

**An Extended Translation of the Travel Diary of Niclas von Popplau:
March 1484 to April 1485, on Behalf of The Missing Princes Project**

By

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REISEBESCHREIBUNG NICLAS VON POPPLAU, RITTER, BÜRTIG VON BRESLAU.
Edited by Piotr Radzikowski. 1998. Trans-Krak s.c., ul. Krolewska 57, 30-081 Krakow,
Poland. ISBN 83-910076-1-8

The Netherlands (Flanders, Burgundy, Belgium):

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He¹ invited me to his table, after which I blessed him, and then he gave me, just like the Bishop of Cologne had done, letters of safe conduct in order to travel safely and freely in their territories, on water and land.

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Finally he² had a herald accompany me to Maastricht, and in all towns between Cologne and Maastricht paid for me at the inns. The towns of Cologne and Aachen presented me some good wine. Said Prince of Berg produced a paper which was sent by courier to the Bishop of Liege, who stayed in Maastricht at that time. He then allowed me an escort of ten horses for my safe travels to Saint Truiden. They refused to take any form of reverence³ from me. He (the bishop)⁴ also paid for my accommodation at Maastricht and Saint Truiden. Some said to me in Cologne that the whole nobility should be ashamed because no one in

¹ William IV, Duke of Jülich-Berg (1455-1511).

² William IV, Duke of Jülich-Berg (1455-1511).

³ Payment.

⁴ Might also mean the escort.

the country would be able to stand a turn with the long spear⁵ against me. A few noblemen became quite outraged because of this speaking and they sent to me a high-born man called Arnoldt of Willingen, who was a drunkard, as well as two other drunkards with him, and they asked me to do a turn against them with the lance, and a necklace would be the reward. They offered me a saddle and some other paraphernalia, too, and wanted me to accept it. I took from their way of speaking that they surely didn't know what they really were talking about, what knightly games truly meant, so I answered that jousting wasn't the business I was after at the moment, but if he so much liked to give it a go, and something precious was the prize, I would be willing and sent him my agreement. I did not come to him for such games, nor for necklaces or other reasons, but if he truly challenged me and had a piece of gem staked, just like I would have (because this was the custom in knightly games) he shall find what he was looking for. The next day I was left at peace, so no more thoughts were spent on it, and I travelled on four days later.

When I came to Brussels, the prince⁶ was staying at the imperial palace in Hainaut. So, I sent a letter to his princely grace to greet him, and was told to get myself to Valenciennes first, which I did. There, the prince received me very politely. He asked me through the assembled knights to talk to him in the Latin language, because of the French men, and this I did. Thereupon, a doctor, one of the prince's counsellors, approached me, he was French by birth, his name was Rochefort,⁷ plus some other ..

⁵ Popplau talks about a lance, so have named it 'lance' henceforth.

⁶ Duke Regent Maximilian (1459-1519).

⁷ Lawyer Gui de Rochefort (1447-1507), younger brother of Guillaume de Rochefort (c.1433/9-1492), Chancellor of France. See also fn.54 below.

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French men, which all treated me good in many friendly ways. The doctor then told me that he thought a strong knight and lord had come to their court. But he concluded from my way of speaking that I was more like a doctor or scholar than a knight (of what he had no doubt). Hereafter, the prince moved on to Bruges, who'd agreed to let him in, but they did not keep their word.⁸ Therefore, his princely grace asked me to stay in Valenciennes, and prepare myself with the lance, as he would love to see me with it at Shrovetide for some enjoyment. This was what I did, but the prince didn't come. I stayed there for about two weeks in much misery because I could not speak their language and had no acquaintance with me. With Lent, the prince sent a messenger to me and asked me to come to Mechlin, which I did together with the messenger and at great expense for the both of us (which I acquit). When I arrived, the prince was welcoming towards me, and he wanted to get me down with the lance, which then happened in front of many people, noble and common alike. Just to please the prince I did something I never had done before, I took the long spear equipped with an iron basket and threw it in a way that the tip of it stood firmly at the hind-heel,⁹ so that everybody was left in astonishment. After that, the prince wanted to joust as well, a thing he never really loved to do, but he was talked out of it. Because no one wanted to team up with him in the competition (but he then liked to spear) and do it cautiously, he was advised to run against me, as I was considered to be of no danger to

⁸ Maximilian was not on good terms with some towns in Flanders because they refused to accept him as regent for his young son Philip the Handsome (1478-1506).

⁹ Popplau seems to refer to throwing a lance in the air, the basket likely being what we now call a vam plate; a conical defence. He says he threw it in the air and it landed tip down in the ground by the horse's back foot. With thanks to jousting and equitation specialist, Dominic Sewell, 15 April 2020.

him. This I did with much prudence, letting him pass my rondache,¹⁰ which I gave to him later as a gift, so that he was able to joust without any danger. I also jousted against Wolff of Polheim. They both fell, the prince the last. He so much wanted to run against me. But when they all saw how I used the lance, they kept quiet and just watched.

