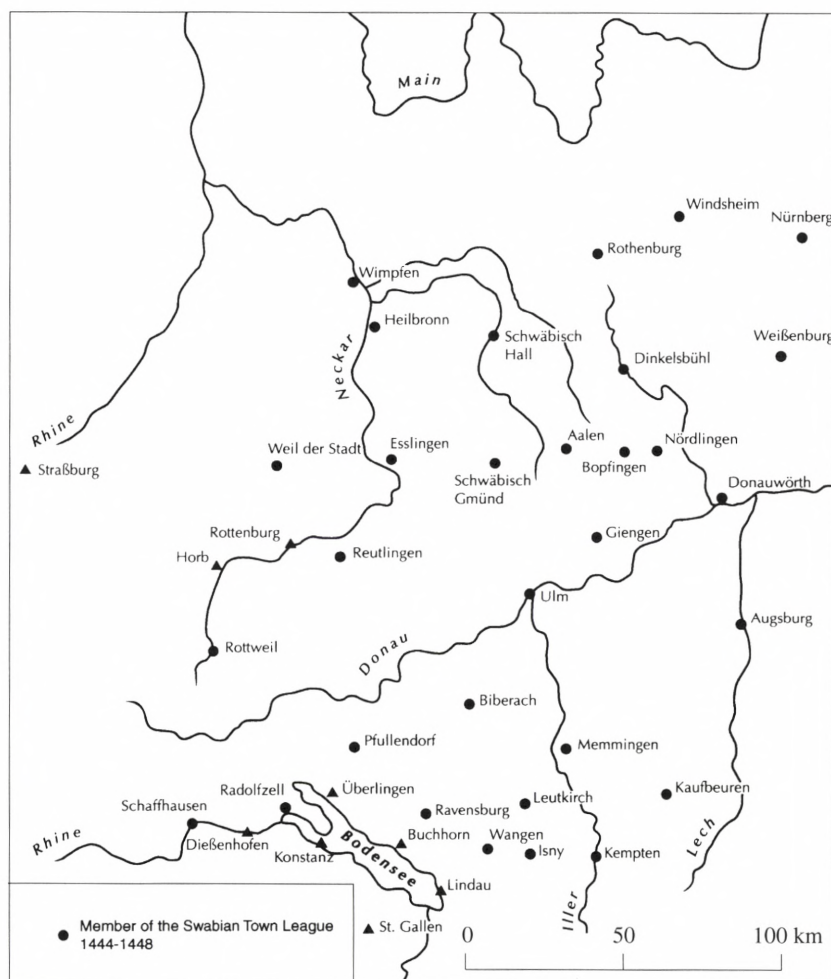
The beginning of the 15th century was in a way the heyday of the imperial cities in the south-western part of the Holy Roman Empire. Encouraged by King Sigismund's (1410-37) attempt to curtail the Habsburg influence their position grew stronger than ever before. In 1410 the Habsburgs were forced to mort-

gage the County of Herrenburg together with the towns Rottenburg am Neckar, Horb, Ehingen, Schöndorf and Binsdorf to the Swabian Town League (Blezinger [1954] 7-8). Five years later, at the Council of Konstanz, the Habsburgs were forced to cede Aargau and Baden to the Swiss Confederacy, and in addition to give imperial rights to the towns Freiburg im Breisgau, Breisach, Endingen, Kenzingen, Radolfzell and Schaffhausen.³³ Freiburg im Breisgau belonged to the handful of towns with a population between 6,000 and 10,000, whereas Rottenburg am Neckar and Breisach had a population between 3,000 and 6,000, which put them among the larger towns of the region. Still the imperial cities failed to capitalise on these gains.

At the Council of Konstanz in 1415 Sigismund suggested that the imperial cities form a large town league under his leadership against the princes. When this was not accepted by the imperial cities, in 1422 he encouraged them instead, also in vain, to collaborate with the knights, who had formed a Society of the Shield of St. George among themselves (see, e.g., Obenaus [1961]). The idea of a large town league encompassing all imperial cities in the south-western part of the Holy Roman Empire was at periods of crisis promoted especially by Ulm. Thus in 1437-38 Ulm invited a total of 46 towns, including Swiss and Alsatian ones, for consultations, and in 1445 when the Swabian Town League consisted of 31 imperial cities, it tried in vain to convince Konstanz, Lindau, Überlingen, Buchhorn, St. Gallen and Strassburg to become members as well.³⁴

The difficulties in forming a large league consisting of all imperial cities in the south-western part of the Holy Roman Empire inevitably led to the loss of the strong position the towns had gained in 1415. Thus already in 1427 Freiburg im Breisgau, Breisach, Endingen and Kenzingen were given back to the Habsburgs (Baum [1991] 103). Weinsberg was conquered by knights and lost its imperial rights in 1440,³⁵ and after the Second Cities' War in 1449/50 the great days of the Swabian Town League were over. Only a small core of towns continued to cooperate under the leadership of Ulm until the 1480s,³⁶ but they were too weak to protest when the County of Herrenburg together with the towns Rottenburg am Neckar, Horb, Ehingen, Schöndorf and Binsdorf had to be given back to the Habsburgs in 1454, or when Radolfzell lost its status as imperial city in 1455.³⁷ In the absence of a strong town league the imperial cities were forced to cooperate with the territorial princes (Angermeier [1966] 422-30), or to conclude treaties with the Swiss Confederation as St. Gallen and Schaffhausen did in

Fig. 2. The members of the Swabian Town League in 1444-48.



