



Heir of the Month:

The Third Year (2015-16)

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Preface

It is with mixed feelings - pride tinged with some sadness - that we are presenting this third and final Royal Annual: another twelve essays addressing aspects of the lives and functions of royal heirs in 19th-century Europe. As before all of them have been produced by members and friends of the AHRC-funded 'Heirs to the Throne' project at the University of St Andrews.

We would like to renew our thanks to the AHRC and to the authors of these insightful vignettes. We are pleased to be able to offer them yet again as a collated digital 'volume' - carefully packaged to afford our readers maximum convenience along with - hopefully - fruitful and enjoyable reading.

As the project formally completed its five-year run in March 2017, this will be the final annual. Over the years we have produced and published 36 separate essays. We intend to keep our online presence going as a lively meeting place for scholars and lay folk with an interest in the monarchical history of 19th-century Europe. So please keep visiting www.heirstothethrone-project.net and our social media sites to find out more about forthcoming talks, publications and initiatives. The website will also offer visitors easy access to the growing number of our podcasts - online mini-lectures based on a selection of our monthly essays. Please visit: http://heirstothethrone-project.net/?page_id=2681.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our project to date and hope that our readers will continue to find our work interesting and engaging.

St Andrews – Aberdeen – Berlin, May 2017

Heidi Mehrkens

Frank Lorenz Müller

Essays

A contested appointment: Juana de Vega and the education of Isabel II	05
<i>Richard Meyer Forsting</i>	
Vittorio Emanuele III and Princess Elena Petrovich: A Fairytale Union?	12
<i>Maria-Christina Marchi</i>	
Princess Beatrice of the United Kingdom: The Duties of a Daughter-Cum-Editor	20
<i>Jennifer Henderson Crane</i>	
Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg: Swabian Loyalty and the Uses of Gefühlspolitik	28
<i>Frank Lorenz Müller</i>	
Tsarevich Nicholas of Russia and Prince Georgios of Greece: A tale of two princes	40
<i>Miriam Schneider</i>	
Louis Antoine de Bourbon, Duc d'Angoulême: The loyal Dauphin	53
<i>Heidi Mehrkens</i>	
How to educate a last minute heir: The Duchess of Kent and the Kensington System	63
<i>Jennifer Henderson Crane</i>	

Luigi Amedeo of Savoia, Duke of the Abruzzi: The Explorer Prince	71
<i>Maria-Christina Marchi</i>	
Ludwig of Bavaria and Helmstadt: The Heroic Memory of an Unmilitary Prince	78
<i>Frank Lorenz Müller</i>	
Alfonso XIII of Spain: 'The altar boy king?'	85
<i>Richard Meyer Forsting</i>	
Prince Heinrich of Prussia: A better William?	93
<i>Miriam Schneider</i>	
Franz Ferdinand of Austria: The Insignificant Archduke	107
<i>Sue Woolmans</i>	

A contested appointment: Juana de Vega and the education of Isabel II

Richard Meyer Forsting

On the evening of 7 October 1841 shots were fired at the Royal Palace of Madrid. Rebellious troops of the Madrid garrison attempted to force their way into the royal chambers to kidnap the young queen and her sister. Isabel and Luisa Fernanda, eleven and nine years old respectively, were terrified as bullets pierced their windows and the aggressors came ever closer. After an agonising and tense night of fighting, the courageous and vastly outnumbered *Alabaderos* who defended the entrance to the bedchamber, managed to repel the attack. Juana de Vega, Condesa de Espoz y Mina, was present at the side of the royal children, consoled them in their anxiety and afterwards documented the events in minute detail.



Isabel II as a child (Portrait by Carlos Luis Ribera, Museo del Romanticismo, c. 1835)

The attack was part of a wider conspiracy of moderate liberal elements against the Regency of General Espartero (1841-43). The moderates (*moderados*) among the officers and in the Cortes were dissatisfied with the shift in power in favour of their progressive liberal rivals (*progresistas*) which had occurred after the departure of the Queen Regent Maria Cristina into exile in October 1840. They singled out the appointment of progressive liberals to the court as particularly offensive. This was seen as a policy designed to undermine the

authority of Maria Cristina, as both mother and head of her household. The kidnapping attempt was thus dressed up as an effort to free the girl queen from a hostile entourage. One particularly reviled figure at the centre of much of *moderado* criticism was Juana de Vega.

The outright snobbery of the highly traditional aristocratic Madrid court was certainly one of the reasons for this hostility. The appointment of the Countess in July 1841 as *Aya* to Isabel II led to the almost immediate resignation of her predecessor, the Marquesa de Santa Cruz, from her post as *Camarera Mayor* (First Lady of the Bedchamber).

The post of *Aya* was of central importance in the upbringing of Isabel II, as it entailed vigilance over her lesson plan, an almost constant presence at the side of the royal children and the opportunity to influence the future queen directly. While the term is difficult to translate into English, one could think of it as a form of personal tutor for heirs or rulers in waiting. The post was highly prestigious and it was traditionally only bestowed on the highest ranking members of the Spanish nobility.

General Baldomero Espartero (Portrait by Antonio María Esquivel, Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1841



The Marquesa de Santa Cruz, who had held both the post of *Camarera Mayor* and *Aya*, was a perfect example of this. Not only was she a close confidante of Maria Cristina but also a member of one of the most distinguished aristocratic families and a Grandee of Spain. Following Santa Cruz's lead many of the other ladies in the service of Isabel and her sister also handed in their

resignations. As the Marquesa wrote in a letter to Maria Cristina; 'walking behind that Mina woman was truly too cruel' for many of the aristocratic ladies. They had suffered a lot since the departure of the queen regent but this appointment was the final straw.¹ Even Maria Cristina's exhortations to Santa Cruz and the other ladies to stay on as her informants and prevent pernicious influences on her daughters could not stop them from resigning. The issue of Juana de Vega's common birth in combination with her being placed above them in the hierarchy of the court seemed utterly offensive.

Unlike most of the court, the new *Aya* was from an upper middle class background, typical of the emerging bourgeoisie in Spain, with no prior links to the court. Juana de Vega was born into an

¹ Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, Diversos Titulos Familias, Leg. 3519, Libro 48, Doc. 90, Letter of Santa Cruz to Maria Cristina, 07/08/1841



Andalusian merchant family as an only child. Her father had been politically active during the War of Independence and after the return of Ferdinand VII had joined the 1815 rebellion of Polier against the re-establishment of absolutist government. It seems that her parents encouraged young Juana to write and study beyond what was expected of women at the time. After the failed uprising in 1830 the family went into exile in Great Britain and only returned to Spain during the brief return to constitutionalism known as the Trienio Liberal (1820-23).

Juana de Vega, Condessa de Espoz y Mina (Unknown Author)

Juana's second stint in British exile was spent at the side of the famous liberal general Francisco de Espoz y Mina (1781-1836), whom she married in 1821. Juan Pérez de Guzmán has argued that her experience of the British system strengthened and deepened Juana's faith in constitutionalism, while preserving a strong monarchical sentiment. In 1833, after the death of Ferdinand VII and another unsuccessful rebellion of Francisco de Espoz y Mina only three years earlier, the couple returned to Spain for good. Following the death of her husband in 1836, Juana dedicated herself almost entirely to writing and editing his memoirs until she was appointed as *Aya* to Isabel II. It is hardly surprising that this child from a bourgeois background, wife of a famous progressive general and a progressive liberal was not welcomed warmly at court.

Rather than being just a personal issue, the controversy over the new *Aya* was part of a much wider debate over the limits of parliamentary authority and royal prerogatives. The man behind Juana's appointment, Agustín Argüelles was elected as *Tutor*, a term best translated as 'guardian', by the Cortes in 1841. While many *moderados* were deeply uneasy about his progressive credentials and his history of opposing Ferdinand VII, they were even more concerned by the fact that the appointment of the *Tutor* was in the hands of the chamber in the first place.

As Encarna and Carmen García Monerris have argued, the absence of the queen regent opened up debates over what was to be considered private or public affairs, in particular with relation to the monarchy.² The *moderados* argued that the authority to decide on matters concerning the upbringing of Isabel II lay with her mother, the queen regent, despite her absence. They regarded the question as a private family matter, which the deputies had no right to interfere with.

The *progresistas* on the other hand argued that Maria Cristina had given up all her prerogatives and believed that the education of the future ruler was not a private issue at all but one of national importance. The education of the queen was explicitly linked to the destinies of the nation and acquired the utmost importance. This was believed to justify the involvement of the Cortes in determining its direction. The *progresistas* were determined to surround the queen with liberal and constitutional ideas in the spirit of the 1812 constitution, as Martín de los Heros, liberal deputy to the Cortes and *Intendente de Palacio* during the Espartero regency made clear. He stated that the aim was to identify both the dynasty with the nation and the monarchy with progressivism by 'making courtiers liberals and liberals courtiers.'³

Juana de Vega clearly shared the belief that the upbringing of Isabel II was a matter of national importance and public interest. Her initial response to her appointment reveals certain reservations about accepting the post, in particular doubts about her own qualifications and the anticipation that traditional sectors of the court would be hostile to her.⁴ However, she was convinced by Argüelles, who argued that the upbringing of Isabel II and Luisa Fernanda was a matter of the utmost importance to the future of the Spanish nation. This closely echoed the arguments previously made in the Cortes. Argüelles insisted that Vega's reservations had to be overcome, as 'all considerations have to cede before the good of the Patria'.⁵ In her memoir Juana de Vega described her final acceptance as a sacrifice to these demands and needs of the nation. To her the education and upbringing of Isabel was not a private but a public and political matter. She linked the queen's education to the destiny of the *patria* and makes the association of service at the palace as service and sacrifice to the nation explicit. Thus Mina identified quite

² Encarna García Monerris and Carmen García Monerris "¿Interés de familia u objeto político? La tesamentaría de Fernando VII" in García Monerris, Encarnación, Mónica Moreno Seco, and Juan Ignacio Marcuello Benedicto (eds), *Culturas políticas monárquicas en la España liberal: discursos, representaciones y prácticas, 1808-1902*, 2013, 171-211, 190-91

³ Diario de Sesiones de Cortes, 13 April 1855, 3730

⁴ Juana María de Vega Espoz y Mina and Juan Pérez de Guzmán, *Apuntes para la historia del tiempo en que ocupó los destinos de aya de S.M.Y.A. y camarera mayor de palacio* (Madrid: M.G. Hernández, 1910).

⁵ Letter of Argüelles to Juana de Vega, Condesa de Espoz y Mina 21 July 1841, cited in Ibid.

explicitly with the *progresista* position and their aim of educating Isabel to become a liberal queen.

This view was radically different from that of the traditional elements at court. They interpreted their duty not as a service to the nation but as a personal service to the monarch to whom they had sworn their allegiance. Santa Cruz also used the language of sacrifice in her correspondence with Maria Cristina, but her sacrifice was a personal one to the queen regent, not to the wider nation. She was willing to give up her political misgivings as a matter of loyalty to the monarchy. Much of the same is true for those ladies that eventually felt compelled to resign from their positions at court and those that were later implicated in the conspiracy of October 1841. It became clear at that point that some members of the court had been involved in planning and providing information to opposition forces. Their aim was to restore what they believed to be the rightful authority of Maria Cristina over the upbringing of her daughter.

As these arguments over the reach of parliamentary authority intensified and the progressives used their parliamentary majority to push through reforms, the *moderados* regrouped and planned to overthrow Espartero.

As the initial rebellion, which started in Pamplona, was fading out, the central aim of the *moderado* plan to win power focused on gaining control over the palace and the royal offspring. The Madrid garrison decided to seize the moment and attack the palace. Their failure to overcome a relatively small force of soldiers in the palace and their decision to put the lives of the young queen in jeopardy discredited the rebellion, which ended in abject failure. Nevertheless, according to Mina, that night left a lasting impression on Isabel and her sister, who were both terrified by the incident and fascinated by the heroism of the troops defending their quarters.

The account of the night in Mina's memoirs gives us a good insight into the anxiety and panic that broke out at the palace. One of the most critical moments came at two in the morning, when 'a bullet pierced the window of the Theatre Salon and shattered the glass.' No one was injured but Mina reported that 'the Ladies [Isabel and Luisa Fernanda] were highly exposed, and any incident would have been capable of augmenting the confusion and distress reigning among us.'⁶ For the first time Isabel and her sister were directly and violently confronted with the political conflicts that were coming to the fore during the Espartero Regency.

⁶ Juana María de Vega Espoz y Mina and Juan Pérez de Guzmán, *Apuntes para la historia del tiempo en que ocupó los destinos de aya de S.M.Y.A. y camarera mayor de palacio* (Madrid: M.G. Hernández, 1910), 71



Portrait of the 18 *Alabaderos*, led by Coronel Dulce, who defended the Palace on 7 October 1841 (Congreso de los Diputados, c.1842)

The *progresistas* unsurprisingly condemned the attack on the palace as a cowardly and irresponsible act. The justification of the attack by the *moderados* relied almost entirely on the argument that the queen was surrounded and held captive by a progressive, illegitimately appointed entourage. This allowed the aggressors to portray their actions not as a kidnapping but as an attempt of setting the queen free and restoring her mother's rights over her education. Juana de Vega, who was with the terrified children throughout the events, played a key role in these debates and emerged as one of the focal points of *moderado* criticism.

Even after the failure of the October 1841 conspiracy, the Condessa de Espoz y Mina would remain in the public eye and was subjected to harsh attacks in the opposition papers, especially after she was made a Grandee of Spain and *Camarera Mayor* in October 1842. Throughout her time as *Aya*, Juana de Vega defended herself against these criticisms and tried to imbue the queen with a liberal spirit and bring her closer to the people. Unlike her predecessor she would take Isabel out on semi-public walks more frequently and constantly reminded her of her constitutional duties. Her responsibility as *Aya* did not directly include teaching but it did involve the supervision of lessons and what she calls 'moral and political education'.

In practice this meant Espoz y Mina would usually assist the teacher during lessons to make sure that they were applying themselves and that they were paying attention, as well as directly clarifying and explaining political issues when she thought it appropriate. Together with the director of teaching, she sought to introduce an education in constitutional politics so 'that the

thoughts, the habits and customs of Isabel II shall correspond to those of a queen of a free people'.⁷ As it turned out her time at the palace – along with the progressive dominance in politics as well as at court – were cut short by the success of the yet another rebellion against Espartero in July 1843. Not even a year later, Isabel's minority ended when, at just thirteen years, of age she swore an oath on the new constitution in 1844.

Suggested Reading

- Espoz y Mina, Juana María de la Vega, and Juan Pérez de Guzmán, *Apuntes para la historia del tiempo en que ocupó los destinos de aya de S.M.Y.A. y camarera mayor de palacio* (Madrid: M.G. Hernández, 1910)
- Burdiel, Isabel, *Isabel II: una biografía (1830-1904)* (Madrid: Taurus, 2010)
- Burdiel, Isabel, and María Cruz Romeo, 'Old and New Liberalism: The Making of the Liberal Revolution, 1808-1844', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 75 (1998), 65–80

⁷ Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, Diversos Titulos Familias, Leg. 3757, N.5. 'Exposition of the Ayos of H.M. and H. to the Tutor on the studies of the Ladies', 20/05/1843

King Vittorio Emanuele III and Princess Elena Petrovich: A Fairytale Union?

Maria-Christina Marchi

His Highness the Prince of Naples cuts a fine figure, it is a shame that the fact that his legs are so short takes away from that martial aspect that is so desirable in a crown prince. He is cultured and he is serious beyond his years. He looks promising...

Paolo Paulucci, Diario Segreto



A commemorative stamp of the occasion
(Wikimedia Commons)

Unlike his parents, Vittorio Emanuele III (1869-1947) shied away from the limelight. His years waiting for the throne saw him fulfil his duties in a much more restrained manner than that which had characterized his parents' time as heirs apparent. During his early years his governor, Colonel Osio, kept the young Prince immersed in his studies and military life, rejecting many invitations to parties and unofficial ceremonies that were sent to his student. Moreover, the young Prince did not engage in the same activities for which his father was famous – he did not share the same passion for horse riding, or the same penchant for philandering. Much less interested in the monarchy's public role, the young prince grew up in a strict and generally private manner.

In 1891 however, when the Prince of Naples was twenty-two, Minister-President Francesco Crispi supposedly approached Queen Margherita about the young man's future. He was of marrying age and a marriage would mean a new political and dynastic alliance for Italy, which might help the country gain some prestige on the European

stage. According to Domenico Farini, President of the Italian Senate from 1887 to 1898, Crispi already had a suitable candidate in mind: one of the princesses of Montenegro. Other candidates came up as well, such as the daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh – however her unwillingness to convert to Catholicism immediately excluded her from consideration. In light of this initial failure to secure the prince a bride, Margherita, sensing her son's lack of interest in marriage at that point, believed that decision to select a spouse for her son would be a little premature.

The prince thus remained a bachelor for five more years. His unimpressive stature did not add to his desirability, and although Queen Victoria described him as “wonderfully well-informed, intelligent and amiable” and wrote to Umberto that she had been “charmed” by the young man, he did not seem to charm any of the ladies or princesses he encountered. As early as 1893 rumours began to circulate that the prince was actually impotent, which would help explain why there were no affairs. Giuseppe Saredo, who had been the commissioner of Naples during the prince's residence there, was convinced that this could indeed be possible.

The rumours were further fuelled by the prince's cousin's marriage. Emanuele Filiberto, Duke of Aosta, wed Princess Hélène of Orléans on 25 June 1895 in Kingston Upon Thames. The Duke, who was the first born child of Vittorio Emanuele's uncle, Prince Amedeo, and had been Prince of Asturias, heir to the Spanish throne, for three short years as an infant, posed a serious threat to the throne – if the rumours were true the throne would eventually pass on to him. He was much more attractive than Vittorio Emanuele, and unlike his royal cousin, looked dashing in military uniform. Queen Victoria described him as a “tall and good-looking man” and his popularity soared during the First World War where he became known as the Duca Invitto, the Undefeated Duke.



Special Edition Postcard for the Savoia-Petrovich
Royal Wedding
(Archivio del Risorgimento di Bologna)

There was no cause for concern, though, for the future king of Italy proved to not be impotent. The Minister of the Royal Household, Rattazzi, told Farini that it could not be true for “in Naples [the Prince] would spend many nights away from home” and that he had been put under surveillance, helping his staff to determine that he was in fact spending his nights visiting a female member of the Neapolitan aristocracy. However, the rumours could not be wholly quashed until the Prince took a wife. Thus, the mission to find the Prince a suitable spouse resumed.

In the spring of 1895 the International Exhibition of Art was inaugurated in Venice. The king and queen, accompanied by the heir, were welcomed by “an enormous, applauding crowd and by a multitude of lavishly decorated gondolas. The entire Canal Grande was full of flags and the balconies of the sumptuous palaces, all of their windows, were overcrowded with ladies... it was a magical scene.”

This magnificent stage set up the performance that was to follow. In fact in the days following the Savoias’ arrival in Venice the royals were visited by the Princess of Montenegro and her “splendid daughters”, one of whom was the Princess Elena Petrovich (1873-1952), the future queen of Italy. The ladies were introduced to the sovereigns and Elena was placed next to Margherita at one of the banquets. She also met Vittorio Emanuele, however this initial introduction did not arouse any suspicions on the prince’s part. He did not realise that there was an ulterior purpose to this introduction – it created the possibility for his royal parents to lay eyes on a possible candidate.

It was not until he was sent to Russia as the Italian representative at Tsar Nicolas II's coronation that Elena struck him as the ideal wife. The coronation took place in May 1896 and by June King Umberto had sent the Italian ambassador in Vienna, Costantino Nigra, a telegram asking him to enquire whether or not Elena's father, Nicola of Montenegro, who was in Vienna at the time, would look favourably on a match with the House of Savoia. Umberto wrote: "[when] the Prince of Naples [was in] in Moscow [he] found Princess Elena of Montenegro very pleasant and desires to marry her. Queen and I approve of this marital plan." He asked the ambassador to make sure that the princess would be willing to convert to Catholicism – an absolute prerequisite for her to be able to accept this proposal. Less than 24 hours later Nigra replied confirming Nicola's interest in the match.

The back of the above postcard
reads: "To their royal
highnesses the Prince Vittorio
Emanuele and Princess Elena of
Savoia."



On 18 August 1896 the betrothal of the prince and princess was officially announced in both Rome and Cetinje. The Prince of Naples had travelled to Montenegro in order to ask for Elena's hand in marriage and the trip had served to formalise the ties between the two countries as well as between the two dynasties. Elena was described by the Italian press as a "marvellous princess, with opulent black hair, dazzling black eyes, a slender frame, and of oriental beauty." What was stressed in particular was the fact that this was not a marriage of convenience, not one arranged in order to create an alliance for the Italian state, but rather a marriage of love and "a homage to beauty." This narrative allowed the engagement to acquire a fairy tale-like status. In the popular *Illustrazione Italiana* it was reported that as soon as the Prince of Naples had returned to Rome from Moscow he had declared that he would either marry Elena or not marry

at all. This romantic impetuosity had given the prince a stronger, manlier image, which helped him appeal more widely to the Italian people.



**Elena of Montenegro on the Cover of the
Illustrazione Italiana
(Anno XXIII, N. 35, 30 August 1896)**

The belief that this was in fact a marriage of love was perpetuated by the prince himself, who was convinced that he had picked his bride all by himself, without being part of any political web. As soon as his betrothal had been made public, he wrote to his former governor and friend Colonel Osio announcing the engagement. In response to Osio's congratulations the prince declared:

"...the part that you have played in these celebrations makes me infinitely happy; I did everything on my own accord and without any help from politics, which is fortunately a thousand miles away from my engagement..." His mother, Queen Margherita, maintained the same conviction, even though her role behind the scenes – selecting a suitable bride and accepting Elena as her future daughter-in-law – had been anything but negligible.

My dear Osio, she wrote, I am very pleased! I am so happy about my son's engagement, so happy that I cannot believe that one can feel so alive after having passed the 40-year mark. He actually chose his own bride... When he came back from Russia after 20 days spent in Princess Elena's company, he told us that he wanted to marry her, that he would not marry anyone else! We were so happy! ...