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At this occasion, the aforementioned doctor (Rochefort) approached me again, together with some other men, lauding me very much, now that he knew me as a scholar as well as a skilled knight in tournament, in which I showed much chivalry, and that he never would have thought that of me. I answered him that none of it was a peculiarity that one had not heard or seen before, resulting from me being a High-German. Would I be a Frenchman, then he would have been right in saying that he saw something special. The prince did send me wine every day, as much as I was able to drink together with my servants. I also received invitations from the prince's chamberlain¹¹ and from the Earl of Nassau. I always dressed properly and honoured the prince by wearing exquisite garments. When the French saw this, they thought me a good man and treated me with much more honour than before.

Mid-Lent I bade farewell to the prince, who gave to me a golden collar, twelve cubits of black velvet, and three cubits of satin, all with the request to hold it in high esteem as a gift. And I should not forget to

¹⁰ A shield.

¹¹ 'Cämmerer' is used here in plural (because the verb 'luden' is also in plural), so this may be referring to several people that were holding the position of chamberlain. Von Polheim was probably one of them. With thanks to Albert Jan de Rooij, 19 June 2020. This would be Wolfgang von Polheim (1458-1512).

come and visit again, after my travels through France, on my return journey, which I agreed to. His princely grace showed every possible honour and graciousness towards me, and he gave to me letters of pass and recommendation to the Kings of England, Portugal, Hispania, France, and also to the Duke of Brittany. All my belongings I had were then sent forth from Mechlin, also the weapons I carried, three horses, and some servants, to Brussels. I came to Antwerp on the eve of Annuntiationis, or Annunciation to Mary, where I stayed for eight days. On the eve of Palmarum I travelled on by water to Middelburg in Zeeland.

England:

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On Monday after Palmarum¹² I entered a ship with mariners as company and we went fifty English miles by sea, two of them making one mile in our terms. As we came to England I stepped off the ship and went ten miles on foot to Canterbury. There I saw the grave of holy Saint Thomas; I never saw anything of equal beauty before, being adorned immeasurably with gemstones. There I also saw a (red) stone¹³, as big as a walnut, hanging. After that I separated from my company and rode on forty miles, until I came on Good Friday to London. There my manservant, the disloyal Königsteiner parted from me with some other company, though he had been of noble birth. He acted against all honour to leave me all by myself without any cause in misery in a foreign country. In London in the house of merchants I found a nobleman

¹² 12 April 1484.

¹³ This might refer to the Black Prince's Ruby. Although the word 'red' is not in the text the word used is: 'Karbunckel-Stein' which probably refers to a carbuncle, meaning any red gemstone, and usually a red garnet.

named Schenck who was a doctor of law, or a licentiatuſ, a Silesian. He did me a lot of good, ſummoned a new manservant for me, guided me along the whole town, ſhewed me the water jugs from Cana in Galilee, and a very long and big church. Invited me to a mercantile houſe, which was called “Mannſchafft” (merchants?¹⁴). So the merchants invited me as well and kept good company with me. As I then wanted...

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... to travel from London on to the king of England, eight days after Easter, aforementioned Schenck gave a ſilver ring to me as a gift. As on the evening before in the “Mannſchafft” there was a merchant from Gdanſk of the name Peter Eckſtedt paſſing on to me a golden ring, poſſeſſing the power and virtue for the perſon wearing it on the right or left hand that no ſickneſs will be forced upon him, as per the hiſtory of Saint Edward who is lying in a golden grave in London which I have ſeen. There I alſo ſaw many other king’s and queen’s graves, ſome of which have been Bohemians,¹⁵ and have been married to the kings of England. The holy Saint Edward was a born King of England, according to hiſ hiſtory of which I was told by credible and noble people in this country. He worſhipped with peculiar and great devotion the holy Saint John the Baptist. So that he never denied anything to a beggar to the credits of holy John. There once was a time when a beggar begged him for alms. But the king did not have any money with him, ſo he ſtripped off a ring from hiſ finger and gave it to him. After that ſuddenly ſome

¹⁴ Radzikowski’s fn.113 ſtates that it is probably ſhort for ‘Kaufmannſchaft’, which would refer to a group of people with the ſame kind of profeſſion, in this caſe merchants. Radzokowski alſo ſuggeſts it may refer to the London office of the Hanſeatic League. Thanks to project member, Albert Jan de Rooij, 29 January 2020.

