Kluge, Mathias Franc. *Die Macht des Gedächtnisses: Entstehung und Wandel kommunaler Schriftkultur im spätmittelalterlichen Augsburg*. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 181. Leiden: Brill, 2014. Pp. xiii, 428. €138.00/$179.00. ISBN: 978-900-4266-759.

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This volume is a lightly revised version of Kluge's 2012 dissertation at the University of Augsburg (under the direction of Prof. Dr. Martin Kaufhold) [1], in which he puts his codicological expertise [2] to good use in this cultural study of civic writing in late medieval Augsburg. The book's cover bears a fascinating image that captures well the rise of written culture: the 1368 handover of Augsburg's municipal government from the patriciate to the guilds is being accomplished through the mediation of the city scribe, whose written documents lying round about him on the central bench-table play a leading role. The city seal, the Red Book containing the city's statutes, and a key to the city archive also appear in the mix as well. In essence, the written word had come by this time to serve as the mode through which collective civic memory was archived, with the scribe a key player in this codification and transmission of the city's legal and political history.

Kluge's well-articulated thesis maintains that fourteenth-century urban dwellers (overwhelmingly men) in the German Empire north of the Alps were in the midst of a dynamic evolution in the use of written memory, which had begun in the thirteenth century and would culminate in a mature form that continued to shape civic life well into the modern era. The Swabian city of Augsburg therefore serves as the case study.

Of course the new trend in written culture was not new to Europe as a whole, since monastic culture had pulsed with written institutional memory for centuries. But the new aspect was the appearance and spread of the use of writing in the urban life of the laity, a space where written culture had not been a customary matter of daily life until the thirteenth century, according to Kluge. Burgher communities thus began to make use of written documents, first to memorialize their privileges in municipal administration and then to usurp that administration from their former aristocratic lords and craft their own political constitutions.

By the fourteenth century the volume of written documentation and legal precedents had reached a

size that manuscripts were supplanted by codices, which organized and specialized written memory according to administrative fields: *Stadtrechtsbücher* (from 1276 onward), *Bürgerbücher* (from 1288 to 1497), *Achtbücher* (from 1302 to 1528), *Zechpflegbücher* (from ca. 1320), *Steuerbücher* (from 1346), *Rechnungsbücher* (from 1320), *Kopialbücher* and *Briefausganregisterbücher* (from 1358), *Amtseidebücher* and *Ratsprotokollebücher* (from late 14th century), *Söldnerbücher* (from 1360), *Leibgedingbücher* and *Ratsdekretebücher* (from 1390) as veritable memorial inventories of communal charters and accountings of public administration.

Inspired by Pete Moraw's works on diplomatics and Michael Clanchy's *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066-1307* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1993), Kluge's work fuses the two approaches to explain how and why the communal practice of writing emerged and evolved during the later Middle Ages, as well as how the archive collection of written materials was used by contemporaries after their creation and preservation. He thereby moves away from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German historiography which subsumed written culture under a constitutional history defined by the modernist *Leitmotiv* of liberation through literacy. Following works like Henneg Steinfürhrer's "Stadtverwaltung und Schriftlichkeit. Zur Entwicklung des administrativen Schriftwesens sächsischer Städte im späten Mittelalter," he argues rather that the emerging literacy was socially located among a small elite group of merchants who made use of it as a means of gaining control over people and civic governance. [3]

These literate burghers therefore developed habits of thought about the use of writing in which a public instrument could be tied to an event or decision so as to sequester a memory of that event or decision for future reference. In essence, we observe here the cultural evolution from collective public memory to an archived cultural memory encased in written documents. Such a cultural memory enabled the governing community to overcome the inevitable dying out of living collective memory of each generation by the new memory device of written documents. Then in time these documents themselves took on a public authority of their own, which officials employed during municipal rituals legitimating legal and constitutional authority. Since cultural memory now appeared in a written form that continually grew in volume and scope, so too did its power evolve as a means of representation, symbol, and monument binding the municipal community together. Those talismen of city seals, charters of privileges, *Stadtbücher* containing the municipal legal code, and other administrative books produced by the chancery came to represent the community and its capacity to live beyond a generation's life and memory.

Kluge also wisely points out that such public authority imbued in the symbols of civic written culture

inevitably gave power to those who produced and preserved the written documents. A critical element in this process was the establishment of professional city scribes (*Stadtschreiber*), whose knowledge not only of writing but also of diplomata and letter protocols, legal precedents, and municipal archival collections made them the best paid administrators of Augsburg, complete with their own house and servants. They wielded power as participants in court sessions and city council meetings by selecting and reading aloud relevant legal and administrative precedents to the issue or case at hand (here we return to the image on the book cover). They also represented the city at the courts of high-ranking princes or at nearby towns and thus always had access to a horse for transport. Though originally recruited from the priestly scribes of royal and princely courts (with which they always maintained important contacts), by the fourteenth century Augsburg's chancery produced its own non-clerical scribes through an internal school. They too were in charge of preserving the municipal archive, complete with safe storage facilities in towers or vaults secured with multiple keys. Like the written objects he preserved, a civic scribe became a public authority in his own right.