They say the best things about our future daughter; I have seen that she is beautiful, healthy, elegant, vivacious and pleasant, and from reliable sources I have heard that she is good, full of character and of courage, intelligent and very

well educated. She comes from a good and virtuous race, from a very respectable and united family, and from a morally and physically healthy people, brave and loyal, a nation of soldiers...

Margherita, 29 August 1896.

P. S. I am so happy that the news of the wedding has been so well received in Italy. This wedding of true feelings with a princess of a nation of such valorous people appeals to the public!

Once again the queen's preoccupation was how royal actions were perceived. The political situation in 1896 was not particularly stable, and both government and crown had been involved in the military fiasco in Ethiopia. The defeat of an Italian army in the battle of Adwa in March 1896 had secured Ethiopian sovereignty, and the crushing of Italian troops by African warriors threatened internal political stability in Italy. Francesco Crispi had believed that a "baptism of blood" would have been the best solution for generating a cohesive national identity. An article in *La Riforma*, a left wing newspaper founded by Crispi in the 1860s, depicted the mission in Africa as one of national importance, for "thanks to [the heroes of Africa], the old wish, too often made a mockery of since 1860, can now be said to have been fulfilled. With pride, we can now claim that not only Italy, but also Italians, have been made!"

However, the pursuit of colonial power in Africa had resulted in a crippling defeat. Alessandro Guiccioli, the prefect of Rome at the time, wrote in his diary that this was a "catastrophe... a total disaster..." and marked it as "the loss of [Italian] honour." In addition to the failure of the military, Italy was in the midst of a financial crisis. The crown had been involved in a large banking scandal and martial law had been declared in Sicily as a result of growing popular agitation. The unhappy situation was causing mass dejection and little faith could be placed in the governing bodies.

Therefore, the wedding could not come at a more opportune moment. With the crown struggling to find support, it was an opportunity to draw attention to its more positive facets: the prince's love story and the brighter future that the newly engaged couple represented.

After the engagement was announced Elena and her native Montenegro took centre stage in the national press. Distracting from the dispiriting events of 1896, the attention was shifted onto this soon to be member of the nation. Books were published on Montenegro's people and history, and volumes were printed presenting Elena to the Italian public. The Princes' journey towards Italy, closely followed by the press, was celebrated as an opportunity of redemption following the tragedies that had marked the previous months.

However, another opposing force, which was problematic for the monarchy, was the Church. Its involvement in the celebrations was troubling. Ever since the ex-communication of the Savoia monarchy in 1871 and the Vatican's refusal to recognise the legitimacy of the Italian state, Crown and Church had been vying for power over the hearts and minds of the Italian people.



Another commemorative postcard to celebrate the royal wedding (Archivio del Risorgimento di Bologna)

The Church seemed to be the frontrunner in 1896, and it had managed to entrench its power so as to make the royal nuptials

as difficult as possible: “the curia has won again. No Basilica, no roman ecclesiastical presence, no cardinal, no monsignor Anzino [the monarchy's trusted priest], no orthodox wedding for Montenegro to be later converted into a Catholic one...” Farina made it clear that the monarchy's attempt to regain public favour was not as easy as they had hoped. When Elena disembarked in Bari, she had to renounce her faith immediately and become a Catholic. Her dejected attitude during the mass in Bari, where this was made official, demonstrated the unhappiness this request was causing her. Margherita had insisted on this as a condition, though, in order to demonstrate the dynasty's loyalty to Catholicism, but the Church had determined further that Elena could not set foot in Rome unless she had converted already. Consequently, the plan for

her to become a Catholic after the wedding fell through and the monarchy was obligated to bend to the Church's will.

Thus, the fairytale engagement acted as a screen, veiling the disputes and tensions from the public eye. The wedding itself on 24 October 1896 was not as widely publicised as Umberto and Margherita's nuptials, and due to the costs of the war effort the celebrations were not as lavish either. However, the engagement had served to lift national spirits and bring the crown back into a more positive limelight. The focus on the wedding as one based on love was a powerful tool to add a touch of romanticism to the crown and perhaps bring the people to rediscover their own love for the monarchy. And although the nuptials did not redeem the monarchy and government's past actions it still drew crowds to Rome and allowed, if only for a brief moment, for the nation to come together to celebrate the union of the Prince and Princess of Naples.

Suggested Reading

- Alessandro Guiccioli, *Diario di un Conservatore* (Milano: Edizione del Borghese, 1973)
- Domenico Farini, *Diario di Fine Secolo* (Roma: Bardi, 1961)
- Silvio Bertoldi, *Vittorio Emanuele III: Un re tra le due guerre e il fascismo* (Torino: UTET, 2002)
- Denis Mack Smith, *Italy and its Monarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989)

Princess Beatrice of the United Kingdom: The Duties of a Daughter-Cum-Editor

Jennifer Henderson Crane

On the 193rd anniversary of her great-great grandmother's birth, 24 May 2012, Queen Elizabeth II made Queen Victoria's journals available online. The welcoming page notes that the journals were the first digitalised documents belonging to the Royal Archives to be made available online. In a special message by the current sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II states that she hoped this project will "...enhance our knowledge and understanding of the past." This, as this essay will show, was an interesting choice of words.



Princess Beatrice in the early 1870s (Hills & Saunders)

Queen Victoria began her journals in the late summer of 1832 when she was thirteen; they conclude approximately a week before her death at eighty-two in January 1901. Nearly every day is accounted for, though there are exceptions as, for example, during her confinements with each of her nine children—entries resumed roughly six weeks after the child's birth. Despite these occasional interruptions, Victoria's journals are still lengthy. In her work on Albert Edward Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, Jane Ridley estimated that, along with her avid letter-writing, the Queen wrote sixty million words during the course of her reign. But the focus here will not be on an examination of Victoria's journals per se but, rather, the editing process performed by Princess Beatrice.

Beatrice was the Queen's literary executor and, as such, it was her responsibility to carry out her mother's wishes with regards to editing the journals. If Victoria had any doubt as to whether her daughter would fulfil her orders diligently, she need not have worried. Since Beatrice finished her editing assignment numerous historians have lamented that the original content has been decimated; indeed, the Princess's work obliterated rich details, excising passages that may have added more colour and life to this account of her mother's reign, as well deleting information on numerous others who filled her court and foreign courts as well.

Beatrice's position of editor, a job she undertook very seriously, filled nearly half of her life, and has triggered controversies over "ominous omissions"—what did she hide? This has lent considerably to the mystery surrounding Victoria's relationship with her Scottish servant, John Brown, a mystery that persists to the present day. Very luckily for historians, however, a selection of Victoria's journals survive in her own hand; additionally, other transcribed versions remain untouched. These are significant; not only have they been saved from Beatrice's hands, but, more importantly, they can be compared with Beatrice's edits. In this we are allowed a glimpse to what the Princess sought to expunge from the gaze of posterity.

Born Beatrice Mary Victoria Feodore on 14 April 1857, Beatrice's birth, like that of her elder brother Leopold, had been assisted by what Victoria called, "that blessed chloroform." As the child of the sovereign, Princess Beatrice was technically an heir, but there was not any chance of her ever ascending the throne. Barring any catastrophic series of events eliminating her four brothers and their children, and then her four elder sisters and their children, there was in reality no possibility of her becoming queen. Known as Baby for years, Beatrice became her mother's pet. Following Prince Albert's death in December 1861, so the story went, Victoria clutched Baby to her, and had the young princess was finely bedecked in the finest mourning attire.



Victoria's five daughters (Alice, Helena, Beatrice, Victoria and Louise); photographed by William Bambridge

Once Beatrice reached marriageable age, Victoria shut her ears on the subject, wishing her youngest child to remain with her as her companion. This did not go to plan. According to her

biographer Matthew Dennison, when told of her daughter's plans, Victoria refused to speak with her for seven months, and took instead to pushing notes across the table. Beatrice wed Prince Henry of Battenberg on 23 July 1885 but this was only allowed with the caveat that the couple would live with the Queen. The marriage produced four children: Alexander, Victoria Eugénie ('Ena'), Leopold, and Maurice; Ena later became Queen of Spain upon her marriage with King Alfonso XIII in 1906. Sadly, widowhood came all too soon to Beatrice. Prince Henry, having gone to serve Britain in the Anglo-Asante War, was sickened by malaria and died on 22 January 1896.

To the consternation of advisors and the Prince of Wales, Beatrice became her mother's unofficial secretary and, as the Queen's sight dimmed as a result of cataracts, she became her hands and eyes as well, writing as Victoria dictated letters as well as her journals. Even before Prince Henry's death, the Queen's vision problems were cause for concern amongst her doctors. Two of her physicians, Sir James Reid (1849-1923) and Sir William Jenner (1815-1898) corresponded on the matter, with Reid writing that, "The Queen's defective eyesight is now a serious hindrance to her writing letters." Ill feeling about the Princess's position was not withheld. Frederick 'Fritz' Ponsonby (1867-1935), Victoria's private secretary, was aghast at her access to delicate government issues; the situation he wrote no doubt echoed the opinion of others:

“When her [Victoria’s] sole means of reading dispatches...debates, etc, lies in Princess Beatrice, it is simply hopeless.” While not everyone agreed, she was, to all intents and purposes, her mother’s only choice for literary executor.

Queen Victoria and her daughter Princess Beatrice, c. 1880 (Alexander Bassano)



It is a fair question to ask: why Victoria may have wanted her journals edited following her death? Did she wish to cover conspiracies? Were there scandals she hoped to hush up? These questions are only further intensified when combined with the fact that, after completing her editing, Beatrice destroyed the original journals. Perhaps one of the biggest scandals connected to what Beatrice is said to have erased concerns the precise nature of her mother’s relationship with her Scottish servant, John Brown. Brown (1826-1883), who became a ghillie for the royal family during Prince Albert’s lifetime, made himself indispensable to the Queen in the early years following Albert’s death.

Rumours did not take long to surface; this is evident by reports printed by the Swiss newspaper *Lausanne Gazette* which claimed Brown and the Queen had married and she was already carrying his child. Tales of the Victoria’s supposed second marriage are still printed today. An article from the *Daily Mail*, published on 25 February 2012, pointed to a story originally from *The Oldie Magazine* which claimed there was proof of the rumour. Oldie’s source of the story came from Sir John Julius Norwich, the second Viscount Norwich. According to the *Daily Mail*, Norwich, born in 1929, asserted that a marriage certificate citing the union between Victoria and Brown had been discovered within the Royal Archives by his friend, Sir Steven Runciman (1903-2000). Runciman showed it to the Queen Mother, who promptly burned it in order to save the royal family from embarrassment. The article also details stories of the children Victoria supposedly had with Brown, again citing Runciman as the source. However extraordinary the claims, though, this same article also confesses that Sir Steven was

not always a reliable historian. This also brings to mind more practical matters. The time period when these events were meant to take place was approximately in the mid to late 1860s just when Victoria was nearing her fifties. It is safe to say her fertility at that time would have been highly questionable.

Another story linked with Beatrice's work targets one of the Queen's children, her fourth daughter, Princess Louise. Born in 1848, Louise is remembered best today for her exceptional artistic talents. One of her best known sculptures is now the most visible: the white statue of Queen Victoria outside the gates of Kensington Palace. Historian Lucinda Hawksley, though, believes there are darker secrets to Louise's life, which is the focal of her biography, *The Mystery of Princess Louise*. According to Hawksley, Louise had an affair during her teenage years which resulted in the birth of an illegitimate son. Concrete details relating to this were not shown to researchers in the Royal Archives, though, and also erased from the Queen's journals. However tantalising the stories—including that of Louise being in the arms of her lover when he died—the book offers little in the way of source material, relying instead heavily on the limited access to the Archives at Windsor Castle and the Queen's censored journals. As with the Queen and John Brown, whatever the truth regarding Louise's relationships, and whether or not she indeed bore a child, the real answer cannot be conjectured through the remaining evidence.

The extent of Beatrice's editing will not be entirely known with any precision as the surviving transcripts of Victoria's writing end on 16 February 1840, a week following her marriage to Prince Albert. The journals in Victoria's own hand cover the years from August 1832 until 1 January 1837, the year she became queen. One of the best examples of Beatrice's editing, and one cited by numerous historians, is the entry the morning after her and Albert's wedding. In the transcriptions provided by Lord Esher, Reginald Brett (1852-1930), the entry began: "11th February, When day dawned (for we did not sleep much) and I beheld that beautiful angelic face by my side, it was more than I can express! He does look so beautiful in his shirt only, with his beautiful throat seen."

She continued to write on having breakfast, taking walks together, and the various personages to whom she wrote, and concluded with details about the dinner that night and who was present. The opening to Princess Beatrice's version was exceedingly

different: "After a nice little breakfast together, I wrote to Mama from whom I had a kind letter..." Gone were all the specifics of Victoria's seeing her bridegroom the morning after their wedding that revealed the intimacy which the bride described in such gushing words. Stricken also were the attendees at their dinner, and particulars that made up their first married day together. Victoria's words revealed her emotional state, while her daughter's version offers a comparatively basic recap of events.



Princess Beatrice, coloured bookplate from her wedding, 1885

The entry the day of wedding is also telling. Beatrice transcribed that Victoria "Slept well & breakfasted at ½ p. 9, before which Mama came, bringing me a nosegay of orange flowers, & good Lehzen gave me a little ring." The original version went like this: "Monday, February 10, The last time I slept alone. Got up at a ¼ to 9 and having slept well; and breakfast at ½ p.9. Mama came before and brought me a Nosegay of orange flowers. My dearest kindest Lehzen gave me a dear little ring."

Not only are there difference in the opening of both versions, but in the endings as well. Beatrice's recounting that the Queen felt unwell that night, and that Albert stayed with her the whole time where she thanked God for the blessing she had in Albert and how she endeavoured to be worthy of him. Once again, Victoria's own words display the closeness and intimacy she already felt towards in her husband: "...we both went to bed; (of course in one bed), to lie by his side, and in his arms, and on his dear bosom, and be called by names of tenderness, I have never yet heard used to me before - was bliss beyond belief! Oh! this was the happiest day of my life! - May God help me to do my duty as I ought and be worthy of such blessings!"

While it may be understandable that Beatrice chose to excise the details disclosing her parents' physical intimacy, it may be questioned why she chose to rephrase her mother's words regarding Lehzen. Johanna Clara Louise Lehzen, born in 1784, had been Victoria's governess and rose to become her confidante. Though adored by her charge,

Lehzen was loathed and distrusted by others because her influence on Victoria. Later a



Baroness, she and Prince Albert would cross swords over the issue of the royal nursery where she ultimately found herself the loser.

Princess Beatrice in mourning with Queen Victoria (coloured from black and white photo). Photograph by W. & D. Downey, colourization by Peter Symonds.

Another matter that may have come into play with her Victoria's description of her "dearest kindest Lehzen" was the issue of fraternization. It may well be that she did not consider her former governess to be a servant, but that is not to say

that Beatrice felt the same. Lehzen, in the most practical sense, had been a servant of the family to help educate the then young Princess Victoria as well as a, for lack of a better term, a babysitter. Beatrice's edition of "Good Lehzen" implies approbation upon a servant; Victoria's endearment reveals a far closer relationship as shown in token for, in Victoria's words, "the dear little ring." This editing of Victoria's relationships with her servants may also cover the entries relating to John Brown. The Queen could not be read as having such personal ties with those meant to serve her. Entries that had referred to servants by name were replaced with generic terms. Identities were whitewashed, and the Queen remained above her servants.

It has been estimated by Robin Macworth-Young that Beatrice removed roughly two-thirds of the original text from her mother's journals. Whatever the contents may have been, scandal fodder or not, they continue to elude historians. While she is routinely condemned for her work, not all believe Princess Beatrice should be so treated. Jane Ridley offers a kinder assessment, pointedly writing that the Princess was following her mother's wishes. Ridley also believes that it is entirely possible that had the Queen left them to her son Bertie, Edward VII, he would have had them destroyed without any transcription, whether edited or not. The question remains, though, on why Victoria wanted her journals edited. The Queen was no fool. She knew that, as sovereign, her writings would attract much attention—and very possibly exploitation as well. When

she began her journals, she did so with the understanding that her mother and Lehzen would read whatever she noted down.

Later, as Queen, she was fully cognizant of the importance attached to her personal writings. It may be argued that, giving Beatrice the task of editing her journals following her death, afforded Victoria a degree of safety. If pieces of her writings were not to offer the level of discretion that was required, she was assured that Beatrice would excise anything deemed too personal and private, and anything not to be shared with anyone other than the royal family. It is also very likely that she may have felt that aspects of the Queen's private life were not vital in saving. Beatrice did not record her personal involvement in editing her mother's journals, so all her own thoughts and opinions on what she chose to ignore or rewrite has been lost.

Beatrice's position, often scorned and lamented, was not an easy one. Her mother held a tight grip on her from her earliest years, and resented her daughter's intention to marry. As Victoria's health declined, so her need for her youngest child grew. Her last task for Beatrice inevitably led to an unfair assessment and reputation. While it cannot be denied that her editing irrevocably lost much to history, perhaps it would be best to close on what Robin Mackworth-Young thought: Queen Victoria was perfectly entitled to do what she chose with her most private and intimate writings, and we can count ourselves lucky that they have been left to posterity in any form at all."

Suggested Reading

- Matthew Denison, *The Last Princess: The Devoted Life of Queen Victoria's Youngest Daughter* (Phoenix, 2008)
- Robin Mackworth-Young, *The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, Archives, vol. 13* (1978)
- Jerrold Packard, *Queen Victoria's Daughters* (St Martin's Press, 1998)
- Queen Victoria's Journals: <http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/home.do>
- Thornton, Michael, 'Victoria's Secret?', <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2106204/Victorias-secret-According-tantalising-new-evidence-Queen-Victoria-married-Scottish-groom-bore-secret-daughter-spirited-America.html#ixzz3qDfNPowf>

Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg: Swabian Loyalty and the Uses of *Gefühlspolitik*

Frank Lorenz Müller

Nineteenth-century narratives of patriotic self-praise are not exactly a genre characterised by originality. When strutting its virtuous stuff, almost every community claimed the same set of great qualities for itself and went on to regard them as typically French or British, Prussian or Bavarian. A trope that was routinely invoked in monarchical states or nations was the characteristic loyalty of the people, a steadfast and faithful adherence to their ruling house that constituted a fair quid-pro-quo for what was purported to be the dynasty's unceasing dedication and love for its subjects.

The people of Württemberg were no exception. If anything, for the Swabians, the unqualified loyalty they were convinced to have shown their princes over the centuries was a matter of particular pride. This admirable character trait was at the heart of the poem *"Preisend mit viel schönen Reden"* which emerged as Württemberg's unofficial anthem in the middle of the nineteenth century. Penned by Justinus Kerner in 1818, the verses describe a scene alleged to have taken place during a get-together of the greats of medieval Germany. While feasting during an imperial assembly in 1495, a posse of dukes were said to have indulged in a bout of one-upmanship as to whose realm was the most precious. After the Saxon, the Bavarian and the Rhinelander had finished bragging about their respective silver mines, monasteries and vineyards, it was the turn of the bearded Count Eberhard, "Württemberg's beloved lord". He put them all to shame. Notwithstanding the poverty of his native land, it still held the greatest treasure, he claimed: For "in the forests, though so vast/I can boldly rest my head/In the lap of every subject". Faced with such a gemstone of loyalty the other princes sportingly conceded defeat and declared Eberhard the richest of them all.

It will come as little surprise that Count Eberhard's nineteenth-century successors, now elevated to the rank of kings of Württemberg, found much to like in this story, which Kerner's poem had carried into countless songbooks and classrooms. In 1876 King Karl I of Württemberg (1823-1891) commissioned the sculptor Paul Müller to

create a monument depicting the famous scene. The granite ensemble was unveiled in 1881 to mark the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the kingdom and, judging by the write-up in the Württemberg State Gazette, King Karl was pleased with what the artist had crafted: “Paul Müller has boldly realised [Eberhard’s] princely words by showing how the count, caught by the darkness after the hunt is resting in the lap of a shepherd, who is faithfully watching over his slumbering master.” Installed in the capital’s palace gardens, the bearded Eberhard has edified the good people of Stuttgart ever since.



Paul Müller (1881):
Eberhardsgroupe
(Schlossgarten, Stuttgart,
image: Ra Boe via
Wikimedia Commons)

Something was to happen in the autumn of 1889, though, that cut the loyal Swabians to the quick. “A grieving Württemberg has to cover its head in shame”, the *Württembergische Landeszeitung* lamented on 22 October; “the proud boast of each one of its princes since the Bearded Eberhard ... yesterday has made it untrue; the book of Swabian history has been soiled by a shameful stain.” Stuttgart’s *Neues Tageblatt* initially found the news of the deed downright incredible and even more so, “that a child of Württemberg should have carried it out.” On 23 October the paper reported a comment made by an unnamed farmer, who flatly refused to believe what he had been told: “We have read and witnessed that the Prussians and Italians shoot their princes, but no-one has ever wanted to kill a Württemberger. It could only have been done by a foreigner.”

Sadly, though, for this proud Swabian, the inconceivable had really happened: Martin Müller, a fellow-Swabian, had fired a gun at Prince Wilhelm (1848-1921), the heir to the throne of Württemberg. Just as the prince and his eleven-year old daughter were leaving Marienwahl mansion at Ludwigsburg to attend Sunday service at a nearby church the assassin had stepped up to the carriage and discharged his revolver. Müller's shot had gone wide and the would-be assassin was immediately apprehended, but grievous damage had been done to the cherished image of flawless loyalty.

It came as some small comfort, though, that the gunman – in spite of initial claims that religious motivations had driven him to his deed – was certified as mentally ill. "The old and tested Swabian fidelity is, thank God, untainted now," the *Schwarzwälder Bote* breathed a sigh of relief, "for the deed of a madman can surely not demean an honest, faithful people." Moreover, to be on the safe side, the Württembergers put on an impressive performance of collective loyalty: books were laid out in which people could inscribe their congratulations to the prince on his narrow escape; a torch-lit parade was held to mark the occasion; people travelled to Ludwigsburg to be near Prince Wilhelm's mansion and messages of gratitude poured in from across the kingdom.