1454, Stein am Rhein in 1459, Rottweil in 1463 and Mülhausen in Alsace in 1466.³⁸

After the decline of the Swabian Town League, Emperor Frederick III tried to secure peace within Swabia by promulgating a *Landfrieden*, which was renewed several times and remained in force from 1467 until 1487. In the absence of an executive power Frederick III in 1487-88 forced 20 imperial cities and the knights of the Society of St. George's Shield to form a Swabian League under his leadership.³⁹ The Swabian League had both an assembly (*Bundesversammlung*) with two houses, one for the nobility and one for the towns, and a ruling council (*Bundesrat*). In 1500 a third house was formed in the assembly for the princes, thus to some extent circumscribing the influence of the towns (Brady [1985] 53). The aim of Frederick III was from the very beginning to enlarge the Swabian League. Already within a year after it was founded it had 26 imperial cities as members,⁴⁰ and negotiations were held with the Swiss and Alsatian towns. The Swiss, however, rejected the proposal of joining the

Swabian League,⁴¹ and the Alsatian imperial towns (still cooperating as a small town league of their own, the so-called Dekapolis) in 1493 decided together with local territorial lords to reorganise into a league of their own, the Lower Union (as opposed to the Upper Union, which referred to the Swiss Confederacy).⁴²

The failure to cooperate with the Swiss led finally in 1499 to a brutal war between the Swiss Confederacy and the Swabian League. As a result of the Swiss victory, Basel and Schaffhausen became full members (*Orte*) of the Swiss Confederacy in 1501, and Mülhausen and Rottweil associate members (*Zugewandte Orte*) in 1511 and 1519.⁴³ The forming of a third house for the princes in the Swabian League's assembly had to a certain degree curtailed the influence of the imperial towns, but on the other hand the position of the towns was strengthened considerably when Nürnberg, Strassburg and Weissenburg in Alsace joined the league in 1500.⁴⁴ The position of the princes was also severely curtailed when the Duke of Württemberg left the league in

1511. Thus in the war between the Swabian League and the Duchy of Württemberg, the winning Swabian forces consisted mainly of troops from the imperial cities and the Duchy of Bavaria. As Thomas Brady has shown, contemporary commentators saw the fall of Duke Ulrich of Württemberg (who was forced into exile) as the work of the imperial cities.⁴⁵

The Swabian League was dissolved in 1534 as a result of the Reformation, which split towns, principalities, etc. into new groups according to their religious faith. The south-west German imperial cities never again united into leagues. Although the Swabian League (1487-1534) was not a clear-cut town league, it still formed an organisation bringing together the imperial cities in line with the tradition set by the earlier Swabian Town League, which existed apart from short breaks between 1376 and the 1480s. As we have seen there were other town leagues in Alsace (the Dekapolis in fact continued to exist until 1648)⁴⁶ and around the Bodensee, and collaboration with the Swiss towns did occasionally take place. Thus, the south-west German imperial and free cities do, from the mid-14th until the mid-16th century, fulfil the criterion of a city-state culture, according to which its members need to interact politically in peacetime by having close diplomatic contacts, by concluding alliances, and by forming leagues or federations (Hansen [2000a] 17).

What was the role of the south-west German city-states in the constitutional structure and policy-making of the Empire?

One of the reasons why Peter Johanek cannot accept that the German imperial and free cities formed a city-state culture was that they were not a prominent element in the constitutional structure of the Holy Roman Empire and that they had no decisive influence on its policy-making. Although largely true, this is not an important reason for disregarding them as a city-state culture. Or to put it the other way: they would not fit Hansen's criteria for a city-state culture better even if they were an important element in the constitutional structure and had a strong influence on the Empire's policy-making. However, I still want to describe briefly the position of the imperial and free cities in the constitutional structure of the Empire, because it bears witness to a close cooperation between the south-west German city-states continuing for a long time after the fall of the Swabian League.

Around the turn of the 15th/16th century a new centralised institution, the *Reichstag* (Imperial Diet)

was created in the Holy Roman Empire. As Johanek correctly stresses, the Imperial Diet was largely dominated by the territorial princes, although the free and imperial cities were also summoned to it, where they formed a third house (*Kurie*) of their own but only had the right to a *votum consultativum* (Johanek [2000] 296). However, Johanek does not mention that at the same time as the *Reichstag* was established, there emerged an Urban Diet, which was an assembly of envoys from the free and imperial cities. The Urban Diet convened for the first time in 1471 in Frankfurt, after which it met at irregular intervals, usually with an interval of a couple of years, until 1671.⁴⁷ All imperial and free cities had the right to take part in the Urban Diets, although the smaller towns due to financial problems, usually allowed some of their larger neighbours to represent them. During the first half of the 16th century a total of 69 towns took part in at least one Urban Diet (Schmidt [1984] 36-65, Tabelle 1), but the number of imperial and free cities started to decrease after the mid-16th century.⁴⁸

Any of the free or imperial cities could request an Urban Diet to be summoned in order to discuss political or economic matters of mutual interest.⁴⁹ The Urban Diet sometimes met at the same time as a *Reichstag*, but was usually summoned in order to discuss questions of concern for the towns. Thus the Urban Diet constituted a forum where the imperial and free cities could discuss decisions by past and agendas of future Imperial Diets (e.g. how to be able to influence the decisions taken by the Imperial Diet, or how to respond to higher taxation demands), but also how to deal with threats against the privileges of one of its members.⁵⁰ Several attempts were made in connection with the meetings to form a more permanent town league, the last time on the suggestion of Strassburg in 1668, but they all failed.⁵¹

Although the Urban Diet encompassed all imperial and free cities it was still largely dominated by towns in our study-area. This was not only due to the fact that the majority of the imperial and free cities were located in this part of the Empire. Because of the long distance to the Urban Diets, which usually met either in Speyer or Esslingen, cities in northern Germany tended to abstain from coming to the Urban Diets as frequently. Thus, of the 27 cities, which during the first half of the 16th century took part in more than 40% of the Urban Diets, only five are located outside our study-area.⁵² And it should be noted that three of these five cities (Frankfurt, Schweinfurt and Regensburg) were located close to our study-area, and belonged to the cities which occasionally had been

Swabian bank		Rhenish bank
1. Regensburg	19. Schweinfurt	1. Köln
2. Augsburg	20. Kempten	2. Aachen
3. Nürnberg	21. Windsheim	3. Strassburg
4. Ulm	22. Kaufbeuren	4. Lübeck
5. Esslingen	23. Weil der Stadt	5. Worms
6. Reutlingen	24. Wangen	6. Speyer
7. Nördlingen	25. Isny	7. Frankfurt
8. Rothenburg o.d.T.	26. Pfullendorf	8. Dekapolis (represented by Kolmar and/or Hagenau)
9. Schwäbisch Hall	27. Offenburg	9. Besançon
10. Rottweil	28. Leutkirch	10. Goslar
11. Überlingen	29. Wimpfen	11. Dortmund
12. Heilbronn	30. Weissenburg/Nordgau	12. Bremen
13. Schwäbisch Gmünd	31. Giengen	13. Gelnhausen
14. Memmingen	32. Gengenbach	14. Mühlhausen
15. Lindau	33. Zell am Harmersbach	15. Nordhausen
16. Dinkelsbühl	34. Buchhorn	16. Herford
17. Biberach	35. Aalen	17. Friedberg
18. Ravensburg	36. Buchau	18. Wetzlar
	37. Bopfingen	