Kluge organizes his book chronologically into three eras in the evolution of written memory. In the first phase (chapter two), the birth of a civic writing custom takes place during the period of separation by the burgher community from its former city lord, the bishop of Augsburg Hermann of Dillingen in the late thirteenth century, which was confirmed by a written document from the monarch confirming Augsburg's new status as an imperial free city. Threads of this newborn custom can be found as far back as the first third of the thirteenth century in the context of a declining Hohenstaufen empire and the spread across the Alps of Italian ideas of administrative organization, the latter of which in turn had their own origins in the twelfth-century expansion of legal studies in Italy--both Roman and canon law. Barbarossa's use of Roman law as a bulwark for his claims to imperial authority in Italy, and the codifying function of the Fourth Lateran Council each proved an impetus to the spread of new legal concepts in the German kingdom. The growth in charter production in Augsburg alone from the mid-eleventh to the mid-thirteenth century saw a remarkable increase from a handful to an archive of around 11,000 documents (40). This reflects as well the growing complexity of economic life in Augsburg; in particular, the civic function of market regulation evolved rapidly in this regard.

The second phase (chapter three) in the historical evolution of a culture of written memory in Augsburg took place during the first half of the fourteenth century. It was marked most especially by a transition from lists and individual charters to books, as communal writing needs intensified along with the public business of courts, markets, and city council deliberations. The diversified codices

already mentioned thus came into fashion, as both storable and portable memory-books that outlived the human generation that produced them. The emergence of the city scribe and his chancery and archive provided the creative impetus behind this expansion of written documentation, along with establishing the customs of seals and other documentary protocols.

The final era of late medieval Augsburg's evolution (chapter four) spanned the second half of the fourteenth century. Here the gradual adoption of paper and the overhauling of the archive led to the full maturation of the culture of written civic memory. Paper arrived first from Italy in the first third of the fourteenth century, but it was not extensively used until the 1370s, primarily because it was considered useful only for short-term documentation needs while parchment was still the preferred medium for permanent, archival-quality record-keeping. But once the cost of paper milling was lowered enough by the last third of the century paper was adopted for long-term written documents as well as for the mundane stuff of daily life like personal receipts and locally employed notes and messages. The chancery load had grown such that the staff of scribes had doubled in size from its thirteenth-century number. Production of administrative letters and of records of the city council's business had reached such a capacity that reforms were in order. Therefore a codex (*Briefbuch*) of formulas for titles, greetings, and so forth was drawn up to standardize governmental letters, which extended city life far beyond its own boundaries. Furthermore, the Council's business forms were also standardized (*Ratsprotokollbücher*). And finally, the city archive itself was reorganized during the second half of the fourteenth century to make its contents accessible for daily reference--here we see what one may have thought were modern archival practices of ordering documents by category and then numbering them with signatures (using a combination of numbers and signs). The archive was thus transformed from a storage facility to a reference library that could share the increasingly vast collective memories it housed. Sheer volume and not merely professionalization of the administrators had led to standardization and specialization.

Kluge does an admirable job himself of organizing the disparate elements of this complex cultural history of civic writing in Augsburg. Not only the forms of writing but their cultural functions are clearly elucidated and fascinating in their implications. This book should not only find a home in all major research libraries, but no doubt will be regularly requested as well by scholars studying the collective memory of Augsburg's civic history. We should all consider the methodological implications for how we as historians make use of archives, being the products of selective preservation and organization themselves.

There are only two reservations about the scholarship embodied in this codex, and both are

historiographical in nature. Kluge asserts that the communal use of writing in medieval Germany is *insgesamt noch wenig erforscht*, and that its birth was in the early thirteenth century. However, wider comparative research in other medieval German cities would easily reveal that Cologne's burghers had developed a culture of written memory in the 1120s, a century before Augsburg. Kluge relies too much on Ernst Pitze's pioneering but long outdated book, *Schrift- und Aktenwesen der städtischen Verwaltung im Spätmittelalter. Köln-Nürnberg-Lübeck: Beitrag zur vergleichenden Städteforschung und zur spätmittelalterlichen Aktenkunde* [Mitteilungen aus dem Stadtarchiv von Köln, 45] (Cologne: Paul Neubner Verlag, 1959). The subject was indeed little researched until Pitze in 1959, but since then the work of Manfred Groten has transformed our knowledge of the rise of burgher literacy and civic writing in medieval Germany. [4] Though Kluge acknowledges the existence of the *Schreinskarten* and *Schreinsbücher* in Cologne in a footnote on page 186, he does not seem to realize their implications for his assertions about civic writing in medieval Germany.