Even in the nineteenth century - long before Rahm Emmanuel exhorted us never to let a crisis go to waste – it was already understood that something good could even come out of as undesirable an event as the deed of this deranged gun slinger. Only a few days after Müller had fired the shot, Carl von Tauffkirchen, the Bavarian envoy to Württemberg made an interesting observation. He calmly concluded that "the most significant consequence of the assassination was an immense increase in Prince Wilhelm's popularity". Tauffkirchen's analysis went even further: "If such an increase is already the regular and natural result of any such criminal attack," the envoy argued, "then this had to be even more the case after this specific incident, since the attitude of His Royal Highness was an entirely admirable one." Prince Wilhelm's response to the assassination attempt was not merely admirable, but showed a fair amount of political nous. He personally visited Martin Müller in prison and calmly interrogated him about his motives; he comforted the assassin's distraught brother; he mingled with the well-wishers and he rewarded the affection shown by the inhabitants of Ludwigsburg with a

financial gift to benefit the town's poor. And, of course, none of these actions remained unreported.

Amongst the many things Wilhelm did in the wake of the assassination attempt, one characteristic gesture stood out. Immediately after his return from the church, the *Schwäbische Kronik* reported, the prince had commented on the fact that the assassin had chosen a moment, when Wilhelm had been accompanied by his daughter Pauline, rather than attacking him when he was alone. Wilhelm returned to this point when interviewing Müller. "Did you not consider that you could have hit and killed the child, my daughter?" the *Neues Tageblatt* quoted the prince, whereupon the assassin "fell silent and looked to the ground." The royal father's concern for his daughter was also reported by the *Tübinger Chronik* and Tauffkirchen counted the reference to his "innocent child" amongst the list of actions that won Wilhelm everyone's heart.

Casting himself as a loving and concerned parent who knew the meaning of loss was not a new departure for the heir to the Württemberg throne. In February 1877 the 29 year-old Prince Wilhelm married Princess Marie of Waldeck and Pyrmont. The people of Stuttgart gave the newlyweds a rapturous welcome.

Stuttgart's illustrated weekly "*Über Land und Meer*" marks the marriage of Prince Wilhelm and Princess Marie in 1877

Ten months later, Princess Marie gave birth to a healthy daughter, Princess Pauline. The couple's happiness seemed complete when, in July 1880, their son Ulrich, destined to be the future king, was born. "Imagine the innermost joy of the happy parents", the *Schwäbische Kronik* rejoiced; "that joy is generally shared here. Already flags are



flying over much of the city.” The *Neues Tageblatt* reported that a deputation from Ludwigsburg, which had travelled to Stuttgart to offer the town’s congratulations, got to meet the prince in person: “His Royal Highness most graciously spoke to them for some time and delighted them with the news that mother and child were in excellent health.”

Wilhelm and Marie’s happiness was not to last, though. The whole country shared in the pain inflicted by young Ulrich’s sudden death five months later. “The sympathy of the people of Stuttgart is great”, the Prussian envoy reported on 28 December 1880. “Over the last two days the drive to the princely palace was never empty of people of every class, who had come to confirm the sad news which had travelled through Stuttgart at lightning speed.” Both parents were almost paralysed by grief. In a letter to his friend Detlef von Plato Prince Wilhelm described his life as bleak and joyless and wondered if death were not the preferable option. Their daughter was now the only consolation for him and his wife.

But much worse was to come. In April 1882, after a long labour, Marie gave birth to a stillborn daughter and then died herself of complications three days later. Prince Wilhelm was so shocked and broken after these tragic events that observers wondered if he might have suffered a stroke and may not survive. Eventually he recovered physically, but the emotional damage was immense. “My whole life is broken, shattered. If I were allowed to do so, I would best like to throw it away”, he admitted to Plato in June 1882. “I have to continue with this tortured existence, though, for my poor, motherless child, this sacred legacy, the only thing that I have left.”⁸

True to his word, the prince – although he withdrew as much as he could from his public and the military duties he had never enjoyed – remained committed to this sacred legacy and took modest steps in the direction of a politics of memory. In December 1882, the *Schwäbische Kronik* commented on the “touching manner in which the memory of the royal unforgettable Princess Marie was being renewed in the villages [around Ludwigsburg].” Just as it had been Marie’s practice personally to deliver lavish Christmas gifts to the poorest widows and their children, so the princely

⁸ *Im Lichte neuer Quellen: Wilhelm II. Der letzte König von Württemberg. Katalog zur Ausstellung.* Bearb. v. Albrecht Ernst (Stuttgart, 2015), 42.

carriage also arrived this year so that they would receive their “carefully chosen presents from the hands of the little princess [Pauline].”

In the spring of 1883, in time for the first anniversary of Marie’s death, a beautifully designed memorial book was published entitled “Dedicated to the Memory of Her Royal Highness the Prematurely-Deceased Princess Wilhelm of Württemberg”.⁹ The short hagiography, written by an anonymous author, told the story of a saint-like young princess, wife and mother whose early death destroyed “an uncommonly happy family”. The reader is told that, before passing away, Marie had offered “her deeply dejected husband words of refreshing consolation.” There was also praise for Marie’s own parents, who had also coped with the loss of a child: “It is admirable how the princely parents dedicated themselves to the education and upbringing of their children with undiminished zeal.”

The parallel with Wilhelm’s admirable dedication to his own daughter was hard to miss. Count Tauffkirchen certainly believed that the book was of some interest in that “even if it was not fully written by H. R. H. Prince Wilhelm, it was initiated by him and based on information he provided.” The Bavarian diplomat noted further that the publication had “made a profound impression in the whole country.”

In the long run, the role of the loving father and grieving widower did not, however, prove sufficient for a royal heir not yet in his forties. In 1886 Prince Wilhelm finally had to give in to the mounting pressure from the public, the king and the government and re-marry.

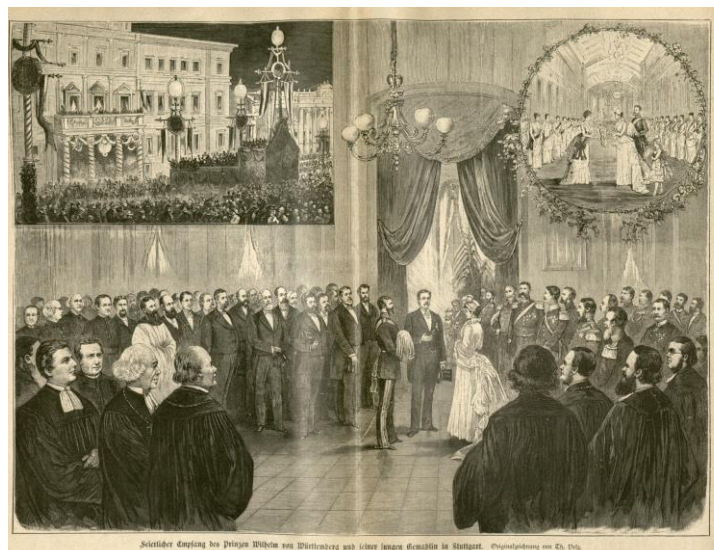
The ever-informed Tauffkirchen reported to Munich that Hermann von Mittnacht, the country’s long-standing chief minister, had urged the prince on several occasions to take this important step in the interests of the kingdom. So when the news of his engagement to Princess Charlotte of Schaumburg-Lippe broke in January 1886, the State Gazette pointed out that an earnest desire of the king had now been met. “The hearts of everyone were rejoicing and offered the prince thanks for his decision, with which he fulfilled an urgent wish of the whole country”, the *Schwäbische Kronik* added in April 1886. Stuttgart once again laid on a grand reception when the princely couple

⁹ *Dem Gedächtniß Ihrer Königlichen Hoheit der frühvollendeten Frau Prinzessin Wilhelm von Württemberg* (Ludwigsburg, 1883).

entered the capital of Württemberg. In his almost painfully elaborate address Lord Mayor Theophil von Hack explained that the “manifold demonstrations with which the capital seeks to welcome Your Royal Highnesses are an attempt to express the wish that the union of the hearts, which your Royal Highnesses have entered, is and remains a wellspring of unchangeable happiness, an eternal fountain of the richest blessings.”

The Württemberg public had every reason to rejoice in the purity and sincerity of the couple’s love. In an attempt to explain why he was taking his time to re-marry, Wilhelm had put his beliefs in this regard on record and emphatically declared himself an opponent of merely dynastic marriages. “I have never lost sight of what I owe to my position as prince and to my country,” he explained, “but I was too happy with my first wife to render myself unhappy for the rest of my life with a marriage of convenience; one cannot even expect a prince to endure that. I do not wish to give my country the example of a cold, loveless marriage! I think too highly of this holy estate to wish to de-sanctify it in this way and thereby to debase myself.”¹⁰

Wilhelm and Charlotte’s reception in
Stuttgart (*Über Land und Meer*, Nr 32,
1885-6)



The reality behind the beautiful façade and the soaring rhetoric was less edifying, though. Wilhelm had clearly done what was

expected of him and keeping up the appearance of a happy married life with a woman he did not love soon proved hard work.

Within months of his second wedding he despaired of “this comedy that I have to perform in front of the world, always making coquettish jokes, it often makes me want to crawl up the walls.” But the main thing was, he concluded, that they succeeded in presenting the image of a tenderly loving couple. Before too long rumours about the

¹⁰ Wilhelm II. König von Württemberg. Ein Lebensbild (Ludwigsburg, 1891), 27-28.

true nature of the prince's marriage began to make the rounds and there was even talk of Wilhelm having an improper relationship with the wife of his chamberlain, but – on the whole – the matter was covered up successfully. “We show ourselves together in the theatre, drive and walk together, if we feel like it”, he told Plato the following year. “But, but!! – If only I had never met her; she would have led a happy life alongside someone else, and I would at least have gone my own way quietly and – over time – even contentedly.”¹¹ In terms of its public effect the arrangement worked well, though, and many pious and dignified words were spoken when the couple celebrated their Silver Anniversary in 1911.

Still sombre after all those years: a postcard marking Wilhelm and Charlotte's Silver Anniversary in 1911
(Peter Schnorr, via Wikimedia Commons)



By the time the deranged Martin Müller discharged his pistol at him in 1889, Prince Wilhelm had thus already had plenty of opportunity to gain experience with what Ute Frevert has called *Gefühlspolitik* (Politics of Emotion): a politics engaged with emotions and directed at emotions, where “affective perceptions and attitudes are not motives, but resources, tools and objects of political action.”¹² Little wonder, then, that the prince's response to the attempt on his life was so sure-footed. Moreover, pegging out *Gefühlspolitik* as his field of activity was a shrewd choice for the heir to the Württemberg throne: it suited the place, the time and the man.

By the 1880s, Württemberg's crown was in fairly choppy waters. Like the other small and medium size monarchies that had joined together to form the German Reich in 1871, the kingdom of Württemberg and its monarch had to accept a significant diminution of their sovereign rights. Notwithstanding the official doctrine that the twenty-five ‘allied governments’ formed the *Reich's* ‘collective sovereign’¹³ and

¹¹ *Im Lichte neuer Quellen: Wilhelm II. Der letzte König von Württemberg. Katalog zur Ausstellung.* Bearb. v. Albrecht Ernst (Stuttgart, 2015), 45.

¹² Ute Frevert, *Gefühlspolitik. Friedrich II. als Herr über die Herzen* (Göttingen, 2012), 16.

¹³ Tim Ostermann, *Die verfassungsrechtliche Stellung des Deutschen Kaisers nach der Reichsverfassung von 1871* (Frankfurt, 2009), p. 234.

governed jointly through the federal council (*Bundesrat*), the restrictions placed upon the separate states and their rulers marked a sea change. By forming the German *Reich* its members lost important elements of their sovereignty – most obviously in the fields of foreign and military policy – and this hit no-one harder than the non-Prussian sovereigns. According to the constitutional historian Hans Boldt, there was only one ruler in the *Reich* who was a monarch ‘in the full meaning of the word’: the German Kaiser.¹⁴ For the other crowned heads the most Bismarck's tact, constitutional prestidigitation and occasional bribes could achieve was to sweeten the bitter pill of a fundamental shift from a federation of states (*Staatenbund*) to a Prussian-dominated federal state (*Bundesstaat*). As princes within the Reich the smaller German monarchs simply had less to decide. This discredited the monarchical element, the historian Heinz Gollwitzer has observed, since every intelligent citizen wondered whether there was still a case ‘for the maintenance of a constitutionally legitimised claim of sovereignty by small and miniscule dynasts’.

King Karl I of Württemberg, who reigned from 1864 until his death in 1891, was one of the German monarchs who never fully came to terms with their reduction in status. Württemberg, an ally of Austria, was defeated by Prussia in the war of 1866, and its king played a noticeably unenthusiastic part in the Prussian-led foundation of the Reich that accompanied the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. Like the king of Bavaria, Karl of Württemberg decided to stay away from the proclamation of the new German emperor at Versailles. His reluctant and increasingly frustrated attitude to the new state of affairs certainly contributed to his tendency to withdraw from his duties and increasingly also from his country. Citing ill health, the king spent longer and longer periods in Italy or the South of France and began to feel like a stranger in his own capital. By the end of the 1880s the problem of Karl's absenteeism and unwillingness to fulfil his routine duties was compounded by a series of scandals involving the king's penchant for close friendships with good-looking young men of dubious repute. Soon politicians and diplomats spoke earnestly about the irreparable damage this was doing to the monarchical principle and even the press was beginning to weigh in. King Karl, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* observed in October 1888, had grown “distant

¹⁴ Hans Boldt, ‘Der Föderalismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich als Verfassungsproblem’, in Helmut Rumpler (ed.), *Innere Staatsbildung und gesellschaftliche Modernisierung in Österreich und Deutschland 1867/71-1914* (Vienna and Munich, 1991), p.34.

from his people, whose monarchical loyalty has been praised in song and history since the days of yore.”

As heir to the throne, Prince Wilhelm had increasingly been called upon to deputise for the absent king on formal occasions. He did so without obvious enthusiasm, tried hard to protect his private life and assumed anything but a proactive role in tackling the crisis that was beginning to engulf his predecessor’s¹⁵ reign. For this attitude Wilhelm was criticised not just internally – with Prussian diplomats frequently complaining about his alleged lethargy and lack of action – but also more widely. The people are worried to see, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* observed, that Wilhelm “showed a strong tendency towards seclusion and loneliness.”

The paper need not have worried, though, for Wilhelm’s reign turned out to be remarkably successful. Unlike his predecessor, Wilhelm, who had served with a Prussian regiment, did not chafe too badly under the yoke of the Reich, but readily



accepted the new reality of a German nation state and presented himself as both a good German and a father to his Swabian people. Nor did he – unlike his namesake on Germany’s imperial throne or Bavaria’s ill-fated King Ludwig II – entertain any anachronistic ideas about wanting to exercise a personal monarchical regiment and oppose the development towards an increasingly constitutional monarchy.

King Wilhelm II of Württemberg (1892)
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Rather, as was indicated by the promise he gave upon his accession in 1891 – to strive for „steady and prudent progress in every area of the life of the state” – King Wilhelm II was content to accompany an organic development with a reassuring monarchical presence. The new monarch soon cultivated his own low-key, civilian and tolerant style: modest and approachable, but with a recognisable sense of dignity. Well-known

¹⁵ Since King Karl had no children, Wilhelm was heir-presumptive even though they were only distantly related: Wilhelm’s father Friedrich and King Karl were first cousins.

for his love of cycling and the ever-present small Spitz dogs that accompanied him on his walks, an increasingly portly King Wilhelm quietly and comfortably continued to plough his *Gefühlspolitik* furrow and achieved real popularity.

Not everyone was impressed by this soft-pedalling version of kingship. Kaiser Wilhelm disparagingly referred to Württemberg as a “Royal Republic” and the diarist Baroness Hildegard von Spitzemberg, that perceptive chronicler of political life in Imperial Germany, was left distinctly underwhelmed by a visit to the Württemberg court in October 1897: “They are just not princes with attitude any more, these gentlemen; they do not want to rule any more or protect and give up on themselves before they are being given up on.” This carping from conservative supporters of monarchical government was complemented, though, by unusually kind words from its traditional enemies. In 1916, at the height of the First World War, King Wilhelm completed 25 years on the throne.

Perhaps the warmest congratulations came in the shape of a long article written by Wilhelm Keil, the leader of the Württemberg Social Democrats, and published in the party newspaper: “In Württemberg the relationship between king and people is unclouded. The king has never made an offensive utterance against any party. His public comportment is characterised by the kind of reserve which everyone would wish to see in a non-partisan servant of the state. [...] All in all, it appears to us that nothing would be altered if a republic were to replace the monarchy in Württemberg tomorrow. If all the male and female citizens were asked to decide, no other candidate would have a better prospect of being placed at the head of the state than the current king.”

As it turned out, though, the citizens of Württemberg were not asked and – probably because of that – the country’s monarchy meekly had to yield to the revolutionary current that washed away all of Germany’s crowns in November 1918. It seems, though, that, when it came to the removal of King Wilhelm II, the revolutionaries’ hearts were not really in it. When, on 8 November Arthur Crispian, a leader of the Independent Social Democrats in Württemberg bumped into a group of workers who were noisily demonstrating outside the king’s palace, he snarled at them to leave the old man, who had done nobody any harm, in peace. After that dressing down, they

dispersed. So while it may no longer have been the case that Count Eberhard's last successor could calmly rest his head in the lap of each of his subjects, there was still enough Swabian loyalty left that even his enemies wanted him to enjoy a good night's sleep.



Probably the only monarchical statue erected in post-war Germany and a late triumph for a king whose removal in 1918 still gave some Stuttgarters pangs of guilt seventy years later: King Wilhelm II with his Spitz dogs (Hermann-Christian Zimmerle, 1991) – Image: Klaus Enslin

Suggested Reading

The essay is mainly based on original sources examined in libraries and archives in Stuttgart, Munich and Berlin. I am particularly grateful to Dr Albrecht Ernst (Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart) for sharing some of his important new findings with me.

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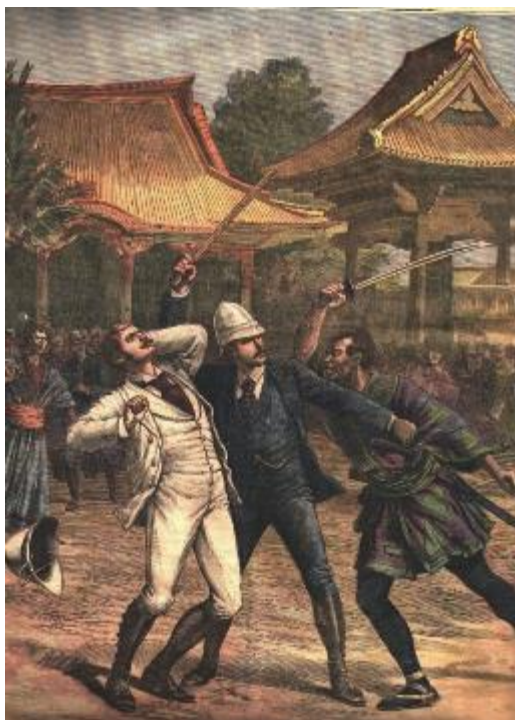
Tsarevich Nicholas of Russia and Prince Georgios of Greece: A tale of two princes

Miriam Schneider

On 6 May 1891 [OS, 18 May 1891 NS], the Athenian newspaper *Asty* recounted a current news story by resorting to the colourful imagery and language of the fairy tale. It told of “two princes” who had travelled to “a faraway country” of mythical fame:

“One of the princes”, the anonymous author explained, “originated from a great, prosperous realm. The homeland of the other was small and weak, although it once had been powerful and glorious. Strangely, though, the prince who came from the mighty kingdom was small and delicate, whereas the other was strong and full of vigour”.

“The two princes”, the story went on, “travelled the world together until one day they arrived at a strange and wild place. Everything in this place was small, small, but well-formed. [...] The houses, the trees, the men, the women. One evening, they strolled along the side of a lake [...] when suddenly two locals appeared and attacked them with their knives. One of them dealt a terrible blow to the delicate prince, and his blood began to stream. When his companion saw this, however, he turned on the villain, dealt him a



blow with his walking stick, a strong cane made from the oak trees of his country”, and thus saved the delicate prince’s life.[\[i\]](#)

Le Crime d’Otsu, *Le petit Journal*, 30.5.1891 (Author’s collection)

This romantic story referred to the so-called “Otsu incident” which occurred during the “eastern journey” of Tsarevich Nicholas of Russia, the future Tsar Nicholas II (1868-1918). It was all over the European news in early May 1891. A fanatical policeman had tried to

assassinate the Russian heir to the throne while he was on a touristic excursion to the Japanese countryside near Lake Biwa. Luckily, though, his cousin and travel companion, Prince Georgios of Greece (1869-1957), had prevented further harm by striking the assassin down with his walking cane.

In the idiosyncratic view of the Greek newspaper, the relatively small height (1.7 metres) and slender figure of the Russian heir to the throne were contrasted with the huge build and bearlike strength of the Hellenic prince. This allowed the Greeks, for ever struggling to be accepted as full members of the European concert of powers, to implicitly reverse the power relations between their insignificant nation on the one, and their mighty friend, the Russian Empire, on the other hand. That the high hopes the Greeks so often put into the dynastic connections of their royal family never materialized, has already been the gist of another “Heir of the month”, the “Prussian Duke of Sparta”.

This is not another tale of failed political hopes. Rather, it is a story about a journey and an unusual assassination attempt and the many different angles from which they can be viewed. It shows how one journey, largely through the turn it took at Otsu, ended in two fundamentally different ways for two travelling princes. For the delicate heir of a mighty throne, despite his encounter with death, the “eastern journey” was an exotic grand tour which introduced him to the Oriental other – or self – of imperial Russia and “awoke” him “to promises of glory and greatness” in the East.^[ii] Historians have frequently pointed to it as an explanation for the erratic imperialist policies that characterized Nicholas’s early reign and the coming about of the Russo-Japanese War (1904). For the vigorous prince from insignificant Greece, however, what started as a pleasure cruise, despite his gallantry at Otsu, ended as a walk of shame as much as fame. It was one of a number of incidents which would finally convince Georgios that, like Greece, he was ultimately travelling alone.