Table 3. The seating order in the Urban Diet's two banks in the 1640s. After Buchstab (1976) 219-220.

members of the town leagues of the late 14th and early 15th century. The parallels between the composition of the Urban Diet and the town leagues is even more obvious if one looks at the two banks into which the Urban Diet was divided (Table 3). The Swabian bank is nearly identical to the composition of the Swabian Town League during its heyday, whereas the Rhenish bank, in spite of the addition of several north German cities, still resembles the composition of the different Rhenish Town Leagues.

Thus, the Urban Diet could in principle be described as an informal successor to the town leagues. Although it did not have any formal power, it still constituted a forum for discussions between the imperial cities in our study-area. It is the best example of direct collaboration between the imperial cities, and clearly illustrates their political consciousness and how they continued to consider themselves as different from other towns or territorial states within the Holy Roman Empire.

Apart from the Urban Diet there was another Imperial institution in which the imperial and free cities participated and played an important role, and that was the Regional Diets. In 1512 the Empire was divided into ten regions, or "circles", of which one was Swabia.⁵³ Every region (*Kreis*) had its own Regional Diet (*Kreistag*) consisting of representatives

from all the estates. A total of 33 of the imperial cities of our study-area belonged to the Swabian region, thus excluding only Speyer, Worms and the Alsatian towns (the Upper Rhenish region) and Nürnberg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Windsheim and Weissenburg (the Franconian region). Although most of the duchies, counties, bishoprics, abbeys, cities, etc. of the Swabian area belonged to the Swabian region, there were exceptions – the most notable being the Habsburg dominions and the imperial knights.⁵⁴

The imperial cities of Swabia had quite an influential position in the Swabian Regional Diet and controlled 33 of the 101 votes. The meetings of the Regional Diet were always held in an imperial city, mostly in Ulm, where the financial office of the region was also located (Jäger [1975] 40-75). The most important task of the Swabian region was to maintain peace within its borders with their own military and police forces. As part of the peacekeeping obligation the region also defended the privileges and independence of its members against expanding landlords who were not part of the region, such as the Habsburgs. The Regional Diet controlled the local monetary system, economy, trade and traffic, and elected not only their own officials, but also their own representatives at the imperial courts. Finally, the Regional Diet prepared matters for the Imperial Diet and adapted

decisions made in the Imperial Diets to the local conditions.⁵⁵

The Swabian region of the Empire existed until the end of the Holy Roman Empire itself in the early 19th century, successfully preventing any larger political changes and thus also protecting the imperial cities, which did not lose their privileges until Napoleon arrived on the scene. In the same way as the Urban Diet can be described as an informal successor to the town leagues, the Swabian region can be regarded as a successor of the Swabian League, in the sense that the imperial cities here collaborated with the territorial landlords. But it should be remembered that whereas the Swabian League was a unique construction with certain rights of its own, the Swabian region was only a constitutional part of the Empire. It should also be pointed out that the imperial cities initially showed considerable interest in the decision-making of the region, but became much less active already in the 17th century.

To conclude, the imperial and free cities of our study-area continued after the fall of the Swabian League to cooperate closely with each other in the Urban Diet and the Swabian Regional Diet with the purpose of defending their autonomy and their privileges. Thus, they did not act as isolated city-states, but rather as members of a city-state culture, albeit one which since the mid-16th century became less and less active and started to stagnate.

How did the South-west German City-states Relate to the Swiss and Italian City-states?

The imperial cities of our study-area have much in common with both the Swiss and Italian city-states. They all developed within the Holy Roman Empire as a result of the central power crumbling and the growing importance of trade along the route from northern Italy via Switzerland and the Rhine to Flanders. Furthermore, they were all part of a feudal reality and had to exist alongside principalities, bishoprics, abbeys, etc. This applies to the Swiss Confederacy as well. Despite the traditional Swiss hatred for nobility, the Confederacy consisted not only of city-states but also of agrarian micro-states (*Länderorte*), bishoprics (Basel), abbeys (St. Gallen, Engelberg) and principalities (Neuchâtel). Still, the position of feudal lords was much weaker in the Swiss Confederacy and even in northern Italy than it was in our study-area. Therefore the Swiss and Italian city-states came close to achieving adjoining territories, which was not the case for the German imperial cities.

In *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures*, the Italian and Swiss city-states have been treated as two separate city-state cultures. In spite of the few similarities regarding the development of towns into city-states in these two separate regions, treating them as two separate city-state cultures is also clearly a correct interpretation. The people of the two regions speak different languages and do not share a common culture. Moreover, city-states developed much earlier in northern Italy (around 1100) than in Switzerland (mid or late 14th century). The question is, however, whether the imperial towns in what today is the French region of Alsace and south-western Germany should be considered as forming a city-state culture of its own, or rather as being part of one and the same city-state culture as the Swiss city-states.

