

„Language policy in the Middle Ages“ shows how such problems were dealt with in the Middle Ages in mostly multi-ethnic and multi-lingual states. Language policy (in the sense of promotion of a dominant language) can be traced back to the Middle Ages. It seems, however, that language policy in general was rather moderate. Linguistic diversity was accepted as a fact and respected. There were even attempts to make the structure of the state reflect this situation. An example of this is the requirement that the ruler speak several languages himself. This general conclusion is corroborated by the findings of Steffen Renner (Saarbrücken) „Did the English try to destroy the Welsh language in fighting Owain Glyndŵr?“. In spite of claims to the contrary, there were no serious attempts to eradicate the Welsh language at that time; similar accusations regarding the English language are equally unfounded. It seems, however, that such claims were made in order to gain support in the fight against enemies speaking another language.

Two contributions are devoted to general questions of language policy. Peter H. Nelde (Brussels) „Vitality and dynamism of European linguistic minorities living in border areas“ analyses the relationship between major languages and languages spoken by minorities in border regions. He shows that the generally assumed dynamics of inevitable decline of minority languages in favour of major languages is not always supported by factual evidence. It seems that the dynamics of the relationship are most complex since they depend upon a multitude of non-linguistic variables. Minority language loss in one case is contradicted by minority language maintenance in others and it is not possible to draw general conclusions. Johannes Kramer (Siegen) „Two and a half lingualism‘ (case studies on Corsica, Curaçao, the Seychelles, the Gröden Valley and Luxemburg)“ describes quite an unusual linguistic situation. It can be described as a special case of diglossia. A prestige language (H-variety) is opposed by two varieties of another language not closely related to the prestige language. One of these varieties is a traditional standard language, the other one is in the first phase of *ausbau*. The examples he adduces are mainly from the Romance-Germanic contact area in Europe but include Creole languages as well.

In view of the difficulty of arriving at valid generalizations and considering the meagre factual basis in many areas it is hardly surprising that many contributions are devoted to detailed analyses of particular situations. Hubertus Menke (Kiel) „I am a Dane and speak German.“ On linguistic history and language policy in the German-Danish border area“ describes the situation in an intra-Germanic border region. This multilingual area divided between two states has a long record of peaceful coexistence and natural evolution of languages. This was interrupted by a period dominated by nationalist thinking which led to discrimination against the respective „foreign“ language. In spite of considerable support by the respective states all such attempts failed. It was not until the introduction of the concept of self-determination, however, that it