¹⁵ Anne of Bohemia was married to Richard II and is buried in Weſtmiſter Abbey.

pilgrims from England went on a journey to the Holy Grave, and to them the holy John appeared as a human being while on sea and asked them who they were. They answered him that they were subjects to the king of England, so he replied to them: Then take back this ring, which your King Edward once gave to a poor in my honour. Giving it over and giving notice that those wearing the ring will not be done any harm from the falling sickness. Whoever will touch the ring with one finger will be released and freed from it. Therefore, all Kings of England to come after him if burdened with this plague will be helped by the ring currently under consideration. So I was told that...

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... all Kings of England keep to the custom of giving offerings of rings¹⁶ kept in huge bowls at mass on Good Friday every year so that the poor can be healed from sicknesses. Then the king himself said to me that this was done on Easter Day. Leaving London I travelled a road with one village following the next, and distant from each other by not yet three Gewende¹⁷ until I came to Ware at twenty English miles from London, because said English miles make three times two for one German mile.¹⁸ From Ware I came to a town called Cambridge, four-and-twenty miles away. There is a university, and another university is fifty miles away, which is called Oxford. That makes two universities of all England and no more. Wycliffe, a born Englishman, had initially, after he was banished from England and his books were burned, brought heresy to Bohemia. After he exploited Oxford by his subtle mind, for ambition and his own benefit, he strayed from the right path to the evil. His error and

¹⁶ Cramp-rings. See Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'He hardly touched his food, but talked with me all the time:' What Niclas von Popplau really wrote about Richard III', *The Ricardian*, June 1999, Vol. XI, No.145, p.527.

¹⁷ Gewende was a Pomeranian unit of area. It is not clear why Popplau used this and not a unit of length.

¹⁸ This calculation and meaning is also difficult to understand.

his mind still smoulder and smoke throughout Bohemia and Moravia, and how I see it; it will not be extinguished soon and forever because they believe him being a God in these places. From London to Cambridge the villages are closer to each other than elsewhere in England. The same area also is more than in other places full of beautiful dames, like I never saw any of equal beauty in the world. They almost love the Germans, they like to friendly jest, dish out mush¹⁹ so kindly. They have nice, pretty, homely bosoms; they have from head to toe genuinely stockier and bigger limbs than the German dames. They have the custom all over the land as when a man comes from another country, or also from England, to an honourable woman's house, they give him a kiss when he enters, and also when he leaves, when he walks from town to town in this land, or when he goes on a journey elsewhere, as soon as he is coming back, and the dames known to him see him, at church, on the road, anywhere, they come to him and kiss him in a friendly way before all people – publicly. They are much more faithful than the...

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... men, who are more of the quick-tempered choleric type, and when their wrath has warmed, they never show mercy on anyone.

England is a quite fertile land, there are sheep and all corn a plenty. It can be compared in cultivating all the fruit to the country Moravia, except the buildings. And there is also a plenty of cattle in it, but what you can

¹⁹ Original word in the text is 'Müßlein'. The exact text: '...geben freundliche Müßlein aus'. 'Freundliche' means 'friendly'. So they treat them in a friendly manner with something to eat. That 'something' would be mush, porridge, or something like that. Thanks to Albert Jan de Rooij. Philippa Langley note: this may also mean pottage, a common soup-like meal of the period mainly made with vegetables.

buy is falling prey to dearth because of the parsimony of the inhabitants. In some parts the land has mountain areas, but not very high. More often you see plains. They dig for lead and tin, then melt it to find silver in the lead. As for their customs, the English do have three ways and differences to be partly compared to other folk and nations, such as splendour and thieveries to Poland, or rudeness and some other things like it, also angry cruelty to Hungary, like ploy and parsimony to Lombardy. They surpass the Polish in waggishness,²⁰ thus the Polish more love honour and honesty than the English do. Also England has only few towns surrounded by walls and locked gates. Therefore, they don't have parapets, bastions, or fortresses. Yes, in Poland the houses are much stronger build than in England. Then you can compare England to Poland that if an enemy invades the country the king moves towards him with his army. Who wins a battle over the king will own all of the country; this is also a custom in Poland. They also wage in much...

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... expenses when it comes to feasting and good living, but not as splendid as the Polish. They also do not know much about preparing the food, but are easily content with simple dishes not costing much, so that their income, money and goods are not derogated.²¹ For all the virtues they can take credit for, the most grand is that they do yield goods and gold without remorse.

From Cambridge I came to Stamford, a town away six-and-thirty English miles from it. From Stamford I came to Newark, a village away six-and-twenty English miles from it. In all towns and lodgings I found beautiful

²⁰ The German word here is 'Schalckheit'. This could mean 'malicious', 'ill-disposed', 'not to be trusted'. Thanks to Albert Jan de Rooij.