Secondly, in a monograph analyzing the cultural history of German civic writing in the later Middle Ages there should be at least be some consideration of the emergence of Augsburg's urban historiography, as well as of its context in the larger trends of such civic histories so typical of German cities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Again, though he does mention on page 28 the obvious connection between the production of *Ratsprotokollen* and civic letters with that of learned texts, chronicles, and urban history writing, he does not engage historiographical production as a key cultural component of late medieval German civic writing. [5] No less than seven civic chronicles were produced in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Augsburg, with Hector Mülich's chronicle an essential part of the city's literary and written cultural production. [6]

These are suggested additions and should not be read as any detractions whatsoever. Kluge has produced an engaging and stimulating cultural history of civic writing in Augsburg. We may look forward to other thoughtful contributions from him in the years to come.

Notes:

1. The dissertation received the Universitätspreis des Bezirks Schwaben (2013).

2. Mathias Franc Kluge, ed., *Handschriften des Mittelalters: Grundwissen Kodikologie und Paläographie* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke Verlag, 2014).

3. Steinführer's article is in Jörg Oberste, ed., *Kommunikation im mittelalterlichen Städten* [Forum Mittelalter, Studien, 3] (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner Verlag, 2007), 11-20.

4. Key works are Manfred Groten, "Die Anfänge des Kölner Schreinswesens," *Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins* 56 (1985), 1-21; "Civic Record Keeping in Cologne 1250-1330," in Richard Britnell, ed., *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200-1330* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 81-88; "Entstehung und Frühgeschichte der Kölner Sondergemeinden," in Peter Johanek, ed., *Sondergemeinden und Sonderbezirke in der Stadt der Vormoderne* [Städteforschung A 59] (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2004) 53-77; "Das Schriftwesen der Stadt Köln im 14. Jahrhundert," in Kurt Gärtner, Günter Holtus, Andreas Rapp, and Harald Völker, eds., *Skripta, Schreiblandschaften und Standardisierungstendenzen. Urkundensprachen im Grenzbereich von Germania und Romania im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zum Kolloquium vom 16. bis 18. September 1998 in Trier* [Trierer Historische Forschungen, 47] (Trier: Kliomedia, 2001), 549-62; "Das Weiße Buch von 1326: Das älteste Urkundenkopiar des Kölner Rates," in Kurt Gärtner and Günter Holtus, eds., *Überlieferungs und Aneignungsprozesse im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert auf dem Gebiet der westmitteldeutschen und ostfränkischen Urkunden- und Literatursprachen. Beiträge zum Kolloquium vom 20.-22. Juni 2001 in Trier* [Trierer Historische Forschungen, 59] (Trier: Kliomedia, 2005), 75-88; "Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Rheinland im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit," in Andreas Rutz, ed., *Das Rheinland als Schul- und Bildungslandschaft (1250-1750)* [Beiträge zur Historischen Bildungsforschung, 39] (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 211-31.

5. Peter Johanek, "Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsüberlieferung in Augsburg am Ausgang des 15. Jahrhunderts," in Johannes Janota and Werner Williams-Knapp, eds., *Literarisches Leben in Augsburg während des 15. Jahrhunderts* [Studia Augustana, 7] (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), 160-82, appears in Kluge's bibliography but has no bearing on the book itself. Dieter Weber, *Geschichtsschreibung in Augsburg. Hektor Mülich und die reichstädtische Chronistik des Spätmittelalters* [Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg, 20] (Augsburg: Mülberger Verlag, 1984), should also be considered.

6. *Die Chroniken der schwäbischen Städte: Augsburg*, 3 vols. [Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert 4-5, 22] (Leipzig: Hirzel Verlag, 1866-92), contain the following Augsburg chronicles: an anonymous chronicle 1368-1406 with continuation to 1447; the Chronicle of Erhard Wahrhaus 1126-1462; another anonymous chronicle from the founding of the city to 1469; the Rhyme Chronicle of the priest Küchlin (396 lines composed 1437-42 on the city's founding); the Chronicle of Burkhard Zink 1368-1468; the Chroncle of Hector Mülich 1348-1487 (continued to 1512

by Georg Diemer); and the third anonymous chronicle 991-1483. The Chronicle of Hector Mülich (d. 1489/90), Ratsherr, son of an Augsburg merchant family, and through his second wife related to the Fugger family, is the most interesting of these literary works.