Our study-area shares several features with the Swiss Confederacy. Both regions are mainly populated by the Alemannic tribe, and as the north-eastern part of Switzerland used to belong to the Duchy of Swabia, part of the Swiss were considered as Swabians until the 14th century (Maurer [1991] 193-94). German was not only the language of our study-area, but also the principal language of the Swiss Confederacy in the mediaeval period. The first French-speaking areas were not added to the Swiss Confederacy until in 1481, when Fribourg became a member. The primacy of the German language is, however, well characterised by the fact that at the same time Fribourg's official language was changed to German (Carl [1991] 241). Admittedly the Swiss slowly developed their own characteristic dialect, which during the war between the Swabian League and the Swiss Confederacy in 1499 was for the first time considered a feature distinguishing Swabians from the Swiss.⁵⁶

Alsace and the south-western parts of modern Germany had more in common with the Swiss than for instance with Bavaria or Austria, for which the highly developed independence or autonomy of towns was a foreign idea. The historical development of the Swiss and south-west German city-states followed very much the same path, at least until the mid-15th century. The social structure and constitution of the towns, developing towards oligarchy, were also similar (Carl [1991] 256). Although the Swiss city-states in general occupied larger territories than their south-west German counterparts, the difference was, with the exception of Bern, really not that great. Thus Zürich and Luzern had a territory that was only slightly larger than Nürnberg's, Solothurn had a territory similar to Ulm's, Basel had one similar to Rothenburg ob der Tauber's, and Schaffhausen, Zug and Rottweil

finally had territories similar to Strassburg's (cf. Scott [2001] 211-12, Table 9.1). It is true that several of the imperial cities in our study-area never acquired any hinterland at all, but there were also several with territories which were not much smaller than that of Schaffhausen, Zug and Rottweil. Moreover, one should not forget that there existed Swiss city-states with almost no territory at all (Geneva, St. Gallen and Mülhausen).⁵⁷

Most of the Swiss city-states had during the late mediaeval period the same status as imperial city in the Holy Roman Empire as the free towns to the north of the Bodensee. Thus, Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Solothurn and St. Gallen were all still represented at the Imperial Diet in Worms in 1495. However, as a result of the war between the Swiss Confederation and the Swabian League, in 1499 the Swiss towns stopped attending the Imperial Diets,⁵⁸ and thereby practically took the step towards full independence, which finally was accepted *de jure* at the peace conference in 1648. The only exception was Rottweil, which had the status of *Zugewandter Ort* (as also Geneva, St. Gallen and Mülhausen) in the Swiss Confederacy until 1632, and at the same time continued to take part in both the Imperial and Urban Diets, thus constituting a unique link between the Swiss and the Empire (Schmidt [1984] 56). In his book *Turning Swiss*, Thomas Brady has furthermore shown how tendencies to join the Swiss cause prevailed among the German population north of the Swiss Confederacy until well into the mid-16th century (Brady [1985]). I would therefore argue that although most of the cooperation, or attempts at cooperation e.g. in the form of alliances, between imperial and free cities in our study-area and the Swiss towns came to an end in 1499, that year should still not be considered as a clear-cut dividing line.

To conclude, I would interpret the data as indicating one large south-west German city-state culture during the late mediaeval period, to which the Swiss, Alsatian as well as the Swabian city-states belonged. I am somewhat more in doubt about how to interpret the situation after the late 15th to early 16th century, when a clear Swiss identity of its own developed. Contemporary commentators from this time onwards, such as Machiavelli, clearly distinguished between the Swiss and the Germans. Whether this is a sufficient argument for speaking about two different city-state cultures depend on how the concept of a city-state culture is defined,⁵⁹ and leaves open the possibility of several different interpretations. In spite of the characteristics which clearly distinguished the Swiss, I would myself

perhaps still prefer to see the Swiss city-states during the Early Modern period as a special case in a larger south-west German city-state culture.

Conclusion

The German free and imperial cities have generally been considered city-states by previous scholars. As we have seen, even Machiavelli considered them to be similar to the northern Italian city-states. Therefore I have in this chapter refrained from repeating the arguments already presented by e.g. Peter Johanek on the extent to which the characteristics of the single free and imperial cities correspond to the definition of a city-state. Instead I focus on the question whether the concentration of free and imperial cities in modern Alsace, Baden-Württemberg, the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken, and a small slice of south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz could be interpreted as a south-west German city-state culture. My conclusion is that there existed a south-west German city-state culture, comprising not only the free and imperial cities in our study-area, but also the Swiss city-states. This south-west German city-state culture developed during the second half of the 14th century and lasted until it was destroyed by Napoleon around 1800. However, beginning in the early 16th century part of the south-west German city-state culture, i.e. the Swiss city-states, developed in a different direction to the rest of its members, which stagnated and became dependent on local territorial states.

Notes

1. I owe thanks to Mogens Herman Hansen for inviting me to write this paper as well as to Christopher R. Friedrichs, Mogens Herman Hansen and Martina Stercken for comments and criticism.
2. The English term "city-state" was probably coined in 1885 as a translation of the Danish "bystat" and German "Stadtstaat", concepts introduced by the Danish scholar J.N. Madvig in 1840 and 1842 respectively. Cf. e.g. Hansen (1994) 19-22 and Hansen (1998) 15-16.
3. For the definition of "city-state cultures" and "isolated city-states", see Hansen (2000a) 16-20.
4. Stercken (2000) 321-42. Stercken actually only discusses the formation of the Swiss city-states, and does not comment upon when the city-state culture expired. The year 1848 is suggested as a date of expiration by Hansen (2000a) 20. Of the ten city-states mentioned, two (Geneva, St. Gallen) had only the status of *Zugewandte Orte* in the Swiss Confederacy. If they are still considered as Swiss city-states, I cannot see why one would not classify Mülhausen and Rottweil, also *Zugewandte Orte*, in the same way.
5. For perhaps the most comprehensive discussion of the concept

