

Abstract: The beginning formation of territories as polities within the Empire north of the Alps: the margraviates Styria, Austria and Meißen

The formation of princely territories as polities within the Empire (*Land*) is a much discussed issue in German constitutional history. In order to define the beginnings of this development in the marches of Styria, Austria and Meißen, this paper collects evidence from written sources for a shared sense of identity, common political interests and the scope of decision making of the region's nobility. In the case of Styria, the process seems to have started around 1100 and reached its decisive stage in the second quarter of the 12th century. In Austria an interest group among the nobles formed in the mid-11th century, and an exclusive sense of identity is discernible from c. 1100 onwards. The emergence of Meißen as a *Land* began tentatively about 1125 and took clearer shape only towards the end of the century. While the Investiture Contest triggered the development in none of these cases, it made some impact. More important, however, were local circumstances and the extent of shared interests among the margraves and the other nobility.

Keywords: Holy Roman Empire, marches; Styria; Austria; Meißen; formation of territories; sense of identity

Schlagworte: Hl. Römisches Reich, Marken; Steier; Österreich; Meißen; Landeswerdung; Landesbewusstsein