

Monarchy and Exile

Konferenz veranstaltet von der Society for Court Studies
in Zusammenarbeit mit den German Historical Institute London
London, 14. bis 15. Dezember 2007

Monarchy has been defined both as an ideology and as a form of government. So close were the links between state power and monarchical authority that little scholarly attention has been given to monarchs who lost power and lived in exile. With the notable exceptions of works on the courts of the exiled Stuarts and of Kaiser Wilhelm II, biographers have tended to treat their subjects' exiles as epilogues to their work or as periods of little interest. The Society for Court Studies, in conjunction with the German Historical Institute London, invited nineteen experts on the Early Modern and Modern periods, in order to establish both a more analytical approach towards the topic and a coherent framework for studying monarchy in exile from 1600 to the present.

The director, *Andreas Gestrich* (London), welcomed the speakers from Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Hungary and Canada, as well as a substantial international audience, to the German Historical Institute in Bloomsbury Square. In his opening remarks, he emphasised the importance of linking the Early Modern period to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. *Philip Mansel* (London) opened the conference with a survey of recent books on exiles. Scholars have long identified the importance of exile communities in the creation of modern western culture. As Mansel pointed out, a study of monarchs in exile could provide important insights into contemporary attitudes to political legitimacy and regional identity; it could also help to avoid deterministic interpretations of European history in general.

The conference papers were arranged in chronological order and divided into five sections. The first section, entitled „Forms and Definitions of Exile“, was chaired by *Thomas Biskup* (Hull). With Marie de' Medici, the Transylvanian prince Ferenc Rákóczi II and the Habsburg emperor Charles VI, it covered three very different seventeenth-century rulers.

Toby Osborne (Durham) discussed Marie de' Medici's self-imposed exile after 1632 as an attempt to organise international opposition to Richelieu. As Osborne demonstrated, exile was a process rather than a definitive event, and the status of the French queen mother changed during the seven years she spent in the Spanish Netherlands. The dynastic network which Osborne described as the society of princes helped her to remain a political reference-point and to maintain a court and entourage (though with declining numbers). However, after the death of her host, the Infanta Isabella, and changes in the international political system, Marie de' Medici became increasingly isolated from what Osborne termed the „society of princes“. The decline in sovereign authority also caused practical problems that often beset exile: financial difficulties, competing loyalties and negative propaganda.

Ferenc Tóth (Budapest) presented the historiographical debate around the Transylvanian prince Ferenc Rákóczi II. After defeat in the Hungarian War of Independence between 1708 and 1711, Rákóczi lived at the court of Louis XIV, accepted, as Tóth demonstrated, as a member of French court society. After the death of Louis XIV, Rákóczi withdrew from society, before accepting an invitation from the Ottoman Sultan. He would

spend his last years in or near Constantinople. As Tóth demonstrated, Rákóczi used his exile to publish political pamphlets on the legitimacy of an independent Hungarian monarchy. He also approached the French government in order to influence international diplomacy. Despite his efforts to support Hungarian sovereignty and independence, Rákóczi's reputation in Hungarian historiography is controversial. The iconic status he gained during the war of independence has been overshadowed by his extended exile. Hungarians seem divided over whether to regard Rákóczi as a national hero forced to emigrate or an exiled rebel.

William O'Reilly (Cambridge) contributed to the section on definitions of exile with a highly innovative paper. In his interpretation of Charles VI, he described the emperor's reign in the Habsburg monarchy in central Europe as an exile from Spain, where he had lived and claimed the throne for much of the War of the Spanish Succession. In O'Reilly's words, Charles later treated the Habsburg monarchy as if it were composed of Spanish crown lands. O'Reilly supported his view of the emperor's Spanish character and mentality by evidence ranging from the Emperor's language in his biographical writings to the many Spanish exiles employed at the court in Vienna. O'Reilly presented exile as a „leitmotif“ in the life of the Emperor, affecting his style of government and representation. Charles VI can be described as „an Austrian emperor who wanted to be King of Spain“.