²¹ Diminished.

dames, who soon followed me and offered to me verbally: Dearest master, (this is almost meant sincerely and honestly), whatever you ask for we will do gladly. So I offered them in honour my hand, but soon enough they offered me their mouthies and tilted necks, knees bended, for kissing. Denied I a kiss to one, she went away in shame, just to return half an hour later, and humbly offered me food and drink. They just did so to take my virginity from me, and that I not went away from them with still my pockets full. Some may speak the truth of the Venus Mountain, but as I have been near and far, have seen and heard much of foreign people that walked many lengths from the Venus Mountain, there might not be any other country than England that can be compared to it.²²

From Newark I then came to Doncaster, eight-and-twenty miles away from it.

The day following I travelled on to York,²³ eight-and-twenty miles away from Doncaster. It is a big town, and it be the King of England's, living at that very time, just before he was elected or had become king by his own power, it was his from his father's side²⁴ and access. It lays (like we say in German) up north.

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In this town I saw a church, more magnificent than in London, more ostensive, all buildings bossed and ornamented richly, but a little shorter than the church in London. And it had underneath another church, build

²² Popplau is very cryptic in this description.

²³ Popplau did not stay in Pontefract. However, it is unclear if he may have made a detour to see the castle or was merely told about it on his way to York.

²⁴ Hereditary. King Richard's father was Richard, Duke of York (1411-1460). Popplau interprets the title, incorrectly, as being an inheritance of the city.

down in the earth, as big as the one above, as well as Saint Paul's Church in London, named in German "Gruff" (crypt). Ten miles away from Doncaster, when you travel towards York, there is also a stronghold castle. In there, the king keeps his treasure, also all noble Lords, such as the king's children and sons to the princes just like you keep prisoners.²⁵ The castle itself is called in Latin *pons fractus*, which was confirmed to me later by word of the king himself, whose name is Richard King of England, who had been Duke of York[sic]²⁶ before. So, I came there²⁷ on the day of Philipp and Jacobi, which was the first of May, 1454 [sic],²⁸ a Saturday, and found the King at this place, who graciously gave me an audience and interview the next day, in the presence of all the princes, earls, councillors, and other noblemen, in front of which I spoke in Latin. The king but truly wondered at my eloquence (though it was only little), I then delivered to His Majesty the King the letters of His Majesty the Emperor and King, along with a letter of the Duchess of Burgundy,²⁹ all of which being letters of recommendation, and...

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... letters of pass. His Majesty the King generously accepted all of them with pleasure and good will. After he read them, the King himself came

²⁵ Notable section for *The Missing Princes Project* from Doris Schneider-Coutandin, 23 February 2017. See also Philippa Langley, 'Niclas von Popplau: Lost in Translation?', Part One, *Ricardian Bulletin* (December 2020), pp. 46-53. Visser-Fuchs, 'Hardly touched his food', p.527, details the Silesian's mention of Pontefract from the Latin '*pons fractus*' [broken bridge] 'as the king himself informed me and made me understand with his own mouth'.

²⁶ One of Popplau's mistakes. Richard III was Duke of Gloucester, his father had been Duke of York, see fn.24 above. Edward IV's youngest son (Richard of Shrewsbury) had also been made Duke of York.

²⁷ York.

²⁸ Copyist error for '1484'.

²⁹ Radzikowski believes this to be a copyist's mistake and should read 'Duke of Burgundy' because Marie, Duchess of Burgundy had died two years previously. However this very probably refers to a letter from Richard's sister Margaret of York (1446-1503), dowager Duchess of Burgundy. Also Visser-Fuchs, p.530, fn 1.

to me, took me by the hand and pulled³⁰ me with him. He answered me through an interpreter in the Latin language,³¹ however, with almost dulcet words, that His Majesty The King would do for me all I desired, and what he could do and liked to do, because of His Imperial Majesty the Prince of Burgundy, and because of me, for his regard of my scholarliness and my eloquence, which he had not sought for nor believed in me, had he...

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... not heard it himself. As he was very amenable towards me, he addressed me no less than three times (as it was the common way in England) before I left the person of His Royal Majesty, using the words: I bid you welcome and be welcome to me. The English use these words towards people of high or low rank, when they come to them from this country or others. They also use it in gatherings, invites for meals, or collation, also when a person gives a blessing to another person they say I bid you welcome. The king's councillors, princes, and lords said the same to me, as did the noblemen, in honouring me. When I left the king, he had his noblemen and chamberlains³² accompany me to my lodgings. Then many ordinary people followed us to the house, women and maiden amongst them. They secretly came into the lodging house with the permission of the landlady (just to take a curious look at me). The day after the king sent a nobleman to me for coming to his church. There I listened to the loveliest music I ever heard in my entire life, the voices of such purity only to be compared to dear angels. After mass,

³⁰ 'led' by the hand also. See Visser-Fuchs, p.526.

³¹ Is not detailed who this interpreter was.