Nicholas' tale – Oriental encounters

In October 1890, the 22-year-old Tsarevich Nicholas of Russia, together with a large entourage, started out from St Petersburg on what would become a 10-month grand tour through Asia on board the cruiser Pamiat Azova. It would take him to Egypt, India, China, Siam, and Japan, culminating in the festive inauguration of the building works on the eastern section of the Trans-Siberian Railway near Vladivostok in May 1891.

Though unconventional in comparison with normal 19th-century grand tours, the cruise was neither exceptional nor illogical. In the Age of Empire, an increasing number of European royal princes travelled to the Far East: be it that they progressed through the imperial realms of their illustrious families, as British princes did on their royal tour; or be it that they were more generally introduced to the fascinating exoticism or future possibilities of this latest area of imperialist rivalry, as Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary (1892) or Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany (1912) were.

Nicholas, by travelling east, could get an impression of the vastness of his future realm, represent his dynasty to Russia's eastern neighbours, and, as heir to the throne, demonstrate his father's active support of a still contested infrastructure project.

Tsar Alexander III's determination to tie the eastern parts of his Empire closer to its core by way of a railway was mainly part of a strategy of domestic consolidation, centralization, and Russification. It can also be seen within the context of a wider eastward turn, though, which influenced intellectual and political life in fin-de-siècle Russia.

Tsarevich Nicholas during his grand tour to the East in Nagasaki



By the late nineteenth century, many Russian intellectuals and nationalists had grown disappointed with the intellectual-political developments in Western Europe (democracy, rationalism, materialism, and atheism). Realizing at the same time that the Westernizers' dreams of catching up with Europe's material progress were futile, these voices increasingly conceptualized Russian national identity as fundamentally distinct. Some turned to Slavophilia, the positive affirmation of Russia's Slav heritage and her destiny as the liberating force of all the Slav peoples living in the Balkans. Others turned to Asianism. They believed that both Russia's roots and her future lay in Asia, that there was a special "spiritual kinship" between the Asian peoples (visible e.g. in their religion or acceptance of autocracy), and that it was the tsar's historical mission to reunite them. Both ideologies influenced Russia's foreign policy and continental imperial expansion in the late 19th century.

Nicholas' tutor on the grand tour, Prince Esper Ukhtomsky (1861-1921), a dilettante Orientalist working for the Interior Ministry's Department of Foreign Creeds, was a prominent representative of the Asianist vision. His presence in the imperial entourage reveals how the tour was not only meant to present the future tsar to the other players in the Eastern imperial game, but also to acquaint him with the Asian civilizations bordering on Russia. The enthusiasm and respect Ukhtomsky entertained for the non-Russian nationalities within and outside the Empire as well as for non-Orthodox faiths such as Buddhism clearly also shaped Nicholas' perception. In his letters home, the grand duke frequently admired Asian culture as unsullied by European influences.

Nicholas' emotional highlight was undoubtedly his stay in Japan. "Only a few days here and I'm absolutely in heaven", he reported home on 21 April 1891. [\[iii\]](#) Although conflict over Korea was already on the horizon, relations between the two countries were friendly at the time. The Japanese, eager to be treated as equals by the European great powers ever since the Meiji Restoration and its programme of Westernized reforms, wanted to show their "regard for [their] great northern neighbour". They therefore prepared a "magnificent welcome" for the Tsarevich, the highest-ranking royal visitor to date, "marked by all the heartiness, grace, and novelty which the Japanese are so well able to impart to these occasions". [\[iv\]](#) Nicholas was enthusiastically received on the

streets, lavishly entertained by the Imperial princes, and watched displays of sumo wrestling, kendo, and samurai drill.

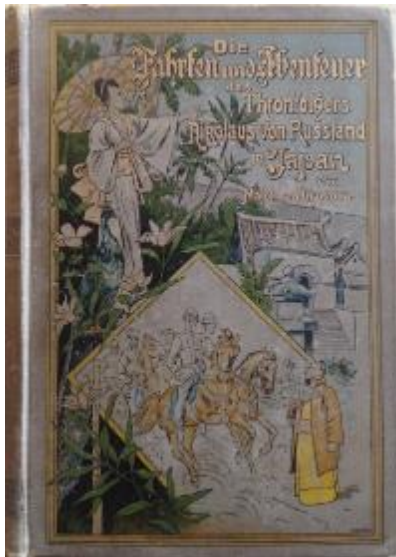
Following his stay at the ancient capital of Kyoto, however, on a touristic excursion around Lake Biwa on 29 April [OS; 11 May NS] 1891, one week after Easter, the prince was attacked by a Japanese policeman while passing the streets of Otsu. For the sake of dramatization, pictorial and written representations of the scene – such as the fairy-tale from Asty – later often depicted the Tsarevich and his cousin standing and relatively alone. In reality, though, their entire party were riding in a procession of rickshaws pulled by Japanese coolies, and the streets were lined with spectators and police. Unlike Europe, which was plagued by anarchist assassinations throughout the 1880s-1890s, Japan was considered a safe place for tourists. Therefore, it came as a shock when suddenly one of the policemen, Tsuda Sanzo, darted forward and hit Nicholas with his

sabre.



One of the more realistic depictions of the Otsu Incident: P. Ilyshev, The attack on the Tsarevich

His motivations were subject to many speculations. Some thought him insane. Others believed he was inspired by a hatred of everything foreign – a trend particularly virulent among the Japanese samurai caste and inducing both the imperial court and Europe's foreign offices to be more cautious about royal visits in the subsequent years. An adventure book published by the German Major von Krusow in 1898 (*Die Fahrten und Abenteuer des Thronfolgers Nikolaus von Russland in Japan* / *The travels and adventures of Tsarevich Nicholas in Japan*) even construed a plot where the assassin was hired by Russian anarchists. Most probably, though, Tsuda's motives were a mix of frustration about his humble status as a policeman (compared to his former career as an officer), anger at Nicholas's irreverent behaviour near a memorial for dead soldiers, and an irrational belief that he was a Russian spy.



An inventive adventure story: Major von Krusow, *Die Fahrten und Abenteuer des Thronfolgers Nikolaus von Russland in Japan*, 1898
(Author's collection)

When Nicholas, feeling a “sharp sensation on my right temple”, turned round, according to his travel journal, he beheld “a policeman, so ugly as to turn my stomach [...] swinging a sabre in both hands and coming at me for a second attack.” He jumped from the rickshaw, and, since no one seemed to stop his pursuer, “ran as fast as I could”. He “wanted to hide in the crowd”, but, as will happen in such moments of terror, “the Japanese had panicked and were scattering in all directions.” Only when he turned again, did he spot his cousin Georgios, who apparently ended the attack by hitting the madman with his walking stick.[\[v\]](#)

Luckily, the wound that Nicholas received in this surreal situation was slight. It caused quite some stir in the European press, though, shocked Russia, and particularly upset his hosts. The entire Japanese nation felt that this first attempt to assassinate a royal personality on their soil was an “indelible stain fixed upon [their] history”.[\[vi\]](#) On the one hand, the Japanese feared that Russia might retaliate with military force – which, however, was never the intention of the peace-loving Alexander III. On the other hand, they were afraid that the West might see this as a sign of Japan’s continued barbarity precluding friendly terms with any civilized nation. The Tenno, therefore, went to unusually great lengths to apologize to his imperial guest, immediately taking the train to Kyoto and even accepting a refusal to meet Nicholas on the first night. Sanzo’s trial would become a downright power struggle between Meiji and the Japanese judiciary. The Emperor, eager to show his kinship with Europe’s royal houses, wanted the death penalty – reserved for violations against the Tenno only by Article 116 of the Criminal Code. The special court convened, however, successfully defended the independence of the judiciary, passing a sentence of lifelong imprisonment instead. The “Otsu incident” would thus go down in Japanese annals as a momentous step in the history of law – as well as in the history of public opinion and the press, since the Japanese newspapers

took great interest in both the incident and the court trial, fighting against official censorship.

Surprisingly, the Russian government accepted both the Japanese apologies and the sentence without further ado. Even Nicholas, though he had to leave Japan earlier than planned on request of his parents, retained “no hard feelings” [vii], regarding the incident as the deed of a fanatic individual. According to most historians, he even returned from his journey with a decided love for the mysterious Orient, “clearly in awe of the Asian realms he stood to inherit” [viii] and, in “his juvenile imagination” playing “with grandiose ideas” [ix] about the wider Far East. Prince Esper Ukhtomsky’s travelogue, written in close consultation with Nicholas, published in two lavish volumes (1893-1897), and broadly distributed through the special efforts of the imperial family, could be understood as a manifest of both men’s Asianist vision. It propagated the idea of the “White Tsar” as a pan-Asian ruler and foreshadowed the expansionist policy Nicholas, influenced by his Asianist and imperialist advisors, would adopt after his accession in 1894.

Asianist manifesto: Prince Esper Ukhtomsky’s travelogue “The Account of Travels Made by His Imperial Highness Tsesarevich to the East” was translated into English, German, and Chinese, among others



This policy veered between the protection of China and territorial expansion at its costs, and it finally ended in a disastrous war against Japan (1904) when the territorial ambitions of the two expanding nations clashed over Manchuria and Korea. Some of Nicholas’ Russian contemporaries would interpret this war as a late revenge for the events of 1891. According to the historian Rotem Kowner, though, the tsar’s attitude towards Japan was a blend of “Orientalist fondness” and racial prejudice which led to an “underestimation of the Japanese national character and military capability”. During his stay, Nicholas, like many European travelers, had formed an impression of the Japanese

as an effeminate, childish, and biologically inferior race. The entire nation was associated with sensual Geishas, perceived as physically small in contrast to the “Russian giants”, and even called “little monkeys”. After his return, these impressions developed into a cognitive “schema”, which would finally influence Nicholas’ assessment of Japanese military power. The defeat of the Russian Fleet at the hands of Meiji’s far from backward forces came as a shock to the young tsar whose autocratic rule stood itself in sharp contrast to his “delicate” physique. They ended the period of Asianist dreams that had begun in 1891.

Georgios’ tale – Travelling alone

The flipside of Nicholas’ “eastern journey” was the story of his cousin, Georgios of Greece, in many ways representing the “dark side” of both the “grand tour” in general and this grand tour in particular.

Georgios had joined the Pamiat Azova in Athens in November 1890 in the official capacity of a Lieutenant Commander. Trained in Denmark, his stint in Russian services was to further prepare him for his role as a naval officer of the young Greek navy. That he should join the Tsarevich on his tour was only logical, as he was both maternally and paternally closely related to the Russian Imperial Family. Also, his nation shared Russia’s fate of being torn between East and West. Striving to be accepted as a “civilized” country by virtue of her ancient heritage, Modern Greece was frequently labelled a backward Oriental nation by the European powers. Russia was her main ally in the pursuit of her irredentist ambitions against Turkey.

This illustration published by Asty on 28 May 1891 had originally been published in the French *Le petit Parisien* before.



Famous for his tall build and Herculean strength, Georgios would reach his moment of fame when his cousin made his encounter with death. His version of the Otsu incident in the shape of a letter to his father, King George of Greece, was published in the Danish paper *Berlingske Tidende* in May 1891 and then went viral around the world. Hearing “something like a shriek in front of me” and seeing his cousin pursued by his Japanese would-be assassin, Georgios jumped out of his rickshaw and followed him. In his terror, the Tsarevich “ran into a shop, but ran out again immediately, which enabled the man to overtake him. But I thank God that I was there in the same moment, and while the policeman still had his sword high in the air, I gave him a blow straight on the head [...]. He now turned against me, but fainted and fell to the ground.” Two rickshaw pullers subsequently finished off the assassin.[\[x\]](#)

Although Georgios, according to other testimonies in the Japanese court trial, did not decisively knock out Suda before the rickshaw coolies came to his assistance, he was immediately celebrated as his cousin’s sole saviour. Emperor Meiji thanked him for having guarded “Japan’s history from a stain which could never have been blotted out”. His crew had his walking cane engraved with the memorable date. All over Europe and the world, but especially in Greece, the newspapers were full of praise for his “gallantry”. Colourful lithographs depicted the scene in imaginative variations. According to the German Minister in Athens, Georgios’ deed was “extolled in all the papers and regarded as a new bond with which providence has tied these two closely related and friendly royal houses closer together”.[\[xi\]](#) Asty, in the article cited above, recounted how Georgios’ name “passes from mouth to mouth like a foreboding of glory and happiness, like a greeting from and a guarantee for the future”.[\[xii\]](#)

While he was publicly celebrated in Europe, however, Georgios was privately expelled from the Tsarevich’ entourage. Instead of accompanying Nicholas all the way back to St Petersburg, as originally planned, he was ordered home via telegram from Vladivostok. As his brother, Crown Prince Constantine, confidentially told his former tutor, the German General Consul Lüders, this departure was “not at all on his own initiative”, as officially stated; rather, the Russian court had advised Georgios “to continue his journey alone and without trespassing Russian soil.” What had happened?



Prince Georgios on the title page of *Asty*, 6 May 1891

According to Constantine, the Tsarevich' entourage, particularly his aide-de-camp Prince Baryatinsky, could not forgive Georgios that he alone had come to Nicholas' rescue. They had intrigued against the prince at the Russian court and called forth the relevant telegram. Tsar Alexander, who did not even express his gratitude to his brother-in-law, King George of Greece, was also supposed to have been furious about the publication of Georgios' letter, in which he publicly

depicted the Tsarevich as running away from the aggressor. Emperor William II, on reading the report, scribbled down a few marginalia giving more insights. He was convinced that Georgios had been "given the chop for his misconduct". As he knew from his aunt, the Duchess of Edinburgh, née Maria Alexandrovna of Russia, "Georg Hellenios [...] has proved so tactless, without manners or bounds that everyone was appalled at his misbehaviour, clownish nature, and silly pranks". Since he was considered a bad example for the future tsar, he was sent packing.^[xiii] According to Georgios' later wife, Marie Bonaparte, the false reports sent home to the Russian Court accused the Greek prince of having dragged Nicholas to disreputable places and having encouraged him to violate the sanctity of a temple.

It is hard to ascertain which side of the reports was right. Georgios, known to be a "man of the people", had indeed, and famously so, introduced his cousin to the taverns of Athens in November 1890. Both from Nicholas' diary and from Japanese police reports we know that he and his entourage frequently slipped away to go on visits on shore during their journey, even during the week before Easter, being entertained by Geishas and maybe also prostitutes. However, the initiative for these visits came both from the Russian officers on board and from Nicholas himself, who had been told about Japanese women by one of his naval cousins and was out to enjoy himself. The "dark side" of the

grand tour was a tacit understanding that highborn European youths would be able to “sow their wild oats” in the relative anonymity of faraway places. In how far Prince Georgios, who, according to his later wife, was not even interested in women, could be held responsible for the digressions is impossible to judge.

Nevertheless, the prince had to leave the party in disgrace, travelling home alone via New York and London – where he was not received by Queen Victoria. Only on 30 July 1891 was he finally embraced by his paternal grandfather, King Christian IX, in Copenhagen.

According to Marie Bonaparte, the disgraceful end of Georgios’ eastern journey was one of a series of experiences which left him a scarred and embittered man. The second event, the so-called Cretan Drama, was strangely involved with the first one. In 1897/98, Tsar Nicholas II, feeling eternally indebted to his cousin for his rescue and sorry for his subsequent unfair removal, decisively supported Georgios’ installation as High Commissioner of the semi-autonomous Cretan State. For years, the Cretans had been struggling for independence from the Ottoman Empire and unity with the Kingdom of Greece. Georgios’ election after another insurrection and the subsequent – disastrous – Greco-Turkish War, represented a significant step towards this goal and a late prove of Asty’s predictions. Unfortunately, though, the prince, being formally a servant of the Ottoman Sultan, was unable to fulfil the hopes for complete re-union. By 1906, not even his friend and cousin Nicholas, troubled by the consequences of the Russo-Japanese War and the subsequent Revolution of 1905, would be able to help. The man who had been hailed as a “messiah” by his Cretan subjects had to secretly be rescued from the isle by a British cruiser. He would never recover from the shame, withdrawing to France and Denmark and to a shell of embittered loneliness.

Fairy tale endings?

The above-mentioned article from Asty, by resorting to the language of the fairy tale, implied a happy ending for the poorer, but abler prince and his small, but once glorious country. In 1891, this twist did not come true for Prince Georgios. In the long run, however, he proved to be more fortunate than his cousin. For while the delicate prince with the scar in his face, due to no small degree to the erratic policies of his first decade

in office, would finally end his life in the turmoil of the Russian revolution (aged 50), the giant prince with the scar on his soul died the longest-living member of his dynasty in 1957, at 88.

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- [xi] Minister Plenipotentiary Wesdehlen to Chancellor Caprivi, 17.5.1891, Archives of the German Foreign Office, The Greek royal family, R 7476.
- [xii] Asty, 6.5.1891.
- [xiii] Report, 16.8.91, Archives of the German Foreign Office, The Greek royal family, R 7476.

Louis Antoine de Bourbon, Duc d'Angoulême: The loyal Dauphin

Heidi Mehrkens

On 2 August 1830 the heir to the throne of France, Prince Louis Antoine de Bourbon, Duc d'Angoulême, was facing a tremendously difficult decision. Paris was once more in turmoil and the people on the barricades. The royal family had fled from the dramatic events of the July revolution to the Château de Rambouillet. Here, on the outskirts of the capital, King Charles X signed his declaration of abdication in favour of his grandson, the nine-year-old Henri de Bourbon, Duc de Bordeaux.



Louis Antoine de Bourbon, Duc d'Angoulême, engraving, c. 1827

The king's eldest son and legitimate successor Louis Antoine is said to have hesitated for twenty solid minutes, during which his wife begged him not to countersign the declaration. In the end, Louis Antoine officially abandoned all his rights to the throne. The dauphin's sacrifice of handing over his rights of succession to a child was supposed to provide the dynasty with a fresh, innocent and hence generally acceptable alternative to the generations which had fallen from grace. In spite of all of this, the elder branch of the Bourbon dynasty never successfully reclaimed power in France.

With hindsight it is difficult to assess the Duc d'Angoulême's motivation for abdicating after roughly twenty minutes as King Louis XIX; the prince has left no personal account of the events. The question is nevertheless worth asking, since Prince Louis Antoine would have been the obvious choice as King Charles's successor. In the summer of 1830, the dauphin was a respectable man of 55 years. His marriage had produced no children,

but he was devoted to his wife and his nephew, and it is likely he never had a mistress. The prince lived a quiet life far from scandal; his reputation had not been compromised in any way during the fifteen years of Bourbon reign since Napoleon's final defeat in 1815.

As a military leader, Louis Antoine had fought actual battles and shown some bravery. He was neither sick nor an imbecile, even though some of his contemporaries (as well as historians) did not think very highly of the 'mediocre' and hardly impressive prince. But mind you, the biological gamble of hereditary monarchy had produced many heirs to the throne one would consider less equal to the task. Louis Antoine might not have been a Prince Charming, which certainly contributed to his dilemma, but the real reason why the last dauphin of France voluntarily opted out of the responsibilities of a future ruler lay in his challenging relationship with his family.

'La Famille Royale'. The French Royal Family around 1822 (by Gautier). The Duc d'Angoulême is standing on the right, together with his brother the Duc de Berry, who died in 1820



According to Chateaubriand who, many years later, paid the Bourbon dynasty his respects

during their exile in Gorizia in the Habsburg Empire, the Duc d'Angoulême complained bitterly that he had signed the abdication of Rambouillet against his better judgment and merely in order to obey his father. It seems that the royal heir to one of the most powerful thrones in Europe had been trapped for years between conflicting claims of obligations towards his family and his own political sentiment. According to the historian Guillaume Bertier de Sauvigny, the Duc d'Angoulême suffered from a full-grown inferiority complex. It seems hardly realistic that a loyal, obedient prince should overcome his deep-seated frustration against the backdrop of a life-threatening revolution and rise boldly to brush aside the dominant father's wishes. Maybe understandably, if unheroically, the dauphin once more did as he was told and denied his dynastic right of succession.

The eldest son of the Comte d'Artois, who was the youngest brother of King Louis XVI of France, was welcomed into the elegant world of the court of Versailles as a grandchild of France and possible successor to the throne on 6 August 1775, when the royal couple was still without offspring. Little Prince Louis Antoine's education, from the tender age of five, was placed in the hands of his governor, the Marquis de Sérent, who supervised a phalanx of three spiritual preceptors, two sub-governors and four institutors. Sérent educated the prince and his younger brother, Charles Ferdinand de Bourbon, Duc de Berry (1778-1820), at the Château de Beauregard. By doing so the governor created a visible and deliberate distance to the royal court at Versailles, where the boys' merry father enjoyed the company of the fashionable set of Paris and indulged in the pleasures of gambling and adultery.



**The Duc d'Angoulême in military uniform in 1796.
Portrait by Henri-Pierre Danloux**

The Revolution of 1789 abruptly ended the sheltered childhood at Beauregard and threw the fourteen-year-old Louis Antoine into the vicissitudes of long years of exile. It also opened up the unusual path of a military career for the two royal princes. Angoulême and Berry underwent training at the royal artillery school in Turin, where they had been invited to stay with the King of Sardinia. They served in the ranks and earned their Captain's epaulettes, eager to follow in the footsteps of their father and lead an émigré army into battle. In the end, both sons of the Comte d'Artois would be 'far more at home on the battlefield than their father'.^[1] In April 1800, Louis Antoine took command of a Bavarian cavalry regiment and fought in the Battle of Hohenlinden. His position as a French refugee prince, caught between power struggles on the continent, prevented him from further military engagements, though: He spent more than ten years in England, waiting impatiently for an opportunity to join the fight against Napoleon.