The second session, chaired by *Michael Schaich* (London) and entitled „Confession“, focused on the Stuart exiles. Considering that Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles I, was the youngest daughter of Marie de' Medici, who died in exile, it is possible to identify five generations of almost continuous exile endured by one family. Only with the death of Henry Benedict, Cardinal of York in 1807, did the Stuart exile in Rome end.

Anna Keay (London) contributed to the debate about the „creation of monarchy“ with a paper on the challenges presented by exile to the young Charles II. The latter's time in France, and in Bruges after 1654, revealed how the young king aimed at creating his own forms of monarchical representation during his 14 years of exile. Leaving England as Prince of Wales in 1646, he re-invented his own religious and ceremonial expressions of kingship after his father's death in 1649, using royal liveries and the ceremony of „touching for the King's evil“ to demonstrate that his restoration was possible.

By focusing on monarchical praxis, *John Cronin* (Florence) emphasised the spatial dimension of exile. In his paper on the Irish royalist elites, he demonstrated the survival of specific social structures during periods of exile. He showed, for example, that the exiled Stuarts still attempted (and sometimes succeeded) to raise substantial sums of money in England, Scotland and Ireland, to fund their government in exile, legitimising their acts by using documents stamped with a newly created great seal. He further elaborated on the importance of kinship links and patron-client connections within the Irish loyalist network. They helped to raise funds, to support assertions of the dynasty's right to rule and to continue the fight against the Cromwellian government. Stressing the military power and activities of the exiled Stuarts, Cronin argued that their court was more than a shadow institution.

Karen Britland (Keele) maintained that there was a strong link between the public image of an exiled monarch and his or her attractiveness to creditors and supporters. Henrietta Maria's return from England to Paris in 1644 caused serious financial problems for the consort of Charles I. As a daughter of Henry IV, however, she found popular support in France. Britland's extensive knowledge of the role of theatre at the court of Henrietta Maria provided fascinating evidence on the transformation of her public image, from her arrival, through the different stages of the civil war until her death in 1669. Britland argued that Catholicism was crucial for the exiled queen's public image in France. However, it proved more difficult to gain the necessary financial assistance which, as Britland argued, was necessary for the exiled queen to play her part in the public staging of monarchy.

Edward Corp (Toulouse) focused on the extended exile of the „Old Pretender“, James III, in Rome after 1719. He identified three factors which were necessary for the Stuart pretender to maintain his royal status at the papal court. After the Catholic religion and a moderate, non-controversial public role, Corp argued that James III had to succeed in making the people of Rome believe that – eventually – the Stuarts would be restored. The latter hypothesis proved crucial not only in discussion of the Stuarts' exile but also throughout the conference, particularly for the question of how an exiled monarch maintained his or her royal status. As Corp demonstrated, the question can be answered by looking at how James III was treated in public, at official entertainments and private receptions. After the Rome and Roman society stopped believing in a restoration of the Stuarts, the latter were no longer considered of royal status, as is illustrated by the fate of Charles Edward Stuart, „Bonnie Prince Charlie“, after the death of his father in 1766.

The third section, which was chaired by *Torsten Riotte* (Frankfurt/M), was entitled „Revolution“. Unfortunately, *Emanuel de Waresquiel* (Paris) was unable to present his paper on Louis XVIII in Ghent during the Hundred Days. Philip Mansel (London) and Peter Hicks (Paris), two experts on the Bourbons and Bonapartes, discussed the different experiences of the two dynasties during their periods of exile.