³² *Cämmerer/Cammer-Herren* would probably mean chamberlain. In the 1711 Reales Staats-Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexicon he is described as 'one of the most important servants at court, who would be responsible for managing the annual household and state income and has access to the King'. Thanks to Albert Jan de Rooij, 3 February 2020. See also p.16 [58]. Francis, Viscount Lovell (b.1454) was Lord Chamberlain to Richard III. May also mean 'gentlemen of the king's chamber', see Visser-Fuchs, p.528.

the king sent John, Lord of Bergen op Zoom³³ (which is a great town of trade in Brabant) to me. He took me by my right hand in the church when the king left church after mass, and then led me to the king to his chamber or tent,³⁴ which was erected nearby the church. There I looked at the king's bed, from top to bottom bedecked with red velvet and atop of it a piece of gold which the Lombards call altabass,³⁵ all the same which also has adorned His Imperial Majesty's bed. In the king's tent there also was a table, laid out and decorated with cloth of silk, embroidered and quilted with gold threading all over, right beside his bed. The king went to sit at the table, he had on a collar of gold of an order,³⁶ on which were many thick pearls, as big as peas, stitched around with diamonds. The collar was as thick as a man's hand, and led over his left shoulders [sic] to his back and from there under his right arm. With him went his princes and...

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...lords. As he was sitting at the table, there were two princes, blood-friends to the king,³⁷ and the Earl of Northumberland, who is the

³³ *Herrn von Bergin Johannem von Zaume*. The word 'Herrn' (Lord/ruler) reveals this to be John II of Bergen (1417-1494), rather than as previously thought, John III, his son and heir (1452-1532). See Visser-Fuchs, p.530 fn 3. John II of Bergen op Zoom signed his letters with "J. van Bergen". In his diary, Popplau has shown himself to be a stickler for proper form and due respect and therefore would have used John III's proper title of 'Lord of Walhain' if he had meant the younger John (1452-1532). He would also most certainly have referred to John III as being a Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Popplau would have felt most honoured to be met and escorted by a person of such rank. With thanks to Wim Wiss of the Dutch Research Group and Oliver Brettschneider from Mainz, Germany for their translation and clarification (as above), 16 May 2020. For John II of Bergen being at King Richard's court in early May, see also Zoë Maula, 'The Glymes at the Court of King Richard in May 1484: A Puzzle Solved', *Ricardian Bulletin* (December 2020), pp. 54-58. John II of Glymes and his son, John III, are persons of interest for *The Missing Princes Project*.

³⁴ In May, so with good weather, the king could show himself to his people in comfortable and spacious accommodation in a royal tent.

³⁵ A gold brocade, interwoven with silver threads, also 'altabas'.

³⁶ Marie Barnfield, 'The Loveliest Music and the Turkish Frontier Itself: von Popplau's day with King Richard', *Ricardian Bulletin* (September 2017), pp.44-46, for the collar being the Order of the Garter. See fn.9 'the baldric style Garter collar ... should not be confused with the riband or sash of the modern Garter ..' For the collar being originally thought to be a baldric see Visser-Fuchs, p.530, fn.4.

³⁷ Radzikowski (fn.166) assumes this must have been the Duke of Suffolk (1442-1492) and his son, the Earl of Lincoln (c.1460-1487), meaning the de la Poles. For 'two princes of the royal blood', see Visser-Fuchs, p.527.

mightiest in all of England. We sat quite far away from the king, at the rear end of the table. But when the king saw me standing in front of him (though, all his royal magnificence seemed to come from the efforts of his court to let him appear much as king in all his royal jewellery at the table), he placed me at the table near his blood-friends, aforementioned princes. I answered that it was my greatest pleasure and desire (which meant I had to rise from my seat) to look into His Majesty face and acknowledge all his renowned virtues, and to sit at the table with His Majesty's companions. The king liked my way of speaking as he liked many of my answers,³⁸ because he did not eat much of the food, instead conversed with me all the time. He asked me about the Imperial Majesty, all kings and princes of the empire well known to me, about their manners, habits, pleasures, behaviour, and virtues. I then gave him answer about them, all much to their praise and honour. After that the king remained silent for a while. Later, he once again asked me questions about many things and events, finally, also about the Turks. So I answered the king that His Royal Majesty of Hungary, together with His Imperial Majesty's skilled people and His Majesty's hereditary lands had cut down more than twelve-thousand Turks of the Turkish Emperor right before Martinmas of the year 1483.³⁹ When the king heard this, he was much delighted, and then he replied: I would like my kingdom and land to lie there where the kingdom of Hungary lies, right at the Turkish

It's debateable if the Duke of Suffolk was considered a blood relation as such, so perhaps 'blood-friends' is more accurate.

³⁸ This may be suggestive that Popplau spoke some English. See also Werner Paravicini, *L'Etranger a la cour. Nicolas de Popplau en voyage a travers L'Europe (1483-1486)* (2015), pp.15-16, for this possibility. With thanks to project member Joanna Larner for her French translation, 10 March 2017.