- “imperial city” and its change through time, as well as of the relationship between the imperial cities and the king and Empire, see Moraw (1979).
6. Friedrichs (1981) 110-13, who was the last person before Johanek to discuss at length whether the German towns should be regarded as city-states or not, is less critical than Johanek and does not find any problems in considering the imperial and free cities as city-states.
 7. Epstein (2000) 285. For examples of feudal power, see also Waley (1988) 159-64. Good examples from the mid-13th century are the Da Romano family, who in the mid-13th century controlled Verona, Vicenza and Padua; Pallavicini who controlled Cremona, Piacenza, Pavia and Vercelli; or the Marquis of Montferrat in Piedmont.
 8. For the gradual expansion of the territories of the city-states, see e.g. *Geschichte* (1983) 246-90, 321-22.
 9. For the size of the Bernese territory, see Stercken (2000) 326. Scott (2001) 212, Table 9.1 estimates the size of the Bernese territory after 1536 to be even larger, 9,000 km². According to the definition of Hansen (2000a) 17, the territory of a city-state should preferably not exceed 3,000 km².
 10. For the subjected towns in the hinterland of Bern, see Gmür (1984) 57. Bern had ca. 5,000 inhabitants during most of the 15th and 16th centuries, whereas Lausanne in 1416 had ca. 4,000-5,000 inhabitants (Mattmüller [1987] 199-200). For estimates of the population in several of the other smaller subjected towns between 1450 and 1550, see also *Geschichte* (1983) 218-19. According to Gmür (1984) 51, there were during the end of the 18th century ca. 400,000 inhabitants in the Bernese hinterland and only 12,000 in Bern itself.
 11. Apart from Alsace only the small part of south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz has thus not been included. Including these parts would on the other hand hardly have changed the general picture. Strassburg, an imperial city in Alsace, is the only city with a population similar to the one of Augsburg, Nürnberg and Ulm, and the free cities Worms and Speyer in south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz (cf. *Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.3), and possibly also Hagenau and Kolmar in Alsace are the only cities with a population between 6,000 and 12,000 (e.g. Sittler [1964] 59).
 12. On the other hand, the percentage of imperial cities of the total number of cities (12.7%) is nearly the same as the percentage of the towns within the Swiss Confederation that developed into city-states. Cf. Gmür (1984), according to whom there were 90 subject towns in the Swiss Confederation. If one counts ten Swiss city-states (as Hansen [2000a] 20 does), then 10% of the towns developed into city-states. If one also considers Mühlhausen and Rottweil as Swiss city-states then only 8.5% of the towns developed into city-states.
 13. If Alsace and the small part of south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz were also included, there would have been a total of ten towns in the second group, seven of which were imperial or free cities (i.e. 70%). Cf. note 11 above.
 14. There exists a vast literature concerning these leagues. For a short general survey, see e.g. Isenmann (1988) 121-27; more detailed references are given in the following notes. The documents and acts of the Mediaeval town leagues in southern Germany are collected by Konrad Ruser. So far all acts before 1380 have been published (Ruser [1979] and Ruser [1988]).
 15. See Ruser (1979) 192-97 and document nos. 207-73.
 16. For the mortgaging of towns in general, see Landwehr (1967), according to whom (pp. 92-96, 216), the following towns between the Palatinate and the Duchy of Württemberg lost their imperial privileges during the 14th and 15th centuries: Eberbach, Eppingen, Feuchtwangen, Heildelshheim, Markgröningen, Mosbach, Neckargemünd, Sinsheim, Waibstadt (fought in vain for its rights as late as the 18th century) and Weinsberg. In Breisgau he mentions during the same time: Breisach, Neuenburg am Rhein and Rheinfelden.
 17. The four cities were mortgaged as a result of the Hagenauer treaty of 8 August 1330. See e.g. Schuler (1978) 660, 673-74 and Landwehr (1967) 22, 232 and 437.
 18. Ruser (1979) nos. 492 and 494. See also Füchtner (1970) 42-66.
 19. Ruser (1979) nos. 547-53. The nine towns were: Esslingen, Reutlingen, Rottweil, Weil der Stadt, Weinsberg, Wimpfen, Heilbronn, Schwäbisch Hall and Schwäbisch Gmünd. See also Schuler (1978) 661-64.
 20. Ruser (1979) no. 452. The towns were: Oberehnheim, Schlettstadt, Kolmar, Kaisersberg, Münster, Türkheim and Mülhausen.
 21. Ruser (1979) no. 555. The towns belonging to the *Landfrieden* were: Augsburg, Ulm, Biberach, Memmingen, Kempten, Kaufbeuren, Ravensburg, Pfullendorf, Überlingen, Lindau, Konstanz, St. Gallen, Zürich, Reutlingen, Rottweil, Weil der Stadt, Heilbronn, Wimpfen, Weinsberg, Schwäbisch Hall, Esslingen and Schwäbisch Gmünd.
 22. Ruser (1979) no. 570. The original founding document includes, apart from the same 22 towns as in the *Landfrieden* of 1331, also the counts of Württemberg, Öttingen, Neufen, Wendenberg, Hohenberg, Herrenberg and Tübingen. Although Konstanz, Zürich and St. Gallen are mentioned, Füchtner (1970) 130 regards it as unlikely that they ever joined the *Landfrieden*. See also Schuler (1978) 671-73.
 23. Ruser (1979) no. 499. For the league between the three towns of 31 August 1340, see also Füchtner (1970) 130-41 and Schuler (1978) 673-74.
 24. Ruser (1988) no. 596. The 14 towns were: Ulm, Konstanz, Überlingen, Ravensburg, Lindau, St. Gallen, Wangen, Buchhorn, Reutlingen, Rottweil, Memmingen, Biberach, Isny and Leutkirch.
 25. Ruser (1988) no. 658. New members were: Esslingen, Weil der Stadt, Kempten, Kaufbeuren, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Schwäbisch Hall, Heilbronn, Nördlingen, Dinkelsbühl, Bopfingen, Wimpfen, Weinsberg and Aalen.
 26. New members were: Regensburg, Augsburg, Pfullendorf, Buchau, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Giengen and Wyl in Thurgau. For the admission of Pfullendorf, Buchau, Rothenburg ob der Tauber and Giengen (all in 1378), see Ruser (1988) nos. 707-8. For the admission of Regensburg, Augsburg and Wyl, see Vischer (1862) 137 and 141.
 27. New members were: Windsheim, Weissenburg, Basel, Nürnberg, Mühlhausen in Alsace and Schweinfurt (Vischer [1862] 146, 149 and 153-54).
 28. Vischer (1862) 37-39. The first seven towns were: Mainz, Worms, Speyer, Frankfurt, Strassburg, Hagenau and Weissenburg. Later Wetzlar, Friedberg, Gelnhausen, Pfeddersheim, Selz, Oberehnheim and Schlettstedt joined.
 29. Vischer (1862) 55-60; Schildhauer (1977) 193.
 30. Füchtner (1970) 331-35. The seven towns were: Konstanz, Überlingen, Ravensburg, Lindau, St. Gallen, Wangen and Buchhorn.
 31. The 12 founding members were: Nördlingen, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Dinkelsbühl, Giengen, Aalen, Bopfingen, Ulm, Biberach, Pfullendorf, Memmingen, Leutkirch and Isny (Blezinger [1954] 3).