Philip Mansel (London) showed that international politics, and most importantly, the geo-political frontiers of a future French state within the European state system, proved crucial to the return of the Comte de Provence as King Louis XVIII in 1814. International support also affected the exile of Provence, ranging from a short interlude of royal grandeur during his first stay at Mittau (1798-1801) to more sobering, even disillusioning, experiences at Hamm (1793-4), Verona (1794-6), and Warsaw (1801-4). Louis XVIII found his final destination fifty miles from London at Hartwell, where he spent five years before returning to France. The significance of Louis's court in exile was determined less by its role as a French political centre, than by the intentions of the rulers and governments of Europe and their plans for France's future. Equally important, Mansel argued that the experience of over twenty years of exile helped transform Provence from a fugitive into a monarch. This transformation helped to modernise and europeanise the French monarchy to a degree that had proved impossible during the final crises of the Ancien Regime. As Mansel convincingly argued, Bourbon rule in 1814 was not a continuation of the pre-revolutionary monarchy.

Peter Hicks (Paris) discussed Napoleon I's exile on Elba. The ten months Napoleon spent as sovereign of the small island off the coast of Tuscany show that the emperor was torn between the desire to establish his rule as a sovereign prince on the island, and the desire to return to France owing in part to financial pressures after the Bourbons refused to pay the pension negotiated in April 1814. The former appeared at least as powerful and time-consuming as the latter. Life at the „Palais imperial des Mulini“ revealed attempts to reproduce imperial court etiquette, such as the diplomatic circle – although on a minute scale. Napoleon's hyperactivity, and his insistence on dealing with every aspect of the island's infrastructure and administration himself, are notorious and led some contemporaries to question his mental health. Authors implied a „decadence intellectuelle“. However, as Hicks argued, the sovereignty established on Elba appears less fragile than Napoleon's regime in France. It was the impossibility of maintaining his life on Elba, due to financial difficulties, that drove Napoleon to bid again for the much less secure crown of France.

The fourth section, on „Nation-building“, was chaired by *John F. Pollard* (Cambridge). Its narrow chronological focus (all three papers dealt with the decades after 1860) allowed a detailed discussion of Italian and German unification and their impact on different monarchies. It also showed that the road to exile was less inevitable than appears in hindsight. While the Bourbons of Naples and the Hanoverians in exile failed to return, King Johann of Saxony made an agreement with Bismarck to be re-established on the throne, on condition that he accepted Prussian hegemony.

Guy Stair Sainty (London) argued against the prevailing negative public image of the Bourbons of Naples. He demonstrated that the positive view of Italian unification in popular historiography disguises many unpopular measures taken after 1860, such as rigid censorship, closure of Monastic Orders and the spread of nepotism in the administration. Sainty emphasised that the coercive measures used to crush resistance to the new government popularised the Bourbon monarchy in retrospect among people in the South for many decades. He painted a lively picture of the Bourbon court in exile in Rome between 1860 and 1870, to illustrate how both individuals and the political context shaped the failure of the royal family to survive as a monarchy. Unlike some of his brothers, the exiled Francis II did not show any of the qualities necessary to capitalize on popular opposition to the new Italian state.

James Retallack (Toronto) discussed the „strange survival of monarchical Saxony“, in a presentation that excelled, not least by his original use of visual material. The historiographical debate about the domestication of German monarchs after 1871 in the Prussian-dominated German empire lay at the core of his paper. Retallack demonstrated that the few months between the defeat at Königgrätz in July and King Johann's return in November 1866 had seen the Saxon king and government negotiate for their survival. Backed by the Saxon crown's popularity, or rather the ambivalence of the Saxon population towards Prussia, King Johann and his court remained key players on the political stage. Prussia, and Bismarck in particular, proved sensitive towards public opinion and allowed King Johann to return. However, the defeat of the Saxon army had a strong impact on Saxon prospects. One cynical contemporary saw the King of Saxony return not as a monarch, but as mayor of Dresden. As Retallack demonstrated, competing views about the Wettin dynasty after 1866 are well-suited to foster discussion about the structure of the German empire and its federal dimension, with regard both to its component monarchies and to popular attitudes.