³⁹ The Battle of Una on 29-30 October 1483. See Sheila Bignell, 'Who Was Nicholas von Popplau?' (1998), *Richard III Society Papers Library*, p.10, for Popplau's praise for Richard III with this speech and his diary being polished following the fall of Vienna. However, this more likely suggests a timeline for the writing of the diary in England during the siege of Vienna which began on 29 January 1485, with Vienna falling on 1 June 1485. See Popplau Timeline, p.6, fn.5, also Philippa Langley and Doris Schneider-Coutandin, 'Niclas von Popplau: Lost in Translation?', Part Two, *Ricardian Bulletin* (March 2021), pp.39, 45-46, fns.10, 12, for the diary in England being written on or by May 1485.

frontier. Then I would, only with the help of my people, and without involvement of other kings, princes or lords, not only fight back the Turks, but all of my foes and opponents.

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... Oh, dearest God, I recognised and found a truly magnanimous⁴⁰ Lord in this king. I stayed there for eight days or more and joined him almost every time for the meal at his court. When I gave my blessing to him the last day, he said to me: as I was determined to travel on he would not hinder nor mistake me in doing so. But after my travels, if I still had the conduct and liking, on my way back, to retire at His Majesty's, he would receive me with even more pleasure than before. He also wanted to show his graciousness for all my ways. He gave to me a collar,⁴¹ which he took from a free or high born Lord's neck and handed it over to me in person. Three days before, before I took my leave from His Majesty, before I gave him my blessing, he sent Lord Hans of Bergen⁴² to me, who told me that His Royal Majesty provided me with fifty Nobel, which are one-hundred Rhenish Guilders and a half, and which were a gift of His Majesty. When I went to His Majesty for a last time, I asked him to not give such a gift to an undeserving person like me, because I came to him not for gifts or donations, instead I only came to His Majesty to be bestowed with His Majesty's graciousness. So the king then said to me

⁴⁰ Visser-Fuchs, p.528, 'great-hearted'.

⁴¹ For this being the king's livery collar with a boar badge, see: Visser-Fuchs, p.529. Also Paravicini, *L'Etranger*, p.17. King John of Portugal later made an innocent jest to Popplau that King Richard had granted him a 'dead boar' so King John would give him something living (a pair of Moorish slaves).

⁴² John II of Bergen of Zoom. *Herr Hanßen von Bergin*. Popplau is now using the more familiar version of John II's name. It seems likely that when they first met they spoke in Latin and John II introduced himself using the Latin version of his name 'Johannes'. Apparently, they got along famously and discovered they could converse with each other in Middle or Lower German, hence the use of the more familiar diminutive Germanic 'Hans' here. With thanks to Wim Wiss of the Dutch Research Group and Oliver Brettschneider from Mainz, Germany for their translation and clarification (as above), 16 May 2020. For John II being at King Richard's court, see: Zoë Maula, 'The Glymes at King Richard's Court in May 1484: A Puzzle Solved', *Ricardian Bulletin* (December 2020), pp. 54-58 (as above, fn.33).

*why I rejected his donations for the sake of my honour, when it was but all his honour to do so, and still then believed to be bestowed with his graciousness? So if I desired his graciousness so much, I should accept his generous reverence towards me, and not reject it.⁴³ Therefore, I thanked the king and finally accepted it, holding the honour in higher esteem than the value, just as honourableness is to put before it like the scholarly philosopher and orator Marcus Cicero has written and told us in his third book *Offitiorium*.⁴⁴ The collar I was given by the king...*

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... held thirteen ounces of gold London weight.⁴⁵ One ounce being twelve Rhenisch Guilders. So I also took my leave from princes, lords and councillors. The king let me rent out an inn, and sent me an open letter thereto, that I and all in my company were safe in travelling by sea and by land whenever I wanted to travel to His Majesty, and His Majesty's subjects.⁴⁶ Before, I invited many of the king's chamberlains, also some of them being nobility, and I was joined by the king's musicians, shawm players, pipers, and lute-players. The king gave to me fifty Nobel, which I gave back to him, refusing to take it.⁴⁷ Then the king was very moved, sent it back to me, and asked me if I was of kingly or princely blood to refuse his donation, and I answered that I had not refused His Majesty's gifts and donations because of disregard, but because of my honour. He then sanctioned me with strong words, urging me to take it. Also the

⁴³ This whole sequence is very awkward, and in the German original also. Basically, it says "You rejected my gift because you are an honourable man, but I made this gift, because I would like to honour you, so there's no need to reject it. "The whole thing is about being extremely polite to each other.