32. For the best general treatment of the new Swabian league, see Blezinger (1954). Periods of crisis when a larger number of members joined the league were 1405-14, 1422-37 and 1444-50. In addition, the Swabian Town League collaborated with the towns around the Bodensee in 1404, 1420 and 1441-42. The 31 members in 1444-48 were: Augsburg, Nürnberg, Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Nördlingen, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Schwäbisch Hall, Schaffhausen, Memmingen, Rottweil, Ravensburg, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Heilbronn, Biberach, Dinkelsbühl, Donauwörth, Weil der Stadt, Pfullendorf, Wimpfen, Windsheim, Weissenburg, Kaufbeuren, Kempten, Wangen, Isny, Leutkirch, Giengen, Aalen, Bopfingen and Radolfzell.
33. Landwehr (1967) 118-19 and Baum (1991) 94. In *Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.2 Bräunlingen is also included among the Breisgau towns that enjoyed imperial rights in 1415-27. In addition, the Swiss towns Diessenhofen, Rapperswil and Winterthur were declared imperial towns in 1415, a position they lost in 1442 (Landwehr [1967] 118-19).
34. For the attempts made by Ulm in 1422/23, 1437/38, 1439, 1441-42, 1444 and 1445, see Blezinger (1954) 37-40, 53, 67-68, 73, 88-89, 118. Konstanz, Lindau, Überlingen and Buchhorn instead in 1445 chose to form a new Bodensee town league, which functioned until the 1450s (renewed in 1454 and still working during the so-called Plappartkrieg in 1458 – cf. Kramml [1991] 310 and Maurer [1991] 208).
35. Blezinger (1954) 63; Landwehr (1967) 93.
36. There is still no thorough study of the Swabian Town League after 1450. See e.g. Hesslinger (1970) 51-52 or Angermeier (1966) 421-22. The number of the members varied between five and ten, after 1484 there were only four left. Ulm, Memmingen and Leutkirch are always mentioned as members. Other towns that occur often, although not always, are: Kempten, Isny, Biberach, Aalen and Schwäbisch Gmünd. Augsburg, Nördlingen, Kaufbeuren, Giengen, Ravensburg and Wangen occur only occasionally.
37. For the County of Herrenburg, see Blezinger (1954) 8; for Radolfzell, see Landwehr (1967) 119.
38. *Geschichte* (1983) 282-82. The treaties of Schaffhausen, Stein am Rhein and Mülhausen were however only for 25 years, and the treaty with Rottweil only for 15 years.
39. Hesslinger (1970) 32-33 for the *Landfrieden*; 86-87 for the founding members, among which were the following towns: Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Überlingen, Lindau, Schwäbisch Hall, Nördlingen, Memmingen, Ravensburg, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Biberach, Dinkelsbühl, Pfullendorf, Kempten, Kaufbeuren, Isny, Leutkirch, Giengen, Wangen, Aalen. The Duke of Austria and the Count of Württemberg were also among the founders of the league, but they became attached to the league through special treaties.
40. The new six towns were: Weil der Stadt, Bopfingen, Heilbronn, Wimpfen, Augsburg and Donauwörth (Hesslinger [1970] 120 and 123).
41. The negotiations dragged on between 1487 and 1489 (Hesslinger [1970] 134-37, 148-49).
42. Brady (1985) 49-51. The Lower Union was reorganised along the lines of the league of the same name which existed between 1474 and 1484.
43. Cf. e.g. Brady (1985) 70 or *Geschichte* (1983) 321. Before 1519 Rottweil had renewed its 1463 treaty with the Swiss twice, in 1477 and 1490 (*Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.2). Rottweil kept its position as a *Zugewandter Ort* until 1632 and Mülhausen until 1798.
44. Brady (1985) 67, 69-70. Strassburg and Weissenburg, however, left the league again in 1512 (Brady [1985] 92-93). The importance of Nürnberg's admission to the league is clear from the fact that in 1512 it paid 23.3% of the contributions of the imperial cities in the Swabian League (Schmidt [1984] 421, Tabelle 19).
45. Brady (1985) 92-100. See for instance the contemporary local song, translated by Brady, 97-98: "O Württemberg, you poor land/Long and loudly I protest your fate/The bath attendant from Ulm is your lord/From Nördlingen the cloth-dryer/And from Weil der Stadt the tanner/The fancy baker from Nuremberg/And Augsburg's weaver lord is over you/And then the papermaker from Ravensburg/The patrician, too, from Schwäbisch Hall/The Kempten teamster, he's there too/And from Aalen the shepherd in the Hertfeld/From Wimpfen the fellow who cuts the hay/And from Isny the pastry gobblers/From Lindau, too, the shipbuilders/Along with Giengen's baker of crullers/There are others whom I won't name here/For the gang is big, and I weary of it/ /These and others I leave unnamed/They now rule over poor Württemberg". Another version of the same song, Seckendorff (1863) 81, includes the names of 25 towns.
46. For the small Alsatian town league (Dekapolis), to which Strassburg did not belong, see e.g. Sittler (1955) or Sittler (1964). The Dekapolis was since 1414 a league running for "ewige zite".
47. For the history of the Urban Diet until the mid-16th century, see Schmidt (1984). Brady (1985) 231-33 gives a list of all Urban Diets until 1585. For the later history of the Urban Diet, see e.g. Buchstab (1976).
48. Thus Konstanz lost its privileges in 1548, Metz, Toul and Verdun were taken by France in 1552 and all the Alsatian towns, except Strassburg, met the same fate in 1648. Besançon became Burgundian in 1651, and Herford finally lost its privileges in 1652.
49. Schmidt (1984) 17-29. There were, however, only four corresponding cities (*ausschreibende Städte*) that handled the communication: Frankfurt, Strassburg, Nürnberg and Ulm (in the beginning Augsburg for some time held the position of Ulm).
50. For a detailed discussion of the different issues discussed by the Urban Diet, see Schmidt (1984) 173-525. For a good short summary in English, see Brady (1985) 134-35. As an example of an occasion when the Urban Diet tried to help member cities whose privileges were threatened, one could mention, the conflict between the Duke of Württemberg and Esslingen in the 1540s. The Urban Diet tried to mediate between the two parties and appealed to the Emperor on behalf of Esslingen.
51. Schmidt (1984) 144-72 and Buchstab (1976) 47-48.
52. Schmidt (1984) 38-39, Tabelle 1. The 27 cities were (in descending order): Nürnberg, Ulm, Augsburg, Frankfurt, Strassburg, Hagenau, Speyer, Köln, Worms, Dinkelsbühl, Heilbronn, Nördlingen, Esslingen, Rothenburg o.d.T., Schwäbisch Hall, Regensburg, Memmingen, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Wimpfen, Schweinfurt, Reutlingen, Metz, Konstanz, Rottweil, Windsheim, Kolmar and Weil der Stadt.
53. For a good synopsis of the present standing of research concerning the regions of the Empire, see Dotzauer (1998).
54. For the members of the Swabian region, see Jäger (1975) 22-25 and Dotzauer (1998) 143-44. The 33 imperial cities were: Augsburg, Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Nördlingen, Schwäbisch Hall, Überlingen, Rottweil, Heilbronn, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Memmingen, Lindau, Dinkelsbühl, Biberach, Ravens-

