On Monday July 22, 1650, Hieronymus Kromayer, Professor of Rhetoric in Leipzig, gave a speech in the presence of the ruler of his country, Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony: “Oratio Panegyrica de Bello Tricennali Germanico” (Speech on the Thirty Years’ War). The occasion for this speech was the festival of thanksgiving, praise, and prayer [Dank-, Lob- und Betfest] that the Elector had proclaimed for this day. Its purpose was to celebrate the restoration of peace in Saxony and in the Holy Roman Empire, a peace that had finally arrived with the Nuremberg Accords for the Implementation of Peace of June 16/26 and the departure of the last Swedish troops from Leipzig, that is, two full years after the Peace of Münster and Osnabrück had been signed and proclaimed. 

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2 Hieronymus Kromayer, Oratio Panegyrica De Bello Tricennali Germanico et Partibus tam togatis, quam sagatis Serenissimi Saxoniae Electoris in isto spectatis habita in Templo Academico, XXII. Julii, Soteriorum die publice indicto (Speech on the Thirty Years’ War as well as on the Peaceful and Likewise Wise Part Played by His Majesty the Elector of Saxony, Held Publicly Before this Audience in the Academic Hall on the Announced day of Congratulations) (Leipzig: Henning, 1650).


The celebration began in Leipzig in the morning with protracted ringing of bells and services of thanksgiving in all the churches. At noon, it was continued with a special academic ceremony in the “Auditorium Philosophicum” of the university. Framed by “stately music” (stattlicher Musik) at the beginning and conclusion of his speech, Kromayer commemorated the return of peace and the preceding years of war. He spoke of the “bellum tricennale” (thirty years’ war), even though he must have known, like his fellow Leipzigers, that the war and its violent consequences had continued in Leipzig, as in other places, for two years after 1648; indeed, the war had not concluded for Saxony until after the peace accords of the summer of 1650 and the departure of the last Swedish troops from Leipzig on June 30, 1650. Like other documents from Middle Germany from the same time period, the electoral ceremonial address thus spoke of a thirty-two years’ war, “in which form our righteous God sent the horseman on the red horse into our Fatherland on account of our copious sins until the thirty-second year.” Notably, in the very act of recalling the past war, Kromayer reaches for an academic, rhetorically distanced formula; that is, right at the beginning of his panegyric he speaks of the “bellum tricennale,” the “thirty years’ war,” thereby placing it in the series of “great historical events” (res magnas) and simultaneously characterizing it as a catastrophe that has to be evaluated in a particular way: “it is known that great things are not to be measured as events, but according to their conclusion, and this applies all the more to the happy catastrophe of the thirty years’ war.”

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8 “non eventu, sed exitu res magnas ponderari..., tritum est, et laeta beli hujus tricennalis catastrophe magnis comprobatum.” Kromayer, *Oratio Panegyrica*, A1r.