Among fellow soldiers Prince Louis Antoine certainly felt accepted and, as a junior member of a once mighty ruling dynasty, capable of shaping his own destiny at least to some extent. The military career opened up some opportunities to prove himself, to earn recognition on the battlefield rather than at the Bourbon exile courts, where others constantly outshone him. The young Louis Antoine apparently was a decent, very shy lad, always thoughtful, lacking the easy manners of his charismatic and handsome father Charles d'Artois and the carefree attitude of his younger brother, the Duc de Berry. A contemporary considered the adult Louis Antoine to be 'incomplete, but not incapable' – or, as Charles de Rémusat put it in his memoirs: 'He does not know anything, but he listens with attention, he wishes to learn the truth...' With considerably less benevolence, the sharp-tongued Duchess d'Abrantes preferred to call the Duc d'Angoulême 'less than a man, nothing, a human envelope, *voilà tout*.' [\[2\]](#)

To be fair, this human envelope quite successfully assisted with the reinstallation of the Bourbon reign in France after the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire. In 1814 Louis Antoine finally joined the British invasion of France, and his entry into the city of Bordeaux on 12 March, on the heels of a small corps of British and Portuguese soldiers under the command of General Beresford, marked the beginning of the Bourbon restoration. The population acclaimed and welcomed the prince, and his presence helped win local support for the Bourbon King Louis XVIII.

A year later, in March 1815, the Duc d'Angoulême was again in Bordeaux when he learned – apparently in the middle of a ball – that Napoleon had returned from his exile on the island of Elba. Following orders from his uncle the king, Louis Antoine commanded the royalist army in the southern Rhône river valley, but was unable to prevent Napoleon's return to Paris.



'L'Enjambée Impériale', print, 1815. The Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême stand by and watch how it takes Napoleon Bonaparte but a single step from Elba to France (Source: Gallica, BNF)

Perhaps the prince's finest hour as a soldier and military leader

came in 1823, when he successfully commanded a French corps sent into Spain to help reinstall the hapless King Ferdinand VII on the throne. Angoulême's 'Hundred Thousand Sons of Saint Louis' fought victoriously in the Battle of Trocadéro; Louis Antoine was awarded the title Prince of Trocadéro for his achievements in restoring his cousin's absolute powers. The prince was less successful in preventing Ferdinand's return from becoming a cruel and bloody reaction. Disillusioned, the Duc d'Angoulême left Spain and 'refused the honors and titles which Ferdinand VII wished to shower upon him'.

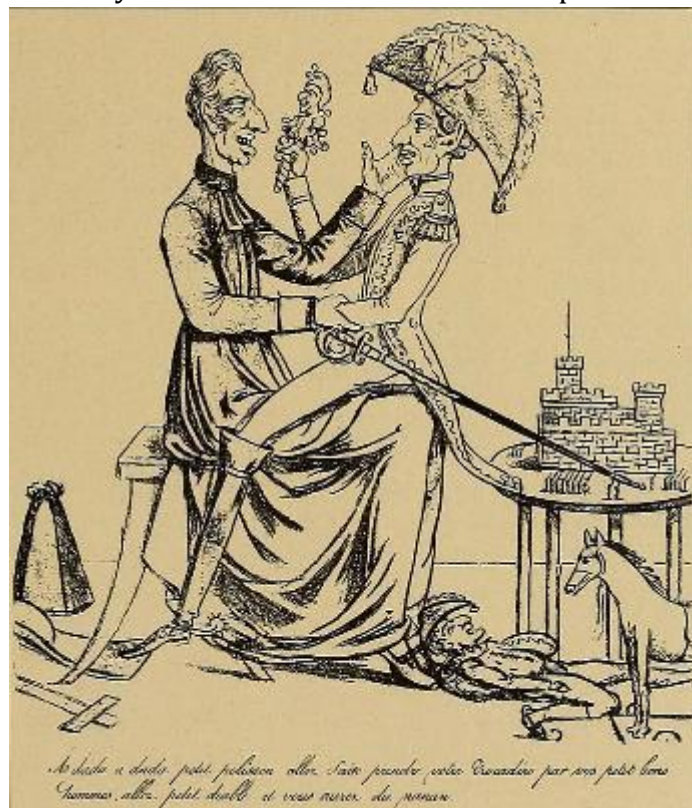
The military service created a niche and some occupation for the prince who otherwise had no say in dynastic or political decisions and was held at arm's length from power once Bourbon reign had been renewed in France. It seems fair to argue that his minor position within the dynasty – where he was dominated by his father, his uncle and to some extent by his wife – as well as his own passivity prevented Louis Antoine from developing anything resembling self-esteem.

Between 1814 and 1824, during the reign of King Louis XVIII, France became a constitutional monarchy that was based on the Charter of 1814. Louis Antoine, second in line to the throne after his father, the Comte d'Artois, wholeheartedly supported the constitutional project. On 16 March 1815, all princes of the Royal House swore an oath of allegiance to the king and the charter. With his reign interrupted by Bonaparte's return to power for a hundred days in summer 1815, Louis XVIII decided to renew the oath during the first royal session of parliament on 7 October 1815. Following his opening speech, Louis Antoine and the other princes stepped forward individually and

swore 'to be faithful to the king and to respect the constitutional charter as well as the laws within the realm.' [3]

Other than his father, the fiercely conservative heir to the throne, Louis Antoine actually meant what he said. However, in the stormy first years of France's post-1815 monarchical constitutionalism, the Duc d'Angoulême was kept in a meaningless position. The prince was a blank sheet for supporters of the constitution as well as its enemies, so he ended up being considered too liberal for the political right and too conservative for support from the moderate left. Louis Antoine did not show the initiative to carve out his own political identity. Whoever tried to use him as a pawn between his father and his uncle – who disagreed on many things, perhaps most of all the role of the monarch within a constitutional system – found the prince too passive to actually become an asset for political opposition.

This caricature ridicules the relationship between father and son: the Duc d'Angoulême is wearing a uniform; still he remains a child on his father's knee
(Source: Gallica, BNF)



The prince's carefully kept reserve, his silence in all matters dynastic and constitutional became even more obvious when Louis XVIII passed away in 1824 and his brother succeeded to the throne as King Charles X. The 'worldly thought and materialistic policy' of the late king had always appeared to his successor to be a fatalistic acceptance of the philosophical and revolutionary doctrines of the eighteenth century which had brought the monarchy to ruin. When Charles X embarked on a mission to bring the Bourbon dynasty back to its true (that is pre-constitutional) glory, his eldest son did nothing to convince him otherwise. Without raising any objections, the dauphin supported the king's sumptuous coronation ceremony in the cathedral of Reims on 25 May 1825. The

traditional site of consecration for French kings invoked strong – and, to many contemporaries, completely outdated – memories of the ancient regime.



Francois Gérard:
Coronation of Charles X
(1827). Detail: The King
embraces his son and
successor, the Duc
d'Angoulême

By contributing to the efforts of reviving an old Bourbon glory, the dauphin not only obeyed his father's wishes, but also

showed loyalty to his cousin and wife, Marie Thérèse de Bourbon, Duchess of Angoulême. *Madame Royale*, as she was known, was born in Versailles in 1778, the only daughter of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. As a teenager she endured more than three years of imprisonment at the Temple fortress (1792-95). The only member of the immediate royal family to survive the terror of the French Revolution, she married her cousin Louis Antoine in exile in 1799.

Marie Thérèse was revered in legitimist circles as the embodiment of the old regime, but she was not a winning personality. Captivity and the terror she had experienced in her early years had left her hard-edged and fearless; she was respected, but not loved. She remained forever bitter about the events of the French Revolution, and her husband silently accepted that she never warmed to the constitutional idea. Add to this that the Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême were both level-headed and devout human beings. Both completely lacked the elegance and ease that might have helped to endear them to large sections of the French people. The cherishing of an absolutist past, which was embraced by both Marie Thérèse and the king, failed to create public support for the cause of a modernised, nineteenth-century Bourbon monarchy – and for the heir to the throne.

Antoine-Jean Gros: Marie Thérèse Charlotte de France, Duchesse d'Angoulême, 1816



Between 1824 and 1830, the Duc d'Angoulême tried to make the most of his uncomfortable situation, which means that he did his best to stay out of harm's way. The dauphin was installed as a member of the state council and the senate. Granting the prince access to these ministerial bodies was hardly an act of support or encouragement, but the king's attempt to control his son. In order to avoid conflict, Louis Antoine kept a low profile. When he was given a task or a mission by the king, he fulfilled it meticulously and without asking questions. 'But', he admitted frankly, 'when I am not consulted or employed, then I remain quiet and I go hunting.' [\[4\]](#)

The prince considered open opposition to the king not a suitable occupation for the heir to a constitutional monarchy. Looking at the severe damage to the dynasty caused by his father's constant meddling with government affairs, the son's rejection to engage in political opposition seems quite understandable. On the other hand, the dauphin clearly lacked more than just a talent for plotting and scheming. The Baron d'Haussez described the prince's participation in the council in 1829 as follows: 'On Wednesdays and Sundays the meetings were at the palace, where the king presided and the Dauphin attended. [...] The Dauphin would leave through the military almanac on which he would note in pencil the transfer of [military] assignments, the list of which the minister of war, after going over these notations, would make up and resubmit to him. Otherwise the Dauphin took very little part in the discussions, hardly ever broke into them except to make some brief remarks, and too often introducing them with some such apologetic phrase as: "Perhaps what I'm going to say is crazy, but you won't pay any attention to it anyway.'" [\[5\]](#)

Notwithstanding his widely deplored lack of enthusiasm in the field of politics, the dauphin remained a dedicated military leader right until the final day of his dynasty's regime. On 29 July 1830, when Paris was on the barricades, Louis Antoine was appointed supreme commander of the royal troops. It seems Charles X relied on his son's example of loyalty and bravery to refresh the soldiers' commitment to defending the king and his dynasty. Angoulême was all in favour of mobilizing the army and crushing the uprising in Paris, exclaiming in the session of the council: 'Let's accept our destiny proudly and perish with arms in our hands.' He wanted to 'mount a horse' (*monter à cheval*) and make a difference on the territory he was familiar with – military engagement.

However, all hope of conquering Paris was lost two days later, when large parts of the remaining royal troops refused to fight and abandoned the prince. The Duc d'Angoulême seized to be *generalissimus* almost at the same moment when he lost his position as dauphin. On his way to England, facing a new exile, Angoulême is reported to have said: 'I have only one regret; it is that I did not die in Paris at the head of the guard.'

[\[6\]](#)



Henri d'Artois, Duc de Bordeaux, inspects the royal guard at Rambouillet on 2 August 1830 (Musée de la Legion d'Honneur / Wikipedia)

On 24 August 1830, the dethroned King Charles X signed the Declaration of Lulworth,

England. The statement revoked the appointment of Louis-Philippe d'Orléans as temporary lieutenant general of the kingdom and declared the Duc de Bordeaux to be pronounced as King Henry V, as soon as the boy would reach majority at the age of 14 on 20 September 1833. This time the ever loyal dauphin Louis Antoine, Duc d'Angoulême, refused to sign the document against his better judgment. His action

caused great insecurity among the supporters of the legitimist cause as to who was now to be considered the rightful pretender. The declaration split the defenders of the exiled Bourbon dynasty in quarrelling fractions around the former king (Carlists), the dauphin (Dauphinists) and his nephew Bordeaux (Henriquists).

The last dauphin of France had missed out on the opportunity to gather troops around Bordeaux and conquer Paris while it was still in turmoil. Louis Antoine aka Louis XIX would never lead troops again. A loyal servant to his dynasty, he dedicated the rest of his life in exile, where he died in 1844, to the intellectual and moral education of his nephew, the Duc de Bordeaux.

Suggested Reading

- Vincent W. Beach (1971), *Charles X of France. His Life and Times*, Paris
- Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny (1966, original 1956), *The Bourbon Restoration*, translated from the French by Lynn M. Case, Philadelphia
- Michel Bernard Cartron (2010), *Louis XIX celui qui fut roi 20 minutes. Mémoires de Louis Antoine d'Artois duc d'Angoulême*, Versailles. (These are no authentic memoirs, but a biography written from the prince's perspective.)
- Michel Bernard Cartron (2014), *Madame Royale. L'énigme résolue*, Versailles
- André Castelot (1988), *Charles X, La fin d'un monde*, Paris
- Vicomte de Guichen (1909), *Le Duc d'Angoulême (1775-1844)*, deuxième édition, Paris

[1] Beach (1971), 92.

[2] Cabanis (1972), 442.

[3] Archives diplomatiques pour l'histoire du tems et des états. 5^{ème} vol : France, de 1814 à 1825, Stuttgart, Cotta, 1825, 68, footnote**.

[4] Cabanis (1972), 443.

[5] Bertier de Sauvigny (1966), 272f.

[6] Bertier de Sauvigny (1966), 406; quoting d'Urville's diary, 19 August 1830, 470.

How to educate a last minute heir: The Duchess of Kent and the Kensington System

Jennifer Henderson Crane

In 1861 Queen Victoria suffered a devastating loss that brought her to the brink of collapse. “The dreaded calamity has befallen us,” she recorded in her journal at Windsor Castle, “which seems like an awful dream, from which I cannot recover.” For those even remotely familiar with Queen Victoria, the image of the black-draped monarch is immediately evoked, a wife in perpetual mourning for the beloved husband she lost in 1861. However, the quoted line does not refer to the passing of Albert the Prince Consort, but instead to that of his paternal aunt and mother-in-law, Victoire, the



Duchess of Kent, who passed away in March of the same year.

Henry Bone: The duchess of Kent with her daughter, the future queen Victoria (c. 1824/25)

Victoria had an at times fraught relationship with her mother, but Victoire’s death appeared to erase the past difficulties and animosities, leaving her daughter feeling like a bereft child. She opened herself fully to her grief, so much so that her obsessive hold onto mourning protocol provoked much

commentary even outside of court circles. In her work, *Magnificent Obsession*, Helen Rappaport quotes an American diplomat lamenting that, “the Queen carries her sorrow at her mother’s death to an absurd extent... There are no balls this season and in lieu thereof but one concert, and to this only the Ministers, and their Ladies and Chief Secretaries only are to be invited’.”

Just as Victoria held varying emotions for her mother, so too have historians held variant stances on Victoire, as well as on her perceived motives and ambition. Contradictions abound in her portrayals: she is both vindictive and weak-willed, a cold-hearted mother and a loving nurturer, and an interloping foreigner seeking riches and lonely widow trapped in her daughter's future kingdom. As for Victoria, possessing a series of contradictions herself, her relationship with her mother led to her clinging even closer to Albert, the man ultimately responsible for bringing the two women together, and it is safe to conjecture that no one better than he knew of the history between Victoire and Victoria. This essay is a brief examination of Victoire, and her relationship with her royal daughter.

Princess Marie Luise Victoire, daughter of Duke Francis and Duchess Augusta of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, was born in Coburg on 17 August 1786, in what was still the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. She was one of nine children; among their number an older sister, Juliane, became a Russian Grand Duchess while her younger brother, Leopold, eventually rose to be the first king of the Belgians.



Sir Georges Hayter: Portrait of Victoire, Duchess of Kent (1835)

If history had play out differently for Leopold, England might have played a bigger part in his life rather than that of his elder sister. In 1816 he married Princess Charlotte Augusta, the only child of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the sole legitimate grandchild and heiress presumptive of her grandfather, George III. But Charlotte never lived to become queen, and Leopold never became her consort. Eighteen months after their wedding, she died at Claremont House in Surrey following the stillbirth of their first child.

At this time, November 1817, Victoire herself was already a widow. She had married Prince Emich Charles of Leiningen in 1803 at the age of seventeen (the bridegroom being more than twenty years her senior), and had had two children by him, Prince Charles and Princess Feodore. By the time the great marriage race amongst the remaining sons of George III got under way following Charlotte's death, Victoire was a prime potential candidate, and had the added advantage of proven fertility. Ultimately she and Edward, the Duke of Kent, were the winners in the quest for an heir upon the birth of Princess Alexandrine Victoria on 24 May 1819, just five days short of their first anniversary. But whatever happiness Victoire enjoyed in her second marriage was short-lived. The Duke contracted pneumonia when he and his small family were in Sidmouth, and died on 23 January 1820 at the age of fifty-two. Less than a week later, his father George III also died; Victoire's eight-month old baby was now third in line for the throne after her uncles Frederick, the Duke of York and William, the Duke of Clarence.

Victoire was now, for all intents and purposes, marooned in England. As he was his late father's heir, Prince Charles, then in his mid-teens, was back in his principality of Leiningen while Feodore remained with her mother and sister. There were not enough funds for Victoire and her daughters to return to Coburg; even if there were, she felt it would be unwise for Victoria to leave English soil. Neither George IV nor Parliament were inclined to grant more than the minimum to the Duchess of Kent. According to Carrolly Erickson, one of Victoria's biographer's, Parliament granted the Duchess £6,000 a year. This compares unfavourably to the yearly £50,000 allotted to Leopold as Charlotte's widower; out of this annual income the Duchess received £3,000 a year.

As for accommodations, Victoire and her daughters were allowed the use of a part of Kensington Palace. Kensington had been a royal residence since it was built in the seventeenth century with William III and Mary II as its first residents. But by the time the Duchess and her daughters moved in, the palace was in a sorry state of neglect. This is an element empathised by Erickson who noted the young princess grew up in surroundings that were little more than dilapidated. Kensington was not one of Victoria's favourite places. She once described it as "empty - empty, bare, dreary, and comfortless ... nothing but bare walls and bare boards." It is no surprise that, soon after

becoming queen, she left the palace for good and entered the recently built Buckingham Palace, as its first sovereign resident.

Sir George Hayter: Portrait of Princess Victoria of Kent with her spaniel Dash (1833)



They may have lived within a palace, but Victoire quickly found that her income of £9,000 was not nearly enough, especially as, with her husband's death, she had inherited his debts. While it was still within the realm of possibilities that her sister-in-law Adelaide, the Duchess of Clarence, could still produce a living child, this seemed increasingly unlikely, and Victoria

appeared to be headed for the throne. It is here where Victoire has been portrayed as a spendthrift; her daughter was the future of Britain and, as such, should present the appropriate image and live the kind of life an heiress should expect to live. But in this wish to present an expected image of royalty, therein lies a contradiction with the Duchess. She wanted the trappings that came with their exalted status, but did not wish Victoria to take her rightful place at the courts of both George IV and then William IV.

This has been perceived as both her desire that the Princess not be unduly influenced by the decadent Hanoverians, as well as Victoire wanting to impose her own sway and control over Victoria. There is an episode that features heavily in Victoria's numerous biographies where the future queen was scooped up into a carriage carrying George IV and his younger sister Mary, the Duchess of Gloucester, for a ride. Witnessing this, Victoire was full of fear that her daughter would be taken from her by the king. Whether this episode served as a catalyst for her excessive control over Victoria is unclear; the Duchess herself left no memoirs, and it is possible such personal issues would not have featured even if she had done so.

What is clear is that Victoria was brought up away from the royal courts, and her father's family, under a rigid structure known as the Kensington System. According to

this, Victoria was never to be left on her own, but always had to have at least one adult in attendance. If not her mother, then her governess Baroness Louise Lehzen guarded the princess against any possible dangers, or undue influence. Even simple tasks, such as walking down the stairs, were treated with extreme caution; Victoria was required to hold the hand of her mother or Lehzen, or anyone else in charge. Socialisation with other high ranking children was not encouraged, with few exceptions, leaving Victoria isolated amongst a world of adults. Her adored sister Feodore married Prince Ernest of Hohenlohe-Langenburg in 1828 at Kensington Palace, and left for Germany where they would have six children. Victoria was not even permitted to sleep in her own bedroom, having instead to share one with her mother right up until she became queen.

The pride in her newfound independence is evident in the journal entry for the morning of her accession. Having been summoned to see the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Coyngham, she recorded that she “went into my sitting-room (only in my dressing gown), and alone, and saw them.” Later in the same entry, having reflected on the day’s duties, she continued in the same vein, meeting various dignities of her council “all in my room and alone... Took my dinner upstairs alone.” She additionally had a room made up for herself and spent her first night by herself. If the Duchess had any personal motives behind the Kensington System, then she ultimately failed. Upon Victoria’s becoming queen came a period of estrangement with Victoire which lasted until, with Albert’s intercession, they reconciled.

Alfred Tidey: Portrait of John Conroy (1786–1854), British Army officer (1836)



There is a matter of debate about just who designed and implemented the Kensington System, and what it was meant to achieve.

While the Duchess has received her fair share of the blame, and that during her own

lifetime, the other half of the blame goes to Sir John Conroy, the comptroller of the Duchess, and former equerry of the Duke of Kent. The precise nature of their relationship is still unknown, although many historians are in concurrence that it was probably not sexual.

While there is agreement that Conroy possessed a hold of Victoire, there is much grey area as to the motives behind the pair. Katherine Hudson's book, *A Royal Conflict*, is a considerably more sympathetic take on Conroy, and others empathise the Duchess's desire to merely bring her daughter up properly as befitting the heir to the throne.

The 2009 film *The Young Victoria* presents Victoire as both firmly under the control of her comptroller, but also as one defiantly set on her own goals of a regency if William IV died before Victoria's eighteenth birthday. As it turned out, there was no need of a regency as the king lived past his niece's milestone. William IV was suspicious of Conroy (he was not fond of the Duchess either), and plainly saw him as the one aching for power when his niece came to the throne.

In an incident portrayed in the film, as well as in countless books, the king made his feelings for the pair crystal clear during his birthday dinner in 1836. In front of his guests, William IV said he hoped his life would be "spared for nine months longer... I should then have the satisfaction of leaving the exercise of the Royal authority to the personal authority of that young lady, heiress presumptive to the Crown, and not in the hands of a person now near me, who is surrounded by evil advisers and is herself incompetent to act with propriety in the situation in which she would be placed."



Kensington
Palace: East
Front with
Queen
Victoria
statue
(Wikimedia
commons)

Such a public outburst demonstrates the contemporary assumption that the Duchess and Conroy were intent on controlling the crown through Victoria if there was to be a regency. After becoming queen, Victoria excluded Conroy from both the Proclamation and Coronation as well. Following her reconciliation with her mother, Victoria firmly established Conroy as the sole villain. At his death in March 1854, she noted that she “heard from Mama that Sir J. Conroy is dead! It has naturally shocked her very much, bringing back to her memory so many recollections of a painful nature. He is dead & with him will be buried the recollection of the many sufferings he caused us both!”

Victoire’s death brought back such feelings, and she evidently held him responsible for all the trouble with her mother before her reign, and that she “regretted the sorrow & distress beloved Mama had often undergone & the misunderstandings, so often caused by others.” Victoria’s memories became clouded, and her grief erupted again when, upon going through her mother’s belongings, she discovered a trove of childhood mementoes Victoire had saved, including a notebook wherein she recorded her daughter’s milestones in learning to walk and when she lost each baby tooth. Victoria rejoiced that her mother had held “such tender care & love & affection for me!”