- burg, Kempten, Weil der Stadt, Kaufbeuren, Wangen, Isny, Pfullendorf, Offenburg, Donauwörth, Leutkirch, Wimpfen, Giengen, Aalen, Gengenbach, Zell am Harmersbach, Buchhorn, Buchau, Bopfingen and Konstanz. Of these Konstanz lost its imperial rights in 1548. For the Franconian region (which, apart from the above mentioned imperial cities, also included Schweinefurt which, however, is located outside the borders of the study-area) and the Upper Rhenish region (also including Frankfurt, Friedberg and Wetzlar, likewise outside the borders of the study-area), see Dotzauer (1998) 82 and 207.
55. Laufs (1971) 210-12 and Jäger (1975) 30-31, 78-282.
56. Maurer (1983) 35, referring to how a woman from Konstanz visiting Überlingen was suspected of belonging to the enemy because she had "der Eidgenossen sprach gehebt".
57. In the absence of a thorough study regarding the size of the territory occupied by imperial cities, we still have to rely on general works such as Bader (1950) or Blickle (1974). According to Blickle (1974) 56, Memmingen, Pfullendorf, Überlingen, Ravensburg, Lindau, Wangen and Kaufbeuren all had a territory of roughly similar medium-large size (he never gives precise measurements). For St. Gallen, Mülhausen and Geneva, see Gmür (1984) 55-56. For a recent collection of papers on the special status of Mülhausen and Geneva within the Swiss Confederacy, cf. also Kaiser et al. (2001).
58. Schmidt (1984) 66. St. Gallen was still represented at the Diet in 1510 and 1529.
59. The Hellenic city-state culture, as described by Hansen, is also divided into different factions, which are far from identical to each other, and which have identities of their own. Thus, for instance, the Aitolian League and the Achaian League were during the Hellenistic period in nearly constant war with each other, and the Aitolians were despised by the Achaians and most of the other Greeks as plunderers. See e.g. Scholten (2000).
- ## Bibliography
- Angermeier, H. 1966. *Königtum und Landfriede im deutschen Spätmittelalter* (Munich).
- Bader, K.S. 1950. *Der deutsche Südwesten in seiner territorial-staatlichen Entwicklung* (Stuttgart).
- Baum, W. 1991. "Friedrich IV. von Österreich und die Schweizer Eidgenossen", in P. Rück (ed.), *Die Eidgenossen und ihre Nachbarn im Deutschen Reich des Mittelalters* (Marburg an der Lahn) 87-109.
- Bleizinger, H. 1954. *Der Schwäbische Städtebund in den Jahren 1438-1445. Mit einem Überblick über seine Entwicklung seit 1389* (Darstellungen aus der Württembergischen Geschichte 39) (Stuttgart).
- Blickle, P. 1974. "Zur Territorialpolitik der oberschwäbischen Reichsstädte", in E. Maschke and J. Sydow, *Stadt und Umland. Protokoll der X. Arbeitstagung der Arbeitskreises für südwestdeutsche Stadtgeschichtsforschung. Calw 12.-14. November 1971* (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg B.82) (Stuttgart) 54-71.
- Brady, T.A. Jr. 1985. *Turning Swiss. Cities and Empire, 1450-1550* (Cambridge).
- Buchstab, G. 1976. *Reichsstädte, Städtekurie und Westfälischer Friedenskongress. Zusammenhänge von Sozialstruktur, Reichsstädte und Wirtschaft* (Schriftenreihe der Vereinigung zur Erforschung der Neueren Geschichte e.V. 7) (Münster).
- Carl, H. 1991. "Eidgenossen und Schwäbischer Bund – feindliche Nachbarn?", in P. Rück (ed.), *Die Eidgenossen und ihre Nachbarn im Deutschen Reich des Mittelalters* (Marburg an der Lahn) 215-65.
- Dotzauer, W. 1998. *Die deutschen Reichskreise (1383-1806). Geschichte und Aktenedition* (Stuttgart).
- Epstein, S.R. 2000. "The Rise and Fall of Italian City-States", in M.H. Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre* (Copenhagen) 277-93.
- Friedrichs, C.R. 1981. "The Swiss and German City-states", in R. Griffith and C.G. Thomas, *The City-state in Five Cultures* (Santa Barbara, CA) 109-42.
- Füchtner, J. 1970. *Die Bündnisse der Bodenseestädte bis zum Jahr 1390. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Einigungswesens, der Landfriedenswahrung und der Rechtsstellung der Reichsstädte* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 8) (Göttingen).
- Geschichte 1983. *Geschichte der Schweiz – und der Schweizer I* (Basel and Frankfurt am Main).
- Gmür, R. 1984. "Die Städte in der schweizerischen Verfassungsgeschichte von 1798 bis 1848", in H. Naumin (ed.), *Städteforschungen des 19. Jahrhunderts. Beiträge zur Kommunalgeschichte Mittel- und Westeuropas* (Städteforschungen 19) (Köln) 44-102.
- Hansen, M.H. 1994. "Polis, Civitas, Stadtstaat and City-State", in D. Whitehead (ed.), *From Political Architecture to Stephanus Byzantius. Sources for the Ancient Greek Polis* (Historia Einzelschriften 87) (Stuttgart) 19-22.
- Hansen, M.H. 1998. *Polis and City-State. An Ancient Concept and Its Modern Equivalent* (Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre 5) (Copenhagen).
- Hansen, M.H. 2000a. "Introduction. The Concept of City-State and City-State Culture", in M.H. Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre* (Copenhagen) 11-34.
- Hansen, M.H. 2000b. "Conclusion. The Impact of City-State Cultures on World History", in M.H. Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre* (Copenhagen) 597-623.
- Hesslinger, H. 1970. *Die Anfänge des Schwäbischen Bundes. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Einigungswesens und der Reichsreform unter Kaiser Friedrich III* (Forschungen zur Geschichte der Stadt Ulm 9) (Ulm).
- Isenmann, E. 1988. *Die deutsche Stadt im Spätmittelalter 1250-1500. Stadtgestalt, Recht, Stadregiment, Kirche, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft* (Stuttgart).
- Jäger, H. 1975. *Reichsstadt und Schwäbischer Kreis. Korporative Städtepolitik im 16. Jahrhundert unter der Führung von Ulm und Augsburg* (Göppinger Akademische Beiträge 95) (Göppingen).
- Johaneck, P. 2000. "Imperial and Free Towns of the Holy Roman Empire – City-States in Pre-Modern Germany?", in M.H. Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre* (Copenhagen) 295-319.
- Kaiser, W., Sieber-Lehmann, C. and Windler, C. (eds.) 2001. *En marge de la Confédération: Mulhouse et Genève* (Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaften 172) (Basel).
- Kramll, P.F. 1991. "Die Reichsstadt Konstanz, der Bund der Bodenseestädte und die Eidgenossen", in P. Rück (ed.), *Die Eidgenossen und ihre Nachbarn im Deutschen Reich des Mittelalters* (Marburg an der Lahn) 295-328.