Torsten Riotte's (Frankfurt/M) paper was directly related to the discussion about Johann's restoration. While the King of Saxony returned from exile, George V of Hanover refused to negotiate with Prussia on any but legitimist terms. Although his wife advised him to come to an agreement with Bismarck (directly citing the Saxon precedent in correspondence with her husband), George V was not prepared to accept defeat. The period from 1866 to 1871 showed many familiar features of monarchy in exile. George V subsidized opposition newspapers, financed a Hanoverian legion to undermine Prussian rule and supported the anti-Prussian party that later became the „Deutsch-Hannoversche Partei“ (German Hanoverian Party). Riotte laid more emphasis on the later stages of Hanoverian exile after the death of George V in 1878. The tension between the exiled king and the loyalist party at home provided an opportunity to discuss the differences between legitimism and regionalism. The exiled king proved crucial to the survival of local patriotism while at the same time local patriotism re-invented the image of the Hanoverian monarchy, rescuing it from its former unpopularity to make it a key element in local identity.

The last session, chaired by *Philip Mansel* (London), was entitled „Defeat and exile“. Both the French emperor Napoleon III and the German emperor Wilhelm II left for exile after crushing military defeats, in 1870 and 1918 respectively. Their reigns were succeeded by the Third Republic and the Weimar republic. In this context, the issue of monarchical legitimacy appeared particularly questionable.

The two accounts by *William H.C. Smith* (London) and *Heidi Mehrkens* (Braunschweig) demonstrated the usefulness of a less biographical approach to exiled monarchs. Smith, a leading expert on the Second Empire, claimed that neither the emperor nor the empress Eugenie believed in the political future of the dynasty. Suffering severe health problems during his two years of exile in England (1871-3), Napoleon III was more concerned with ensuring the future of his son and family than with making serious plans to recover his throne. Equally, the French public showed little support for the former emperor. Amongst the competing factions of republicans, legitimists, Orleanists and Bonapartists, the last were the weakest. However, as Mehrkens demonstrated, the emperor's attitudes were not known to the Prussian government. Mehrkens

found evidence that Bismarck seriously considered reinstating Empress Eugenie as Regent of France. Bismarck considered the plan as a means to pacify France and in particular Paris. Appearances were as important as reality in maintaining a political role for monarchs in exile.

John Röhl (Sussex) discussed the exile of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II, from November 1918 to the Kaiser's death in June 1941. The personality of Wilhelm II had already weakened monarchy in Germany long before the outbreak of the First World War. Germany's defeat discredited the Hohenzollern dynasty even further in the eyes of the majority of Germans. A return of the exiled monarch after 1918 appeared impossible to contemporaries. Röhl painted a compelling picture of Wilhelm II indulging in the composition of obscure, mostly self-righteous writings. Röhl also emphasised the anti-Semitic elements in the Kaiser's correspondence. In the debate about Wilhelm II's role in the Netherlands, which sees the Kaiser either as preoccupied with cutting trees on his enclosed property and detached from world politics, or as hoping for a restoration of the monarchy as a Hohenzollern institution, Röhl stressed that Wilhelm II lived in a world of illusions. Although Wilhelm's attitude towards the Nazi party was ambivalent, Röhl showed that he shared its hostility towards the Jews.

The findings of the conference invite further engagement with the topic of monarchs in exile. The distinctions between the „society of princes“ and the „family of kings“ pose many questions for the Early Modern and Modern period. The popularisation of monarchy in the nineteenth century also posed the question of how far a popular image can be influenced by a monarch himself. As all papers illustrated, exiled monarchs appeared to be very present in debates about legitimacy, and in the creation of opposition to and criticism of the government of the day. It is intended to publish the proceedings in an edited volume.

Torsten Riotte

Kontakt:

Dr. Torsten Riotte

Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität

Historisches Seminar

Grüneburgplatz 1

60629 Frankfurt a. M.

Telefon: 069-79832629

E-Mail: t.riotte@em.uni-frankfurt.de

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AHF, Schellingstraße 9, 80799 München

Telefon: 089/13 47 29, Fax: 089/13 47 39

E-Mail: info@ahf-muenchen.de, Website: <http://www.ahf-muenchen.de>

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