⁴⁴ *De officiis* – Visser-Fuchs, p.528

⁴⁵ For comparison, on 18 June 2020, an ounce of gold was valued at £1,389.35. This equates to a gold value of £18,061.55 in today's terms. From: <https://www.bullionbypost.co.uk/gold-price/gold-price-per-ounce/>

⁴⁶ A copy of Popplau's safe conduct from Frederick III, as his emissary when abroad, has survived in King Richard's Signet. See: Rosemary Horrox and P.W. Hammond (eds), *British Library Harleian manuscript 433* (1982), vol 3, pp 74-76. The safe conduct was signed by Frederick in Vienna on 18 January 1483.

⁴⁷ It might be that Popplau is simply repeating himself here from the story already told on the page before. But the German word 'noch' could imply that Popplau received another 50 Nobel. Thanks to Albert Jan de Rooij.

king's herald, his lute-players and pipers came to me, to whom I gave one crown, to some other four crowns.

King Richard descends of the house and the land called Gloucester, a high-born prince, three fingers taller, but a little slimmer and not so (thick) thickset⁴⁸ as me, also much thinner. He has (subtle) slender⁴⁹ arms and thighs,⁵⁰ also a big heart.⁵¹

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There are Edward and Henry, who reigned before him, being his brothers, and of the blood of both his parents had been before him.⁵² A (mean) common rumour says that King Edward had King Richard's brother drowned in a barrel of Malmsey, because he was a threat to his life and wanted to suppress him,⁵³ both had been King Edward's brothers. And King Richard, who reigns now, had put to death the sons of King Edward, they say, so that not they but he was crowned.⁵⁴ But many say (and I count myself amongst them) they still live and are kept in a very dark cellar. Said King Richard gave to me letters of pass with his personal seal on them, so I can travel free, safe, and without being hindered by his male subjects in his country, by sea and by land, as I said before. When I gave my blessings to the king, one of his captains,

⁴⁸ Visser-Fuchs, p.529, 'thickset'.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.529, 'slender'.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.529, 'thighs'.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.529, 'great heart'.

⁵² One of Popplau's major mistakes - Henry VI (1421-1471) was not a brother to Edward IV (1442-1483) and Richard III (1452-1485).

⁵³ George, Duke of Clarence (1449-1478).

⁵⁴ This being the Continental view as promulgated by Gillaume de Rochefort for the Estates General in France in January 1484. This alleges that the sons of Edward IV were murdered before King Richard was crowned (6 July 1483). Gui de Rochefort (see pp.39, 43, fn.7 above) was Guillaume's younger brother. For more on this source see Philippa Langley, 'The Accession of Richard III', Part One, *Ricardian Bulletin* (June 2019), pp.34-36 and 'Niclas von Popplau: Lost in Translation?' Part Two, *Ricardian Bulletin* (March 2021), pp.39-47. For the Continental view see: Langley, 'The Fate of the Sons of King Edward IV: The Aftermath of Bosworth 22 August to 3 September 1485.' *Ricardian Bulletin* (September 2020), pp.46-7, fn.36.

named Salazar,⁵⁵ who was born Spanish, came to me and gave to me letters and advise for his friends in his country, who'd show their friendship and good-will towards me, and he did so by his own good and free will, as I never in my life asked that of him.

From York there lies a town forty miles called Durham, being a bishop's see. From Durham to Newcastle, also a town of the King of England, and had been before he started his reign and was crowned. It's twelve miles away from Newcastle. And to the river...

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... it's sixty miles. Said river separates the Kingdom of England from Scotland, which also is a kingdom. So that England is on one side and Scotland on the other side of the water. But the king has a town in England at the Scottish side of said river, called Berwick, and this river flows along the city walls. There you can fish for a lot of salmon as this river flows down to the sea. Four and twenty miles away from Berwick the king of England has a castle called Dunbar,⁵⁶ but it's also in Scotland. Berwick is sixty miles away from Edinburgh (where the court of the king of Scotland is). Both kingdoms England and Scotland are surrounded by the sea. The same with the island Hibernia, in German Ireland, away from England about sixty miles on the sea, being three times as long, broad and big as England,⁵⁷ and belongs to the King of

⁵⁵ Juan de Salazar (b.c 1445-d. between 21 September 1503 and 20 November 1504), also known as 'Petit Salazar' was a Spanish (Basque) national who joined the Burgundian army in the 1470's, and fought with distinction against the French. By 1480 he was counsellor and captian of a hundred lances for Maximilian. Salazar was sent to Richard III by Maximilian and fought for the English king at Bosworth on 22 August 1485, surviving the battle. Salazar is a person of interest for *The Missing Princes Project*.

⁵⁶ On Henry VII's accession in 1485 James III of Scotland laid siege to the castle and regained possession.

⁵⁷ Popplau is incorrect. It seems he didn't know too much about the geography of Ireland, or was ill-informed (England is c.50,345 sq. miles, Ireland c.32,595 sq. miles).