However touching these words are, there is a caveat that must be taken with her journals at this point in the collection of Victoria’s writings. In the time leading up to her death in January 1901, she had charged her youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, to edit her journals and extract anything deemed not for public consumption. Beatrice promptly carried out her mother’s wishes, and excised much in the way of personal details, and, in many cases, completely rewrote entries. This is apparent when comparing Beatrice’s edits against transcripts made by Lord Esher, Reginald Brett; fortunately, due to his work, a selection of journals from early in her reign survive, leaving Victoria’s original words intact, thereby showing just how her daughter fulfilled



her brief. Therefore, these references to her mother and childhood should be taken with the proverbial grain of salt.

George Koberwein: Princess Victoria, Duchess of Kent and Strathearn in 1857
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Whatever Victoire's motives in raising her daughter in the Kensington System, if she had any indeed, it cannot be argued that it was a complete failure in that it afforded Victoria the chance to depend upon herself, however briefly before her

marriage to Albert. Victoria may have had a few misjudgements in the first ten years of her reign, but ultimately became a force with which to reckon. She was by no means a perfect or even an ideal monarch, but, having endured such an upbringing it may well have shown her what kind of queen she wanted to be. In many ways, having endured the loss of both her mother and husband within the space of nine months may go a long way in understanding the degree of Victoria's mourning following December 1861 when Albert died.

Suggested Reading

- Carrolly Erickson, *Her Little Majesty* (2004)
- Katherine Hudson, *A Royal Conflict: Sir John Conroy and the Young Victoria* (1994)
- [Kensington Palace History](#)
- [Queen Victoria's Journals](#)
- Helen Rappaport, *Magnificent Obsession: Victoria, Albert, and the Death that Changed the Monarchy* (2011)
- Kate Williams, *Becoming Queen* (2009)

Luigi Amedeo of Savoia, Duke of the Abruzzi: The Explorer Prince

Maria-Christina Marchi

'At eleven thirty on Monday, 12 June, greeted by the gunfire of the fortresses and of the ships, and cheered by the crowds, the *Stella Polare* (Polar Star), on which the young prince Luigi Amedeo of Savoia, Duke of the Abruzzi, lieutenant of the ship, was travelling, together with his companions set sail from Christiania towards the Pole, so as to better study the geography of the *Franz Josef land*. The ships in the harbour were decorated with flags; the sailors were shouting their hurrahs; it can be said that the entire population of Christiania had rushed to give a cordial, clamorous farewell to the Italian prince who responded [...] to this enthusiastic reaction by waving his cap. [...] The sea was calm; the sky was cloudy, but not menacing; everything seemed to wish the maritime and scientific endeavour [...] well.



The departure of the *Stella Polare*, *Illustrazione Italiana*, 18 June 1899

The Prince and Princess of Naples, who had arrived in Christiania on Saturday evening, so as to be able to bid their cousin farewell and bring him the greetings and well-wishes of the King and Queen, were also greeted by the crowd with repeated hurrahs.

King Oscar [of Sweden-Norway] himself gave the order that the fortresses saluted the departure of the *Stella Polare* with twenty-one cannon shots; all of the newspapers wished the travellers a happy journey...

Rarely had there been a departure for a trip of Arctic exploration so fervently greeted by the royal institution, by the international navy in the port, by the population, by the press.

[...] Salve, o Principe! E sempre avanti Savoia!'

(Illustrazione Italiana, Anno XXVI, N.25, 18 June 1899)

The scene described in the *Illustrazione Italiana* narrated the departure of an expedition set out to reach, for the first time in history, the northern-most tip of the planet: the North Pole. However, it was no ordinary expedition, because at the helm of the *Stella Polare* stood no ordinary man, but a Prince of the House of Savoia, the Italian royal family. The ceremonial pomp surrounding the ship's departure suggests that the expedition was important to both the royal family, since the heir to the throne was present in Christiania, and to the Italian people. This was made evident by the extensive press coverage of the occasion. At the centre of it all was Luigi Amedeo, who was only 26 years old at the time, and had already begun making a name for himself as both an explorer and mountaineer. He had voluntarily embarked on this mission to conquer the North Pole, in a bid to expand the scientific knowledge of its geography, while simultaneously promoting a positive image of the royal family. He served as a figure with which to promote the heroic and progress-driven nature of the Savoia family; he was their explorer Prince.

The Duke of the Abruzzi, *La Tribuna Illustrata della Domenica*, 21 May 1899



Luigi Amedeo Giuseppe Maria Ferdinando Francesco of Savoia was born on 29 January 1873, in Madrid, to Amedeo of Savoia (1845-1890) and his wife Maria Vittoria Dal Pozzo della Cisterna (1846-1876). His father, son of Vittorio Emanuele II and younger brother of Umberto I, was at the time the king of Spain, yet would have to flee the country and abdicate his throne shortly after Luigi Amedeo's birth. Thus, Luigi Amedeo and his two older brothers grew up in Italy and were educated in their home country. At the tender age of six, after his mother's premature death and according to Savoia military tradition, Luigi Amedeo was enrolled in the Royal Navy in Genoa as a ship's boy and later moved to the Royal Naval Academy in Livorno, quickly rising through the ranks. The Duke's career as a world traveller began in 1889, upon his promotion to mid-shipman. He was assigned to the *Amerigo Vespucci*, a wooden-hulled sailing ship, which took him around the world, crossing from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, and all the way back to Italy. Only a few years later, in 1893, as second in command of the gun-boat *Volturno*, he sailed to Italian Somaliland – the first of the House of Savoia to do so –, where there was news of a possible

revolt against colonial rule. His position in the navy gave him the opportunity to travel extensively, exposing him to the world, while simultaneously presenting a Savoia prince to foreign nations and national press.

However, although the sea was inextricably tied to his career, he was also very passionate about mountains and mountaineering. A common leisure pursuit among the Savoia family members, mountaineering was also one of the preferred hobbies of both Vittorio Emanuele II and Queen Margherita. Luigi Amedeo's career as a climber took him further however, than either of the two monarchs could ever have imagined. Even before his expedition to Africa, the young Duke had conquered a number of impressive summits, including Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc. In 1894 he climbed the Matterhorn's most demanding route, the Zmutt ridge, which had only been pioneered in 1879 by the English mountaineer Albert Frederick Mummery, who accompanied the Duke on his climb five years later. In 1897 he was the first man to summit Mount St. Elias in Alaska, after numerous expeditions, including one funded by National Geographic in 1890, had failed to reach its peak. His exploit was celebrated both at home and abroad, fuelling much admiration for the prince. After his Alaskan feat, Luigi Amedeo went on to climb numerous other peaks, making and breaking records, from scaling sixteen of the nineteen peaks in the Ruwenzori range in Uganda, to reaching the highest ever recorded height of 7500m on the K2.

Thus, from a young age the Duke of the Abruzzi was a well-travelled explorer and mountaineer, with an interest in pushing natural boundaries and the expansion of scientific knowledge. However, because of his royal status, he was no ordinary explorer and his achievements were used as examples of national character. His adventures meant that he best embodied Italian values, such as courage, as well as the desire to further scientific progress, all while representing the dynasty. His feats allowed the public to equate the Savoia with a degree of heroism that was much needed during the fin de siècle period, when the monarchy had been at the heart of a banking scandal and had endured the humiliating defeat of Adua in their Ethiopian colony. His journeys provided an opportunity for supplying both escapism, by turning them into adventure books, and success. This became particularly evident in 1899-1900, when the young explorer embarked on his journey to become the first man to reach the North Pole.

Unlike his previous journeys, Luigi Amedeo's trip to the Arctic attracted widespread media attention. He had assembled a team of experts and close friends in an attempt to reach the top of the world – something that had never been achieved before. His team comprised his loyal second in command Umberto Cagni (1863-1932), Lieutenant Francesco Querini (1867-1900), Dr Pietro Achille Cavalli Molinelli (1865-1958) and a number of academic experts, who would study the geographical conditions of the North Pole. Moreover they were greatly aided by the

guidance of Norwegian Captain Eversen (1851-1937) and his team of sailors who were better acquainted with the maritime conditions. It was meant to be both a journey of scientific discovery, as well as one of human conquest. In the introduction to his written account of the expedition, which was also translated into English as *On the "Polar Star" in the Arctic Sea* (1903), the Duke wrote:

The practical use of Polar expeditions has often been discussed. If only the moral advantage to be derived from these expeditions be considered, I believe that it would suffice to compensate for the sacrifices they demand. As men who surmount difficulties in their daily struggle feel themselves strengthened for an encounter with still greater difficulties, so should also a nation feel itself still more encouraged and urged by the success won by its sons, to persevere in striving for its greatness and prosperity.



A contemporary postcard celebrating the explorer prince and the House of Savoia

This message is important in understanding the underlying motives behind such a journey, such an expedition – and why the Italian

crown would be so interested in financing it. The desire to draw attention to the success of the Italian royal family, which was directly linked to national success, was an important step in creating a positive image of Italy after a particularly difficult decade of political failures. Moreover, during the expedition Umberto I was assassinated and the wave of monarchical support that was triggered by the event was further fuelled by Luigi Amedeo's role as national hero. Despite the expedition's failure to reach the North Pole, they managed to go further north than anyone before them, reaching a latitude of 86°34', and thus securing a symbolic victory. Not even the fact that the Duke had not been with the team who had reached the northernmost point due to injuries he had sustained during the voyage, detracted from this Italian success story.

**Impressions from the journey to
the North Pole by De Martino**

The expedition was covered by the press from start to finish and the journey was followed by numerous

news sources, making it a public event. The departure was widely reported on, and the Italian heir to the throne, the future Vittorio Emanuele III, as well as King Oscar II of Sweden were present at Christiania when the Duke of the Abruzzi's vessel had set sail on June 12. The public's enthusiasm for the voyage grew, and according to a contemporary commentator, upon the royal's return in September 1900 he was greeted in Chiasso by 'incessant applause' and his carriages 'struggled to make way to the *Palazzo della Cisterna* through the crowd, who gripped by a true frenzy, unusual for the people of Turin, called the Duke numerous times to the balcony.'[\[1\]](#)



The expedition was followed by a conference in Rome in January 1901, which was held in order to present Luigi Amedeo's findings. His efforts were described by the press as 'heroic' and that it had been a 'triumph for the nation.' The conference lasted four hours, during which the Duke discussed his findings and highlighted the accomplishments of the expedition. Count Alessandro Guiccioli (1843-1922) noted that the conference had been a success mainly due to the Duke's powers of attraction, rather than the material handled, highlighting the importance of his royal status in procuring visibility for the crown and nation.



The Duke of the Abruzzi speaking at the conference on the Stella Polare expedition, *Illustrazione Italiana*, 20 January 1901

The press and nobility were not the only ones to be attracted to this tale. The story of the journey was even of interest to Emilio Salgari (1862-1911), the renowned writer of pirate adventures, who was fascinated by the Duke's adventures and managed to secure the details of

the voyage before the newspapers, publishing his embellished account of the journey before Luigi Amedeo's return to Italy. *The "Polar Star" and its adventurous journey* (1900) was so popular that a second edition was released that same year during the Christmas period. And it was not just Salgari who believed that the Duke's achievement should be celebrated by the literary world, as well as by the scientific one.

A collection of commemorative postcards, now held in the Archivio del Risorgimento di Bologna, was published between 1899 and 1901



Many professional and amateur poets wrote odes and sonnets about the *Stella Polare*, including Giovanni Pascoli (1855-1912), one of the most celebrated bards of the nineteenth century. Pascoli wrote one poem titled 'To Umberto Cagni', the expedition's second in command, and the one 'To the Duke of the Abruzzi and his Companions.' In the latter the poet celebrated the young Savoia's mission, calling him a 'pilot of heroes', celebrating his pioneering endeavours, as well as thanking him for 'bringing us [Italians] victory.' His stories went beyond the Italian borders as well, and in the early twentieth century, numerous books on the Duke's polar expedition were published all over Europe, including in Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands.

The widespread interest in the adventure, its fairytale-like quality with the inclusion of a princely figure, attracted much public attention and helped build an image around the Duke that tied crown and nation together in the mastering of arduous challenges. He featured on the covers of illustrated magazines and children's books alike, became a hero in the press and in literature, and allowed Italy to achieve new glories in the field of exploration. The Duke distracted from the wider, domestic problems and allowed the monarchical fairytale to continue for a little longer, gaining popularity for himself as well as for his dynasty. Although his chances of inheriting the crown were slim, he nonetheless served as an asset for the crown in his role as a young explorer prince.

During his youth the Duke served as a symbol of morality and heroism in Italy, and despite his disappointing performance during the First World War, he was remembered as an explorer and pioneer, and a 'truly national hero.'^[2] After his early death due to prostate cancer in 1933,

Professor Giotto Dainelli (1878-1968), a geographer and fellow of the *Accademia d'Italia*, gave a paper commemorating the royal prince at the evening meeting of the Royal Geographical Society on 15 May 1933. In it he described the Duke of the Abruzzi as having a 'moral significance which reaches beyond his glorious activity as an explorer; for he has been, to us, an example and a pure symbol, a forerunner and a prophet, in grey times, of the actual rebirth of our country.'

Images

- Stella Polare 1: The departure of the *Stella Polare*, *Illustrazione Italiana*, 18 June 1899 © BiASA
- Duca degli Abruzzi: The Duke of the Abruzzi, *La Tribuna Illustrata della Domenica*, 21 May 1899
- Stella Polare 3: Duke of the Abruzzi speaking at the conference on the *Stella Polare* expedition, *Illustrazione Italiana*, 20 January 1901 © BiASA
- 3 postcards commemorating the expedition, all printed between 1899 and 1901, from the *Archivio del Risorgimento di Bologna*

Suggested Reading

- Peter Bridges, 'A Prince of Climbers', *VQR*, Vol.76, (2000), pp.38-51
- Giotto Dainelli, 'The Geographical Work of H. R. H. the Late Duke of the Abruzzi', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 85, N.1, (Jul., 1933), pp.1-8
- Luigi Amedeo di Savoia, *On the "Polar Star" in the Arctic Sea* (London: Hutchinson, 1903)
- Mirella Tenderini and Michael Shandick, *The Duke of the Abruzzi: An Explorer's Life* (Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1997).

[1] Alessandro Guiccioli, *Diario di un conservatore*. (Milano: Edizioni del Borghese, 1973), 14 settembre 1900, p.262.

[2] Giotto Dainelli, 'The Geographical Work of H. R. H. the Late Duke of the Abruzzi', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 85, N.1, (Jul., 1933), pp.1-8, p.1.

Ludwig of Bavaria and Helmstadt: The Heroic Memory of an Unmilitary Prince

Frank Lorenz Müller

3 October 1909 was a big day for the small village of Helmstadt in Lower Franconia. Nothing very exciting had happened there for more than 40 years, but now an event of such magnitude was about to take place, that the Senior Postal Director from the nearby regional capital of Würzburg promised the villagers that he would deploy all the available post office motorcars to cope with the additional traffic on the day and would also reinforce the telegraph and telephone services. The inhabitants of Helmstadt were called upon to decorate their houses and the streets of the village, while Karl Scheller, a Würzburg florist, was contracted to bedeck the school hall, the dining hall of the local hostelry “Zur Krone” and – most important of all – the site of the monument with flowers. For 3 October 1909 was the day when – in the presence of a host of local worthies and, most importantly, of the man himself – Helmstadt’s monument commemorating the wounding of Prince Ludwig of Bavaria on the battlefield would be unveiled. The heroic moment had occurred when the heir to the Bavarian throne was involved in a skirmish with Prussian troops just outside Helmstadt on 25 July 1866 – the last time something exciting had happened there.

The German War of 1866 saw Prussia and her few allies pitted against Austria and the majority of the German states. The main campaign took place in Bohemia, where Prussian armies commanded by Helmuth von Moltke eventually defeated Austria’s northern army and Saxon units at Königgrätz on 3 July 1866. Even after this decisive victory there were some minor engagements in central Germany, though, where Prussian units attacked the forces of Austria’s Bavarian and Württemberg allies. One of these was the skirmish at Helmstadt. Serving as a junior officer within a unit commanded by his father, Prince Luitpold, the young Prince Ludwig of Bavaria was knocked off his horse by a Prussian bullet that hit him in the leg. Having lain on the ground for some time, he was eventually carried to a dressing station. It was only here that the wounded officer was recognised as a royal prince. Even though Ludwig had lost

a fair amount of blood and the surgeons failed to remove the bullet that was lodged in his thigh, the prince recovered. The day left him with a lifelong limp, though, and confirmed to this unenthusiastic soldier that the military life was not for him. Not long afterwards the bookish 21-year-old requested to be relieved of his army duties and returned to his university studies.



Young Prince Ludwig in uniform; photograph by court photographer Joseph Albert; Wiki Commons

As was standard practice for princes in nineteenth-century Europe, Prince Ludwig of Bavaria had joined the army at a young age. His branch of the Wittelsbach dynasty displayed a particular aptitude for the military life: his father Luitpold was a dedicated and successful officer. He led the 3rd Bavarian division during the war of 1866, was promoted to inspector-general of the Bavarian army three years later and represented Bavaria at the general headquarters of the German forces during the 1870/71 war with France. Two of Luitpold's sons continued in their father's footsteps: Leopold, who commanded troops in combat in 1866 and 1870/1, reached the rank of field marshal in 1905. His younger brother Arnulf, who also fought in these two wars, ended his career as the commanding officer of the I Royal Bavarian army corps occupying the rank of a colonel-general. In the same vein Luitpold's oldest, Prince Ludwig, was enrolled as a junior lieutenant in the 6th light infantry (*Jäger*) battalion in 1861 when he was just sixteen years old. After his subsequent transfer to the 2nd infantry regiment he was on active – and highly visible! – guard duty on Munich's central *Marienplatz* square. Thereafter Ludwig combined a modicum of soldiering with studying at Munich University and, in 1866, joined the campaign that would lead him to Helmstadt.

That the prince effectively withdrew from any form of active military service after 1866 – he did not even join the war of 1870/71 in any way – did not seriously hamper his advancement through the ranks, though: he was promoted to a colonelcy in 1867, to major-general in 1876 and finally, in 1884, to *General der Infanterie*. These were obviously nothing more than decorative promotions, for the future king of Bavaria cut a thoroughly un-military figure and pursued this part of his public duties with palpably scant vigour. According to the memoirs of the Bavarian war minister Philipp von Hellingrath, when it came to military matters, all the last king of Bavaria did was “to keep up appearances”. Reporting to Berlin in 1891, the Prussian envoy mentioned that the mayor of Nuremberg had been ill-advised to call Ludwig a great soldier in a recent speech, because “it was generally known how little His Royal Highness is inclined to military matters.” The most famous comment on Ludwig’s civilian proclivities was a widely-noted cartoon published by the *Simplicissimus* magazine in September 1909. Entitled “*Kaisermanöver*” it depicted an excessively dashing Kaiser Wilhelm II keenly pointing out the “positions of the enemy troops” to a dishevelled-looking, doddering, over-weight and bespectacled Prince Ludwig, who could not possibly look any more out of place than he does in this military setting. As one would expect from a paper with as strong an anti-militaristic tradition as the *Simplicissimus* the drawing clearly lampooned the ridiculously over-eager emperor. But for supporters of the Bavarian monarchy the cartoon did not make for comfortable viewing either – especially at a time when military prowess and pride in martial virtues were still widely considered obligatory aspects of successful monarchies.

Ludwig had one ace up his sleeve, though, or rather, a Prussian bullet in his left thigh. Unlike most of his more military-minded, sharp-looking fellow princes, sloppily-turned-out and civilian-minded Ludwig had actually seen front-line action and been wounded in combat. Bavarian patriots made sure that this important heroic detail in the life of their future king was kept alive in people’s minds. 25 years after the war, the *Neue Freie Volkszeitung* published a chronicle of the Franconian campaign including a moving drawing showing “The Wounding of His Royal Highness Prince Ludwig at Helmstadt, 25 July”. To mark the 30th anniversary of the skirmish the paper put another image of the scene on its front page. When the prince turned 50 in 1895, the *Bayerischer Courier* printed an image of a heroic battle scene and ten years later it reminded its readers that

“Prince Ludwig had also stood on the battlefield at the heart of the fighting together with the sons of the people, at the side of his noble father, the prince-regent.” Those with a patriotic penchant could also buy coloured postcards depicting the scene.

But nowhere did the heart of the story of Prince Ludwig’s near-death for the fatherland beat more strongly than in Helmstadt itself. Ahead of the 25-year anniversary of the war the village had already planned to commemorate the event with a monument, but finances were tight after the recent completion of the village school and so plans were shelved. The local veterans’ association kept up the pressure, though, and in 1905 a committee was finally set up to realise this long-held ambition. After much toing and froing about the best location His Royal Highness, Prince-Regent Luitpold of Bavaria eventually approved the committee’s plans for the monument in May 1909 – after it had been agreed that red sandstone was to be used rather than the cheaper limestone the thrifty Franconians had suggested. The day originally planned for the unveiling – 26 September 1909 – was pushed back by a week so that Prince Ludwig could attend the Munich *Oktoberfest* before travelling to the northern province of Lower Franconia. Once all of this was settled, frantic last-minute preparations began: various newspapers contacted the local committee, veterans’ associations from across the region offered financial contributions and applied to be represented on the day, catering for 74 VIPs and for the crowds of visitors had to be arranged and a military band from Würzburg was hired to support the local musicians.

The event began with music and “convivial entertainment” (*gesellige Unterhaltung*) on the eve of the day itself and then unfolded through an incredible succession of festive stages: the reveille at 5:30 a.m., the procession to the site of the monument at 9:00 a.m., the arrival of the prince at 10:00 a.m., words of welcome by the “virgin of honour” Miss Hedwig Wolf, a divine service, musical interludes, various speeches, the unveiling of the monument, a festive luncheon and an open-air concert, a further procession along the road on which Prince Ludwig eventually left Helmstadt at 1:45 p.m. – and then further speeches and eventually a ball in one of the taverns.

