

dagegen durch eine geschickte frühneuhochdeutsche Übersetzung der lateinischen Verse eine pro-rupertinische Parteinahme.

For both medievalists and early modern historians, the Golden Bull of Charles IV constitutes a legal document of central importance. In striking contrast to the ample research on its provisions, however, the poem that introduces the Bull, a hexameter panegyric to Charles IV, has attracted little attention. The present article disputes current interpretations of the poem based purely on its content, and seeks to widen the perspective by examining the manuscript tradition. First, as to the text itself, it shows that those lines of the poem extolling Charles do not address power relations between pope and emperor. Second, it analyses the mise-en-page of the poem in exemplars produced for the prince electors. The remarkably understated arrangement of the poem in those manuscripts shows that its principal message aligns with the broader character of the Golden Bull as a document of consensual rule. Verbally, the hexameters emphasize the emperor's pre-eminence – visually, however, they seek accommodation between the monarch and his electors. Furthermore, this paper argues that the poem was first added to the Bohemian copy of the Golden Bull, and that it was not yet present in its exemplar. Finally, the analysis of two further manuscript copies of the poem demonstrates how its propagandistic potential favouring the monarch could be put to use: The Wenceslaus codex of the Golden Bull highlights, in its presentation of the poem, the claims to power raised by the dethroned king. In contrast, a Wolfenbüttel manuscript reveals a pro-Rupertian stance by cleverly translating the Latin verses into Early New High German.