England as well.⁵⁸ They have laborious, good, and fast horses there, good, uncouth, simple-minded people, who can walk for many miles a day. They are well able shooting with their bows, to the same degree the English do. Their horses can be compared with the Turkish horses. At the very end of this island there is a pit, within a cloister, which we call the hole of Patricius. It is said that in there the holy Patrick did penance. Lendulus and John Mandevil from England have written that this is meant to be the end of the world. When I was still in England, I heard of many people who had been in the hole of Patricius, and I asked them with much assiduity about ...

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... how things were, and they all told me that it must be a fraud. People (so they said) wanting to go in there had to keep to fasting for nine or thirteen days, only taking water and bread. Then they confess and go into the hole with weak, nearly lunatic minds. They need to stay in there for twenty-four hours. Then they see a manifold of spirits, and devil's larva/masks because of their weakness of minds. In there they are not well kept, so they fall for the phantasms the devil creates for them. Some of them overcome it, then they are strong in mind and faith. Those more weak, anxious and quailed, get lost; they have to stay there and don't return. Therefore, the pit and hole are mostly bricked and closed, to reduce the danger of moving too deep inside or get into there as it happened. The three islands England, Scotland and Ireland are all surrounded by the sea, but they all hang onto each other, so that you can reach Ireland from the shore of Scotland over a small waterway, but apart from that there's no other way to travel there than by sea. The

⁵⁸ The title of 'Lord of Ireland' was abolished by Henry VIII, who was made King of Ireland by the Parliament of Ireland and the Crown of Ireland Act 1542.

island of Ireland belongs also to the king of England, is subject to him, and has its own language, just like the whole of England can be divided into three parts and three languages. The first land is Anglia, the other Wales, and the third is Cornwall. The English use for their own protection and defence long wooden bows. But they cannot, that I saw, shoot through a suit of armour. I came back to London and stayed there all in all for six days. After that I travelled towards Southampton, a town by the sea, about five-and-sixty miles away from London and, in the language of seafaring people, it's to the west. There I found a ship whose patron or owner was a Lombard. From Southampton we went by boat to an island called Wight. It's also surrounded by the sea and belongs to the king of England. There they create a garb which we call "Kiefig".⁵⁹

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... There I came to a village or market town called Newport. It is twenty miles from Southampton over the sea. From Newport I went by foot to Yarmouth ten miles from it,⁶⁰ and the ship on sea followed me to there. In this very market town I stayed together with some Englishmen and their wives, which had been on the boat with me, for two days. English dames show a hellish amount of lust. When they let a man trustfully in their hearts they become blind and silly from love, much more than in any other nation. I also learned from men and women that they both have watched each other through their fingers, with permission, and seemingly indulging in it, as if they were quite maritally dear. It much looks like devilish marriages for the English, where they may push back

⁵⁹ Probable reference to the fulling-mills on the Isle of Wight producing Kersey wool.

⁶⁰ One of the few distances Popplau gets correct in modern Statue mile (distance is c.9.6 miles). The 'old London' English mile in the medieval period was a little shorter by about 94 yards.

honour and soul for a chance on timely lust. The Isle of Wight is full of mountains just like Moravia, but the mountains are not big. In length twenty and in width ten miles.

From Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight I travelled towards Saint James,⁶¹ almost sixty miles. But then a heavy storm and misfortune came upon us and the ship lost its course, so that we again saw Scotland.⁶²

After the thunderstorm subsided and ended, still there was a strong wind against us, so we came back to Yarmouth by night, left the ship in the morning and stayed because of the nasty weather, which would not subside. When we left again, the day after the storm returned, made us toss and turn all day and all night, so that we came to Ireland, a town called Youghal, by the sea.

There we stayed for three days.

From there we went off by boat on the evening before Pentecost, and we arrived in Saint James on the evening of Mary Magdalene in the town of Compostela.⁶³

(Here ends the report of Popplau's adventures in England. He travelled on, as we can see from the end of this paragraph, to Spain, and from there to other countries, and courts of kings and sovereigns including Portugal. But then, when it comes to Popplau's stay in France in spring (April) 1485, at the court of Charles VIII):

⁶¹ Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

⁶² Most likely a mistake, and he meant mainland England.

⁶³ This would be 6 June 1484 setting sail in Ireland and 22 June 1484 arriving in Santiago de Compostela (the next harbour probably would have been La Coruna, as Santiago lies in the heartland of Spain).

FRANCE:

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... With the king (of France) there was the Duke of Lorraine, the Prince of Orange, and some other princes, counting twelve persons including the king. And there were several English lords, who had escaped England. Amongst them also was...

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... the Earl of Richmond, who deemed himself to become king of England. On Monday before Georgi (Saint George's Day then was the following Saturday) I came to Rouen, and on Saint George's Day the king saw me in audience and interviewed me, in the presence of many princes.

ENDS