The unveiling of the Prince Ludwig monument in Helmstadt, 3 October 1909; Archiv des Marktes Helmstadt; Wiki Commons



The day was a great success. It remained dry, even though the weather was cool and windy. One eye-witness, Josef Baunach, later remembered that the village had never seen as many visitors as on that day. Prince Ludwig appeared to enjoy himself as well. The sixty-four-year-old attended the ceremony – unthinkable for a Prussian prince – wearing not a uniform, but a dark frock coat and bowler hat. As was his style, he gave a long, slightly rambling speech that looked back to the dark days of the fraternal war of 1866, to the inadequate equipment that had cost the Bavarian troops dearly on the day and to the sacrifices the German monarchs had made to form the German Reich. Ludwig regretted the defeat of the noble idea of a greater, more loosely federated *großdeutsch* Germany that included Austria and expressed his concerns about the situation of the German population in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

As was usual for Prince Ludwig's political speeches, reactions divided neatly along political lines. The Prussian envoy to Munich, who had described the whole business of the Helmstadt monument as rather superfluous, regretted that – once again – the “angel of tact” had not been present when the speech was prepared. Writing from the Austrian capital, a Saxon diplomat reported a tart comment from a Viennese newspaper: “The example of the German Emperor has shown only too often that it is not always good, when princes speak.” The Catholic *Allgemeine Rundschau*, on the other hand, called the prince's address “on the battlefield of Helmstadt” a “master-piece of oratory” and welcomed this “truly national speech on the core question of our internal and external development”.

Prince Ludwig – donning a bowler hat and a frock coat – addressing the crowd at Helmstadt, 3 October 1909; Archiv des Marktes Helmstadt; WiKi Commons



The monument itself – which adorns a tacked-away corner of Helmstadt to this day – was a fairly squat affair, but it featured a message that tied the un-

military Ludwig powerfully into the Wittelsbach dynasty's military culture. After he had heard that his son had been wounded Prince Luitpold, the senior Bavarian commander in that region in 1866, rode over to see him. A report of their conversation, filed in the Bavarian war archive, included the following statement made by Luitpold: “At this hour my duties as a father have to give way to higher duties that I have to fulfil towards my fatherland.” These austere words were graven into one of the four stone tablets adorning the monument and thus served to remind all onlookers of the military sacrifice made by both men.



The Prince Ludwig monument at Helmstadt and detail of inscription (photographs by Frank Lorenz Müller, 2014)



I am grateful to Bernd Schätzlein (Helmstadt) for sending me a wealth of scanned and transcribed documents from the Helmstadt Gemeindearchiv C3240, Karton 2 as well as the manuscript of a paper by Walter Hamm (Gehen und Kommen. Von Prinzregent Luitpold zu König Ludwig III. – Vortrag am 9. Dezember 2012) on which much of this essay is based.

Alfonso XIII of Spain: 'The altar boy king?'

Richard Meyer Forsting

On 21 December 1900 an article in the conservative Catholic daily *El Siglo Futuro* condemned the liberal politics of the government as irreconcilable with Christian values and the divine right of kings. The author went as far as stating that *'liberalismo es pecado'* (liberalism is sin). Apart from its rather aggressive tone, the article did not seem extraordinary by the standards of the paper. However, the author was no ordinary priest, theologian or conservative politician – the usual contributors to *El Siglo Futuro* – but Padre Montaña, confessor to the queen regent Maria Christina of Habsburg and, more significantly still, the religious teacher of the Spanish king, Alfonso XIII. The proximity of a reactionary, ultra-Catholic priest to the young monarch, who was to take over the reins in less than two years, seemed to confirm fears that he was not educated according to liberal principles.



El Siglo Futuro, Issue of 21
December 1900

The republican press in particular, interpreted the affair as evidence of the monarchy's anti-constitutional intentions and Alfonso XIII's education came under increasing scrutiny. Doubts and fears manifested themselves in many of these comments: Could a constitutional monarch be raised in such a reactionary environment? How was someone like Montaña allowed to teach the future ruler of Spain? What did this mean for Alfonso's impending reign? What kind of king would Alfonso XIII be?

This was by no means the first time that some of these questions were being asked. The influence of the clergy in the education of Spanish monarchs-in-waiting and its potential consequences had already been an important topic in the upbringing of Alfonso XIII's father, Alfonso XII. In 1862 a decree, which prioritised the heir to the throne's military and religious education had come under intense criticism from progressive liberals, who saw it as symptomatic of the church's excessive influence in Spanish society.

At the time, the left liberal *La Iberia* asked rhetorically if the stress on the future monarch's religious education meant that, 'one wants to educate the prince to be the warrior of the neo Catholics?'.^[1] *La Discusión* even saw the decree as 'an attack against civilization and science.'^[2] The decree and the heir's upbringing became issues of intense public concern and were discussed extensively in the press. The Catholic church's power over schools had long been one of the most divisive issues in Spanish nineteenth century liberalism. The arguments surrounding royal education reflected this much broader debate over secularisation and the position of the church in nineteenth century Spanish society. It is therefore not surprising that the debate resurfaced once more during Alfonso XIII's minority.

Joaquín Sorolla, Portrait of King Alfonso XIII (1907)

The circumstances of Alfonso XIII's birth meant that his education had been a topic of public interest from a very early stage. Alfonso XII and Maria Christina of Habsburg's son became king on 17 May 1886, the day he was born, as his father had died during his mother's pregnancy. Though a monarch from birth, he would only be allowed to exercise royal power from his seventeenth birthday onwards. In 1893, when Alfonso was barely seven years old,



the paper *El Día* already highlighted the importance of the ‘delicate mission of educating kings!’. It admonished its readers to pay close attention to the issue, as the royal household could not be trusted to do the right thing without some form of public oversight. Indeed, the monarch’s upbringing should matter ‘to republicans just in case [the revolution did not come]; to monarchists on account of being monarchist, and to Spain, in any case.’^[3] Judging by the large number of reports that appeared on the first significant appointments to the teaching staff, the public agreed, followed the paper’s advice and took an active interest in the way that their future ruler was educated.



Luis Álvarez Catalá: Alfonso XIII and his mother, María Cristina (1898)

That same year, 1893, rumours circulated in Madrid and beyond that either a priest or a general would become the director of teaching. The first critical voices emerged and it was the republican press that led the way in expressing concerns over the political and ideological direction of Alfonso’s teaching. To them the candidates’ lack of qualification and their inherent conservatism were indicative of the corruption and backwardness of the current political system; Spanish elections during the

Restoration (1875-1921) were, after all, largely unfree and fixed. The federalist republican weekly *El nuevo régimen* was particularly appalled by the idea of a priest directing the king’s education. It considered Señor Merry, an aristocrat with close connections to the Vatican, as a ‘theological sophist’ and believed that the consideration of such a man showed that ‘the old institution [the monarchy] has not sought to accommodate the education of princes to the demands of progress.’^[4] Rather than considering a modern, progressive teacher, the monarchy was accused of ‘clinging to its traditional symbols and formulas’.

Even some leading intellectuals weighed in on debates on monarchical education. Adolfo Posada, a liberal thinker and writer with a strong interest in pedagogics, considered Alfonso XIII's upbringing important enough to write a fourteen-page article on the topic and publish it in *La España moderna*, one of the most prestigious cultural magazines of the period. Posada was particularly concerned about the pernicious influence that the palace environment – 'that atmosphere of humble servants, of small people, that arching of backs in front of the king' – would have on the young monarch. He not only considered the education of a constitutional king to be of the utmost significance but also an extremely complex task. However, there was still plenty of time for young Alfonso to be brought up as a constitutional king.

Signed Photograph of José Fernández Montaña, Unknown Photographer,
c.1903



The Montaña affair revived many of these old fears and reignited the debates over the individuals directing the monarch's education, the influence of the church and the need for educational reform. The press exploded with reports on Alfonso's upbringing, the background of his teachers and the reaction of the palace. A few days after Montaña's article 'Los Errores del Señor Cañalejas' appeared in *El Siglo Futuro*, *El Imparcial*, one of the most influential and largest newspapers in Spain at the time, urged the government to intervene and set things straight. The article argued that Montaña's position at court could no longer be considered solely a private matter but 'an issue that enters the sphere of actions of the responsible minister.'^[5] The liberal *El Globo* pointed out that the king needed to respect liberalism and the authority of the parliamentary Chambers, the Cortes. Padre Montaña's attack on liberal principles was regarded as an affront to the constitutional system and to the monarch himself.

Even conservative publications such as *El Correo*, which praised Montaña for his 'science and virtue', found that 'his latest article, however, makes one doubt his discretion, a most important quality in someone carrying out delicate and responsible functions.'^[6] It feared, furthermore, that the article advocated a return to Isabel II's reign, which was not the direction the country should be taking. After all, Isabel II's alleged proximity to conservative Catholics, such as the nun Sor Patrocino, had been one of the reasons for her downfall.

The uproar was not limited to the press: perhaps more seriously for the monarchy the affair became a topic of debate in the Cortes, where liberal deputies seized on the issue to chastise the government and the monarchy. Senator Bernabé Dávila, a member of the Partido Liberal, read out Padre Montaña's article in Congress to demonstrate that the author had committed a major offence. He felt that the possible negative effects of Montaña's influence over the king could be severe, and even if the priest were to be removed from his post 'it would take long time to record the consequences.' The best response the government was able to come up with, given by the minister of agriculture Sánchez de Toca in the Cortes, was that 'religious education had been carried out with all the possible guarantees and sanctioned by various governments.' This appears to have done little to reassure the public.

The court felt forced to react and did so rather swiftly. Already on 27 December, a day after Senator Dávila's intervention in the Cortes, the first monarchist papers reported that changes were under way at the palace. According to *La Época*, Alfonso XIII's teacher of 'history and the art of war', González de Castejón, personally confronted Montaña and asked him if he was indeed the author of the article in *El Siglo Futuro*. Having confirmed this, the priest was immediately dismissed from his post and told that his anti-constitutional opinions were not welcome at the palace. The government and Maria Christina, who's decisive influence in the dismissal was highlighted by various newspapers, also tried to emphasise that Montaña's teaching was strictly limited to religious issues and that he had never ventured outside of this remit to instruct the king in politics, law or social issues. For *El Español* this was evidence that things were now moving in the right direction and it saw 'in the act of the queen regent, an example worthy of imitation.'^[7]

Los errores del Sr. Canalejas EN EL CONGRESO

I

Todos ellos se pueden ofrecer y señalar en dos grupos generales. Políticos los unos, religiosos los otros.

En orden á los primeros, sepa, ó, sino, recuerde el Sr. Canalejas que no hay más política legítima y verdadera debajo del sol, ni tampoco encima, sino la política de Dios; ni más gobierno, del gobierno de Cristo. Y esto no lo invento yo, sino que lo enseña, establece y prueba debidamente en inmortal escrito un gran filósofo, poeta notabilísimo, teólogo y moralista profundo, historiador insigne, el caballero de la Orden de Santiago, D. Francisco de Quevedo Villegas. El cual da allí sapientísimos avisos á los reyes, gobernantes y ministros del mundo, predicando la política antigua, tradicional y cristiana; sacada, no tanto de su propia cosecha y muy agudo ingenio, cuanto de la Cruz y del Evangelio, fuentes de verdad y manantiales perennes del buen progreso y de la civilización católica, enemigos del falso progreso y la cultura herética.

No muestra saña el sabio Quevedo contra el clero, ni contra venerandos Institutos, beneméritos de la ciencia, del saber y de la humanidad; fundadores de muchas Universidades y colegios de España, de Europa y América; predicadores de la penitencia y del orden social; verdaderos amigos del pueblo; instructores y amparo constante de los pobres; *florones siempre estimados, honrados y defendidos de la Iglesia*; sino que con las palabras divinas de la Eterna Sabiduría (Sap. 6), enseña á las generaciones todas la política del cielo, diametralmente contraria y enemiga de la política moderna, invento de hombres mundanos, malos y perversos. Dice así:

«Oid, pues, reyes y entendid. Aprended los que juzgáis los fines de la tierra. Dadme oídos; oh vosotros, que domináis los ejércitos y os complacéis en la muchedumbre de las naciones. PORQUE EL SEÑOR OS DIÓ EL PODER; Y LA FUERZA OS DIÓ EL AL-

The first paragraphs of Montaña's article

From this point onwards the monarchy seemed intent on reassuring the public that Alfonso XIII was being taught how to fulfil his constitutional duties by qualified, liberal teachers. The most prominent example of this was the appointment of Santamaría de Paredes a few months before the king's majority in May 1902. Paredes was a well-known liberal academic at the law department of the Universidad Central of Madrid, who was to instruct Alfonso in 'Political Law'. According to his own account, his fundamental aim was to make the young king understand the constitution, the function of his position within the state and explain the basic concepts of public finance and administration.^[8] The appointment was reported by various newspapers and many of the articles that summarised Alfonso XIII's education in the immediate run-up to his accession to the throne were imbued with renewed confidence in the king's ability to fulfil his constitutional

duties. The Montaña affair was barely mentioned in the liberal press, which opted instead for a message of hope. The magazine *Por Esos Mundos* for example looked forward to 'Spain recovering the position that due to her glorious history and tradition, is entitled to occupy in the world of cultured nations.'^[9] But the affair had not been entirely forgotten or overcome.

Not everyone was willing to let bygones be bygones. Republican publications regularly reminded its readers of the affair and the excessive influence that reactionary clerical

elements had over the king. The republican *El País* demanded much wider-reaching reforms of public institutions and particularly of schools. The palace affair was only a symptom of '[Catholic] integrist doctrines poisoning Spaniards, children and adults'. In an interesting turn, it even suggested the government should follow the example of the queen regent and 'eliminate from schools the doctrines of the Padre Montaña.'^[10] However, there was disappointment when it seemed to become clear that religious elements remained powerful at court. Reports in October 1901 that the king had assisted the papal nuncio at mass, were regarded as proof that hopes in a fundamental alteration of Alfonso XIII's education had been misplaced. *El País* ran an article on its front page with the heading 'The altar boy king?'. It pronounced its dismay at the fact that 'the young king who would in a few months take over the reign, had not attended a single academic or university solemnity (...) but has in turn perfectly assisted at mass.'^[11] It seemed incomprehensible that the monarch could be brought up as a servant of the church, which presented a new low point for the Spanish monarchy. The author concluded that 'We understand everything: a womanizing king, a tyrant king like Ferdinand VII, a complaisant king like Charles IV, an idiot king like Henry IV, everything, we understand everything, apart from an altar boy king.' These doubts over Alfonso XIII's constitutional commitments and his proximity to the church would continue to play an important role throughout his turbulent reign.

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- [1] *La Ibría*, 29 October 1864
- [2] *La Discusión*, 29 November 1864
- [3] *El Día*, 26 May 1893.
- [4] *El nuevo régimen*, 5 August 1893.
- [5] *El Imparcial*, 26 December 1900
- [6] *El Correo*, 25 December 1900
- [7] *El Español*, 28 December 1900
- [8] Conde de las Navas, *La educación de un rey a nativata*, pp.67-68.
- [9] *Por Esos Mundos*, May 1902, p.386
- [10] *El País*, 28 December 1900.
- [11] *El País*, 5 October 1901.

Prince Heinrich of Prussia: A better William?

Miriam Schneider

In the years 1890-1894, General Albrecht von Stosch (1818-1896), the former chief of the German Admiralty, was frequently asked the same question. As he confided to his friend, the novelist Gustav Freytag, people were worried that the young Emperor William II (1859-1941), who had ascended the throne in 1888 and had since displayed “the restlessness of a maniac”, might eventually become mentally or physically ill. Therefore, they inquired of Stosch “**what kind of man**” Prince Heinrich, the Emperor’s younger brother, was.[\[i\]](#)



Prince Heinrich of Prussia, postcard, c. 1910 (author’s collection)

Humble and unobtrusive, Heinrich (1862-1929) could easily be overlooked. Yet, throughout his youth he was third-in-line to the Prussian throne, and from 1888 to 1900, he was designated to become regent in case the Emperor should die before his eldest son had reached his majority. Some men, like William’s friend Philipp Eulenburg (1847-1921), did not rate Heinrich’s abilities very highly. They worried “**what kind of regent**” he would be if “something, God forbid, should happen to our master”.[\[ii\]](#) Others, however, saw the possibility in a more favourable light. As late as the 1920s, the former chancellor Bernhard von Bülow (1849-1929) mused in his memoirs “whether on balance **the German Empire might not have been better served** if Prince Heinrich had been Emperor instead of his much more talented, yet also much more ambivalent, dreamy and unreliable older brother”.[\[iii\]](#)

All commentators had very particular motives for their musings. Stosch, once a shadow chancellor of the liberal left, was vaguely hoping for a turn in German politics. Bülow, who had decisively shaped William II's foreign policy in the years 1900-1909 but then deserted his master, needed Heinrich as a contrast for his negative depiction of the Emperor. Sober scholars would therefore probably warn us to refrain from the idle question “**What if?**”. Yet, with all the contemporary “What ifs?” in mind, it nevertheless seems a worthwhile enterprise to study Prince Heinrich in comparison with his brother and maybe also to ponder some counterfactual thoughts.

Partners in loneliness – divided by destiny

In the first few years of their childhood, Prince William and Prince Heinrich were actually an inseparable **community of shared fate**. With only three years between them, the two boys paired up as a natural study group. This was a common practice among nineteenth-century royal families because it saved valuable teaching resources as well as provided young princes with a sort of substitute peers.

For Heinrich, being together with William primarily meant that he became a silent witness to the **famous educational experiment** that his parents had devised for their eldest son and heir. Determined to raise a new race of monarchs for the modern age, Crown Prince Frederick William (1831-1888) and particularly his clever, ambitious English-born wife Victoria (1841-1901), had drawn up extensive plans for an education according to the latest and highest standards of the age. To achieve their goal, they hired a stern and unforgiving tutor, Dr Georg Hinzpeter (1827-1907). Moreover, they even followed through with the unheard-of experiment of sending William to a public grammar school in Kassel where he had to compete with middle-class peers.



Prince William and Prince Heinrich, c. 1886

Heinrich shared his brother's fate, being subjected to the same harsh and frugal regiment of his tutor and to the merciless criticism of his disappointed mother. Considered a mere appendix to the heir to the throne, though, his education was **comparatively neglected**. While William was pushed through to his A-levels, Heinrich entered the *Realschule I. Ordnung* (a secondary school) and obtained his *Zeugnis für Obersekunda-Reife* (intermediate school-leaving certificate) in January 1877 aged fourteen.

Some might see this neglect as Heinrich's misfortune. As Bülow remembered in his memoirs, the "malicious" Hinzpeter once remarked how "by studying Prince Heinrich, one can see what would have become of the Emperor if I had not taken his education into my hands".^[iv] The idea was clearly that Heinrich, pretty much left to his own devices, lacked the education and polish that had turned William into a fit monarch.

One could argue, though, that Heinrich was **extremely lucky**. For while William was forced to endure the psychological pressure of having to overcome the physical disadvantages of a disabled arm, while he had to study Latin and Greek and attend university in order to somehow fit his parents' ideal of a future monarch, Heinrich, for all we know, was allowed to live the life he wanted – a life that William, had he been free, might have chosen as well.

As grandchildren of Queen Victoria, both boys were acquainted from earliest age with the grandeur and beauty of the ships that made up Britain's status as Europe's greatest naval and imperial power. During their holidays in England they frequently visited British sea ports. Back home in Germany they were trained in practical seamanship and learned how to row on the Jungfernsee. Their mother's pride in her home country and their father's desire to turn Germany also into a major global player by way of naval and colonial expansion, combined to inspire both William and Heinrich with a **life-long love for the sea**.

It was Heinrich's wish to join the young **Imperial Navy** – and his parents' realization that this alliance with a powerful symbol of national unity and future imperial greatness was an invaluable career path for a younger member of the Hohenzollern dynasty – that led to his particular school education. The science- and modern-language-based training of

a Realschule provided him with the necessary knowledge and certificates for a career as a naval officer.

Heinrich's naval entrance exam and his subsequent embarkation on-board the cadet training ship Niobe in 1877 marked a **parting of ways for the two brothers**. For one last night, William was allowed to sleep in Heinrich's bunk bed while the future sailor made do with his uncomfortable hammock. Then, on 22 April 1877, they said farewell.

From now on, two thirds of Heinrich's time would be dedicated to his cherished profession. William, meanwhile, would continue his exacting training as a Prussian heir to the throne and eventually only be able to act out his maritime passion as a politicized hobby. In the process, **the lives and characters of the two men diverged**. Heinrich's professionalism, his cosmopolitanism, and the relationships he formed along the way played a major part in this.



Prince Heinrich leaving for his first world cruise, *Über Land und Meer* 1878 (author's collection)

"You can hardly imagine how glad I am to go to sea again, as a sailor's life on board is too nice and I am so fond of it!"

Prince Heinrich writing to his mother, Crown Princess Victoria, 1 September 1882 (Archiv des Hauses Hessen)

The advantage of a real vocation

Today, Emperor William II is probably most famous for his **love of uniforms and military demeanour** as well as the naval enthusiasm that he displayed throughout his reign. The speed with which he changed his outward garb and his predilection for naval accoutrement were running jokes already in his own lifetime. His biographers agree, though, that his “undoubted attraction to the culture and ambience” of military life was not matched by an internalization of “the values and mental habits of a Prussian officer”.^[v] William did not know discipline nor could he bear criticism. Moreover, his ambitious and troubled education resulted in a sort of **accomplished dilettantism**: a desire to be interested in and informed about everything, to impress people with his knowledge and skills, but lacking true expertise. William loved to see himself as the great helmsman of the German ship of state and frequently took part in the Kiel Regatta with his own yacht. His guests on-board would be nervous, though, until they could return to the safe harbour.

Heinrich, on the other hand, went through all the stages of a vocation-specific education and became a **real professional career officer** after his lieutenant’s examination in 1881. His training was not free of exceptions befitting his social status (he was usually allowed a separate room, was accompanied by a military governor and valet, or received private coaching). Overall, however, the prince had to undergo the same exacting training as any other naval cadet and thus achieved the proficiency necessary for naval command.