- Landwehr, G. 1967. *Die Verpfändungen der deutschen Reichsstädte im Mittelalter* (Forschungen zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte 5) (Köln).
- Laufs, A. 1971. *Der Schwäbische Kreis. Studien über Einigungswesen und Reichsverfassung im deutschen Südwesten zu Beginn der Neuzeit* (Untersuchungen zur deutschen Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte, Neue Serie 16) (Aalen).
- Machiavelli, N. 1899. *Il Principe. Testo critico con introduzione e note a cura di G. Lisisio* (Firenze).
- Mattmüller, M. 1987. *Bevölkerungsgeschichte der Schweiz 1-2* (Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft 154) (Basel and Frankfurt am Main).
- Maurer, H. 1983. *Schweizer oder Schwaben. Ihre Begegnung und ihr Auseinanderleben am Bodensee im Spätmittelalter* (Konstanzer Universitätsreden 136) (Konstanz).
- Maurer, H. 1991. "Formen der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Eidgenossen und Schwaben: Der »Plappartkrieg« von 1458", in P. Rück (ed.), *Die Eidgenossen und ihre Nachbarn im Deutschen Reich des Mittelalters* (Marburg an der Lahn) 193-214.
- Moraw, P. 1979. "Reichsstadt, Reich und Königtum im späten Mittelalter", *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 6: 385-424.
- Obenaus, H. 1961. *Recht und Verfassung der Gesellschaften mit St. Jörgenschild in Schwaben. Untersuchungen über Adel, Einung, Schiedsgerichte und Fehde im 15. Jahrhundert* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 7) (Göttingen).
- Ruser, K. 1979. *Die Urkunden und Akten der oberdeutschen Städtebünde vom 13. Jahrhundert bis 1549, I: Vom 13. Jahrhundert bis 1347* (Göttingen).
- Ruser, K. 1988. *Die Urkunden und Akten der oberdeutschen Städtebünde, II.1-2: Städtebünde und Landfriedensbündnisse von 1347 bis 1380* (Göttingen).
- Schildhauer, J. 1977. "Der schwäbische Städtebund – Ausdruck der Kraftentfaltung der deutschen Städtebürgertums in der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Feudalismus* 1: 187-210.
- Schmidt, G. 1984. *Der Städtetag in der Reichsverfassung. Eine Untersuchung zur korporativen Politik der Freien und Reichsstädte in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart).
- Scholten, J. 2000. *The Politics of Plunder. Aitolians and their Koinon in the Early Hellenistic Era, 279-217 B.C.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles).
- Schuler, P.-J. 1978. "Die Rolle der schwäbischen und elsässischen Städtebünde in den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Ludwig dem Bayern und Karl IV", in H. Patze (ed.), *Kaiser Karl IV. 1316-1378. Forschungen über Kaiser und Reich* (Neustadt am Aisch) 659-94.
- Scott, T. 2001. "Town and Country in Germany, 1350-1600", in S.R. Epstein, *Town and Country in Europe, 1300-1800* (Themes in International Urban History 5) (Cambridge) 202-28.
- Seckendorff, E. 1863. *Reimchronik über Herzog Ulrich von Württemberg und seine nächsten Nachfolger* (Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart 74) (Stuttgart).
- Sittler, L. 1955. *La Décapole alsacienne des origines à la fin du moyen âge* (Publications de l'Institut des Hautes Etudes Alsaciennes 12) (Strasbourg and Paris).
- Sittler, L. 1964. "Der Elsässische Zehnstädtebund. Seine Geschichtliche Eigenheit und seine Organisation", *Esslinger Studien* 10: 59-78.
- Stercken, M. 2000. "Reichsstadt, eidgenössischer Ort, städtische Territorialherrschaft. Zu den Anfängen der Stadtstaaten im Gebiet der heutigen Schweiz", in M.H. Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre* (Copenhagen) 321-42.
- Vischer, W. 1862. "Geschichte des Schwäbischen Städtebundes der Jahre 1376 bis 1389", *Forschungen zu deutschen Geschichte* 2: 1-201.
- Waley, D. 1988. *The Italian City-Republics* (3rd edn, London and New York).