Like William, Heinrich never formed close relationships with his peers. The almost equal footing on which he lived with his comrades and colleagues in the cramped space of the ship, however, as well as the daily experience of meritocratic assessment inevitably had an effect: they resulted in a humble self-image, in valuable **social skills** and a more than superficial internalization of the military ethos. These were all qualities which distinguished him from his narcissistic, unapproachable and unstable older brother.

Heinrich’s identification with the naval profession, moreover, meant that he even rejected premature promotions because he wished to avoid superficiality. It would be

naïve to believe that his princely naval career was merely the result of talent and performance. Under normal conditions, so the verdict of many naval historians, the prince who was to become **an admiral at the incredibly early age of 39** would probably never have commanded larger naval units. His nautical talents, though, were certainly sufficient for minor commands. [\[vi\]](#)

His professional know-how, his dedication to the navy and his stable trademarks (naval uniform, captain's beard and the famous Prince-Heinrich-cap) combined to create an **aura of authenticity** around the prince which his "jack-of-all-trades" brother lacked. Heinrich epitomized the public persona of the "**Sailor Prince**", a brand of the nineteenth century which, by embodying promises of middle-class professionalism, imperial greatness and exciting adventure, contributed to the popularization of Europe's monarchies.

Prince Heinrich's naval career in pictures, postcard c. 1910
(author's collection)



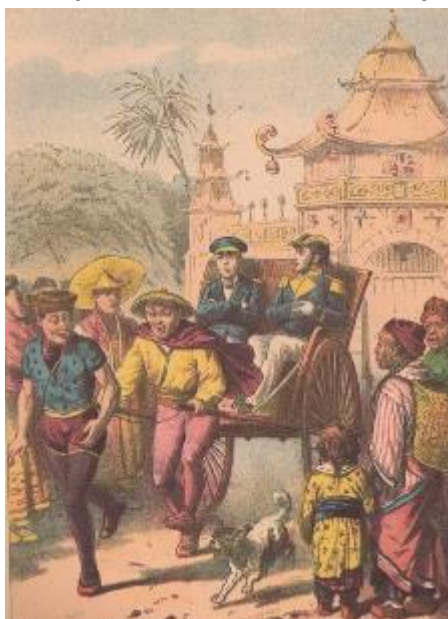
The open mind of a globetrotter

In the assessment of modern historians, Prince Heinrich's image is largely determined by two distinct episodes during which he actively influenced German politics. The first is the famous reply he gave to his brother when he left to take command of the East Asia Squadron following the seizure of Kiautschou Bay in December 1897. When William exhorted his brother to go for the Chinese "with a mailed fist", Heinrich responded with the infelicitous words that he would "**preach the gospel of Your Majesty's sacred person** to all who will hear it". Naturally, this pseudo-religious wording caused great disquiet in the German and European press. The second episode was when Heinrich, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, allegedly conveyed the wrong impression to his brother that their cousin, King George V, would at all events keep out of a potential war. In the view of some historians, this led to a fateful overconfidence on the part of the German government.

Both episodes were used to represent Prince Heinrich as a naïve, if not ignorant family-go-between and blind admirer of his brother who shared the bellicose militarism and chauvinism of his time and was probably even a worse public speaker than William II himself. Philipp Eulenburg dreaded a Heinrich regency exactly because he feared his lack of verbal tact. And both William and his chancellor Bülow tried to keep the Prince-Admiral away from an active involvement in foreign politics because they thought he was naïve and misguided by a one-sided love for his mother's birth country Britain.

On closer inspection, though, Heinrich probably had a much more differentiated and discerning view of the world than his brother as well as a positive effect on foreign affairs. From his earliest training in the navy, the prince shared the **globetrotting life** of his professional colleagues. In 1878-1880 and in 1882-1884 he undertook two much-publicized journeys around the world, in 1897-1900 he was stationed in East Asia, in 1902 he visited the United States and so on. His border-crossing activities, his contacts with other empire roamers and his diplomatic relations with the representatives of other (non-)European countries resulted in a sort of **nationalist cosmopolitanism**: an attitude combining the inevitable national chauvinism of the time with a certain open-mindedness and even appreciation for other cultures.

While William II tended to file away his brother's reports from East Asia, Bernhard von Bülow thus later admitted that Heinrich's observations were actually not unreasonable, particularly when he advocated good relations with the Japanese Empire. Heinrich's ability to act as an intermediary between the Japanese and German imperial families –



both when Japanese princes visited Berlin or when he attended court festivities in Tokyo – was even a valuable asset in German foreign policy. William II, meanwhile, who had never travelled beyond the Holy Land, preferred to conjure up the spectre of the “yellow peril”.[\[vii\]](#)

Prince Heinrich in Japan, Illustration from the children's book „Des Prinzen Heinrich von Preußen Weltumseglung“, c. 1884 (author's collection)

“One impression remains with all of us – that we are confronted with a very serious, progressive people worthy of close study and equal to any European nation.

We are well advised to get along with them rather than to count them among our enemies.”

Prince Heinrich writing to William II, Tokyo, 14 September 1912

(Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg/Br)

During his visit to the United States in 1902, probably his most important mission, Heinrich equally understood how to **win the hearts** of the Americans through his sportsmanlike manner. Countless newspapers, stereographs, moving pictures, commemorative medals, collectible cards etc. celebrated the event on both sides of the Atlantic. Where William II tended to confuse or offend his hosts and audience through his pretentious or erratic behaviour, the straightforward Heinrich was a **welcome guest**.

This was particularly true for the royal and imperial courts of Britain and Russia, where family relations also played an important part. Maybe the most striking difference between Prince Heinrich and his brother – apart from their diverging dynastic destinies – was what one might call the **contingency of romance**. In their early youth, both William and Heinrich formed a lasting love interest in two of their cousins from the grand ducal house of Hesse-Darmstadt, the daughters of Queen Victoria’s second daughter Princess Alice. While the beautiful Princess Elisabeth (1864-1918) rejected William’s advances, though, went on to marry a Russian Grand Duke and ultimately introduced her youngest sister Alix to the future Tsar Nicholas II, the good-natured Princess Iréne (1866-1953) eventually accepted Prince Heinrich’s proposal and married him in May 1888.

Prince Heinrich und Princess Iréne
on-board SMS *Schneewittchen*
(author’s collection)

“Indeed I may be called happy, as Niny is really as true and honest as gold![...]”



To think, that one so dear and good can love a monster like me, makes me mad...”

Prince Heinrich writing to Crown Princess Victoria of Prussia, 4 February 1887

(Archiv des Hauses Hessen)

This humiliation, for all we know, increased William’s feelings of being rejected by his critical British mother and relatives and fostered a life-long love-hate-relationship with Britain. Heinrich, meanwhile, once again allowed to live the life that William had secretly dreamed of – in a happy marriage with a clever, supportive wife – was **drawn closer to the English camp** of his mother as well as his British and Russian relatives. He regularly spent his holidays together with Irene’s family and, as a beloved in-law, also became a diplomatic envoy of sorts with exclusive access to the secret circles of the Windsor-Glücksborg-Romanov clan. His reports about British and Russian (public) moods were generally very accurate. William II and his advisors only discarded them for one flaw: that Heinrich, as Bülow put it in whitewashed retrospective, “did politics with his **heart rather than calculating brain**” and therefore was too one-sided in his judgement. His big fault in both of the above-mentioned infelicitous episodes was that, although he “did not lack common sense [...] his innocent and simple mind did not always anticipate the wickedness of human beings and the evilness of the world”.[\[viii\]](#) In 1897, Heinrich had yet to learn his lesson about the negative impact of speeches. And regarding the fateful events of 1914, there are good reasons to believe that King George V really did not express himself clearly to his German cousin.

A loyal heart

Heinrich’s simple, good nature meant that his brother could order him about **like a puppet** for much of his reign. He would treat the Prince-Admiral as his operative arm with the navy and as a figurehead of his extensive fleet-building programme, dispatching him for representative functions like ship launches, but keeping him away from the decision-making process. He would send Heinrich on royal tours to Germany’s

large diaspora communities in the New World or to new model colonies like Kiautschou, using him to represent the idea of a Greater German Empire to German citizens and foreign publics alike, but forbidding all political initiatives. And he would delegate his brother to attend all major court festivities, thus frequently calling him away from his residence, the imperial war harbour Kiel, although Heinrich wished to dedicate his life to his professional duties.

Only once the resolute Princess Irène intervened, did Heinrich protest against his brother's high-handed commands. It was also Irène who would write an angry letter to William in July 1912, when Heinrich felt slighted by his brother's personnel decisions in the naval command.



Emperor Wilhelm II and his brother, the Prince-Admiral, c. 1916

“William, you cannot do it, you cannot hurt him so much! Heinrich, who has worked for you in silence and in public all his life. You grew up together – you are brothers, after all, and love each other dearly!”

Princess Irène writing to William II, 19 July 1912
(Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg/Br)

Probably reminiscent of his own first love, the Emperor never turned down his sister-in-law's wishes. Privately, however, his saddest betrayal of his brother's loyalty was the way in which he would frequently make fun of Heinrich or speak contemptuously about him in front of advisors, friends and family members.

An entry from the journal of William's aid-de-camp in his Dutch exile, Sigurd von Ilseman (1884-1952), about Prince Heinrich's last visit to Huis Doorn in February 1928 reveals the **entire tragedy of this fraternal relationship**. Following the disastrous First World War, both Heinrich and then William had been forced to flee from the revolutionary forces in November 1918. While Heinrich spent the rest of his life on his

family farm near Schleswig, William had to seek exile in the Netherlands. Heinrich would visit him once or twice a year.

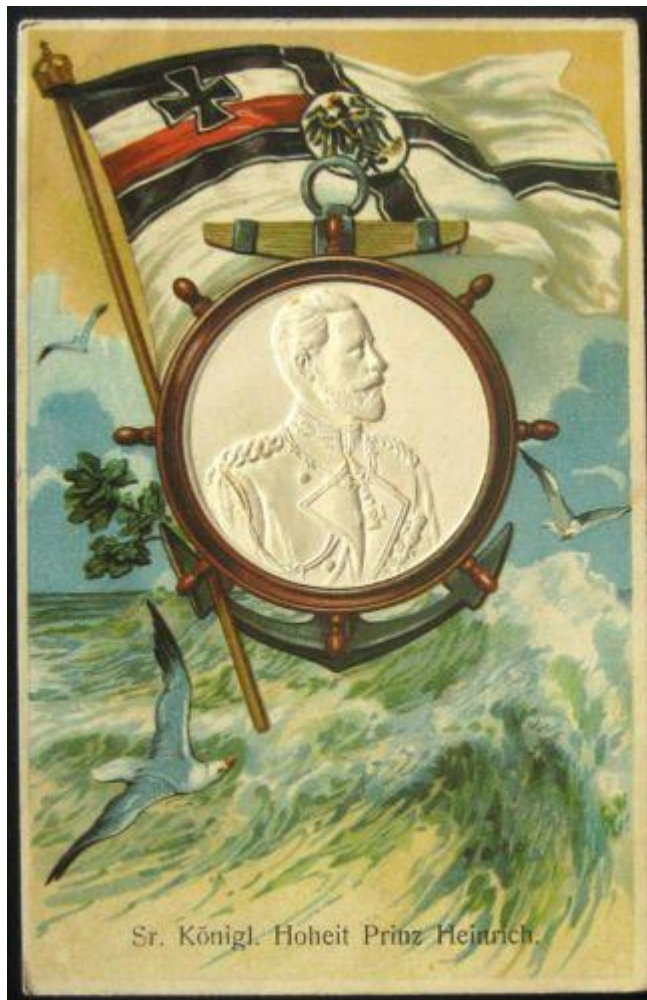
On taking leave in February 1928, the prince, marked by illness and close to tears, was shocked about the delusions that William still entertained regarding a possible return to the throne. “The Kaiser is so astute in his judgement of so many things”, he sighed, “[...] and then, in these things, he suddenly fails”. He was unable to get through to his brother, though. As the loyal Ilseemann observed, William was unapproachable, a “species of his own” who did not even realize that he did not have any close confidants.

“How easy it could be for the Emperor to come closer to his brother, this man who adores him like a god. Never could there be a better brother. But no, there never was and there never will be a human being that he completely opens up to [...] Brother Heinrich has striven so hard for his trust, but he has not achieved it this time, nor will he ever achieve it. Luckily, he does not know how his imperial brother sometimes makes ironic remarks about him and derides his flaws to the gentlemen in his company.” [ix]

Although they had spent the first one and a half decades of their childhood and adolescence together, William somehow never seems to have been able to feel true affection for his brother. The good-natured Heinrich thus once again left with his attentions unrequited. One year later, he was dead.

Like his father, the ill-fated Emperor Frederick III, Heinrich died of cancer of the throat on 20 April 1929, aged 66. Ironically, many of Heinrich’s contemporaries had already throughout his lifetime observed a **close similarity between father and son** (both in physiognomy and temper). Some had even seen this as one of the most striking distinctions between William and his brother. “He has a simple nature, which follows unconditionally where he trusts”, was how Albrecht von Stosch described the prince to those who enquired about a possible regency in 1890-1894. “He is more of a Hohenzollern than his brother und he much takes after his father.” Bernhard von Bülow, following the guideline *de mortuis nil nisi bene*, likewise remarked that “Prince Heinrich not only inherited his wonderful father’s handsome external appearance. He also, like him, was of thoroughly noble nature. He had a golden heart.” [x] And even the many ordinary citizens who would write fan mail to Prince Heinrich when he left for

East Asia in 1897 frequently referred to the “noble Frederick’s son” who was “the darling of your people / more even than your father was”.[\[xi\]](#)



The „Sailor Prince“, postcard, c. 1900 (author’s collection)

The public persona “Sailor Prince” – combining the aura of the aristocrat with the humble, yet exciting life of the seafarer – indeed resembled the persona “Our Fritz” that Emperor Frederick III had fashioned for himself – combining the aura of a military hero of the German Wars of Unification with the charm of a bourgeois family father. The connection established thus draws our attention to **another, corresponding “What if?” of Prusso-German history**. From the moment of his premature death in 1888,

Frederick’s memory was suffused with

reflections about the possible alternative course that German history might have taken if he had lived. There were some vague ideas that Frederick would have advocated a policy of liberal domestic reform and of close foreign political ties with his wife’s birth country Britain. Thus he would have prevented his son’s autocratic diversion tactics and the diplomatic tensions which eventually led to the outbreak of war in 1914.

The idea of Prince Heinrich’s regency or alternative succession was a natural extension of these wishful musings. It implied that the humble, stable, cosmopolitan “Sailor Prince” might have made a good constitutional monarch appealing to his people’s emotions and enjoying good relations with Europe’s other powers. Heinrich’s biography seems to confirm that – at least in terms of temper and feeling – he might indeed have been **a better William**. But, then again, just as historians have begun to doubt whether

Emperor Frederick III would really have been the liberal, appeasing monarch of our dreams, so the question remains in how far Heinrich would have altered the course of history at all. Idle as it may be, though, the idea remains tempting.

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- [ii] Philipp von Eulenburg, summer 1896, cited by Röhl, vol. 2, 706.
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- [v] Clark, Christopher, Wilhelm II, 6.
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- [vii] Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, vol. 1, 436-38.
- [viii] Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, vol. 1, 204 and 548.
- [ix] Sigurd von Ilseman, 27.2.1928 and 28.2.1928.
- [x] Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, vol. 1, 204.
- [xi] Excerpts from letters to Prince Heinrich, LASH (Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein) Abt. 395 (Hofmarschallamt des Prinzen Heinrich von Preußen), Nr. 5.

Franz Ferdinand of Austria: The Insignificant Archduke

Sue Woolmans

It is a sad but inescapable fact that the most significant heir in the period 1815-1914 is the Archduke Franz Ferdinand – the man whose assassination triggered World War 1, which led to the rise of Communism and Hitler, then to World War 2 and, let us not forget, the civil war in former Yugoslavia and even the debacle taking place in the Ukraine at time of writing. That's quite a catalogue of major world incidents to place at the feet of one man – and it could be argued that most would have taken place had Franz Ferdinand not been shot ... one of the favourite “what ifs” of history. But was Franz Ferdinand as significant in his own lifetime? In fact, who was he? To most schoolchildren he is a fact they have to learn to pass their History GCSE, to most 20-somethings he is the name of a pop group, to most 40-somethings he is Baldrick's joke in Blackadder “some bloke called Archie Duke shot an ostrich because he was hungry”.



A young Franz Ferdinand

When Franz Ferdinand was born in 1863, he was just an average Archduke in terms of rank, and was not expected to amount to much more than a leading member of the Austrian army. His father was Archduke Karl Ludwig, a younger brother of the Emperor Franz Joseph. Franz Joseph succeeded as Emperor during the revolutionary year of 1848, taking over from his enfeebled Uncle, Ferdinand I, and bypassing his lacklustre father, Franz Karl. He was young, he was seen as a fresh, dynamic new start for Austria. He married a beautiful Bavarian Princess, Elizabeth (known as Sissi), who, in 1858, gave birth to an heir, Archduke Rudolf. At the time of Franz Ferdinand's arrival, it was expected that Sissi would give birth to more children, that Rudolf would not be his father's sole male heir and even if he were, he would go on to have sons himself. And then there was Archduke Maximilian, the brother

in between Franz Joseph and Karl Ludwig in age. In 1857 he married Princess Charlotte of Belgium. They surely would have children, too. Thus Franz Ferdinand was the first son of a third son, low in the pecking order of who would succeed to the throne – pretty insignificant.

Archduke Karl Ludwig was a loving, pious family man. He was not ambitious to be involved in ruling or the military – unlike Maximilian who achieved a leading role in the navy, or their cousin Archduke Albrecht who carved a career in the military and became Inspector General of the Army. Karl Ludwig quietly supported the Emperor by living the life of a rich nobleman and creating no scandal. He had “none of the Habsburg arrogance” [1] to quote Princess Catherine Radziwill. It was not all comfort though – his first wife, Margaretha of Saxony, died after only two years of marriage in 1858. His second wife, Maria Annunciata of the Two Sicilies, the mother of three sons and one daughter including Franz Ferdinand, died at the age of 28 in 1871 from consumption. Karl Ludwig sincerely mourned both wives but decided that his children needed a mother figure in their lives, and in 1873 married Maria Theresa of Braganza. He could not have chosen a better wife. She was over twenty years younger than her husband and only eight years older than Franz Ferdinand, but she did her utmost to be a good mother to Karl Ludwig’s children and they sincerely loved and admired her. She went on to have two daughters of her own, Maria Annunciata in 1876 and Elisabeth in 1878.

Karl Ludwig educated his son to be a good archduke to reflect his own image. He appointed Count Ferdinand Degenfeld as his governor – a former army officer, very reactionary and unimaginative. Lessons included arithmetic, grammar, sciences, geography, the languages of the Empire, fencing, swimming, history, literature, music and religion – lots of religion. In fact, lots of lessons in lots of subjects. It was too much both in breadth and demand for the student himself, who was no academic. Franz Ferdinand was diligent but not really engaged, and came away with a passing knowledge of many topics but no real depth of understanding of any. And he spent much time in his studies alone, being tutored at home. This, compounded with the loss of his mother, helped to mould him into a retired, quiet, shy personality. He was as pious as his father too. And it did not help that his younger brother, Otto, was always so much more popular, clever, handsome and outgoing than Franz Ferdinand.

This slightly bemused Archduke came into his own in 1878 when Franz Joseph made him an honorary lieutenant in an infantry regiment in the Austrian army. He was happy in the army, feeling much more at home. By 1883 he had been promoted to lieutenant in the 4th Emperor Ferdinand Dragoon Cavalry Regiment. "I am an officer body and soul", he proudly declared. "To my mind, that profession is the noblest and highest in the world". [2] He still struggled a little when it came to socialising with his fellow officers, but he sowed his wild oats (especially under the influence of gregarious Otto) and rumours credit him with two illegitimate children. [3]

Everything was trundling along just as a junior archduke's life should but several cases of venereal disease, ill-fated ambitions in Mexico and a suicide changed Franz Ferdinand's life forever. The first case of VD was supposedly that of the Emperor. The marriage of Franz Joseph and Sissi was in trouble in 1860 – Sissi was ill, she had had a cough for months and was very fragile. By November, Dr Joseph Skoda, a lung specialist, ordered the Empress to travel to Madeira for a cure. Much artistic license has been made of this – Franz Joseph supposedly had been visiting mistresses, and caught gonorrhoea which he had given to his Empress. Sissi had started undertaking a very strict diet regime, she was coping badly with life at court, she battled with her mother-in-law, her sister's throne in Naples was shaking badly, Austria had lost the Second Italian War of Independence and the Empress kept having nervous breakdowns. Whatever the cause, she was ill and needed a break. Sissi was away for two years and on her return, her family's physician declared there could be no thoughts of children for a while as she was still recovering. More separations followed and Sissi refused to contemplate any pregnancies. In fact, the Imperial couple only had one more child, a girl, Archduchess Valerie, in 1868. [4]

The next brother in age to Franz Joseph was Archduke Maximilian, born in 1832. He did not desperately enjoy being a younger brother, was ambitious and wanted to make his mark in history. In Mexico, the radical government of Benito Juarez was defaulting on its debts to the European powers. Napoleon III believed that ousting Juarez and replacing him with a monarch chosen from the Old European order would solve the debt problem, and also open up the South American market to Europe whilst America battled with its own Civil War. Napoleon suggested Max for the role. After some hesitation, and prompting from his ambitious wife Charlotte, Max accepted. He then had to renounce

his rights, and those of his heirs, to the Austrian throne (though he was reinstated later [5]). It was an ill-fated idea from the start, and it ended very badly, with Max's execution in 1867 by a firing squad led by Juarez. And he and Charlotte never had any children. [6]

Our insignificant archduke had moved up a good few rungs of the ladder – during the 1870s and 1880s he was number three behind Crown Prince Rudolf and his own father, Karl Ludwig. Rudolf placed him higher than that, commenting that it would be Franz and not himself who would one day inherit the throne. [7]

In 1881, Crown Prince Rudolf married Princess Stephanie of Belgium – in a marriage bartered through the foreign court by the Austrian Ambassador to Belgium, Bohuslav Chotek. It was certainly a happy marriage at first and in 1883 they had their first child, Elisabeth. Then things started to fall apart – Rudolf became unfaithful, unstable, and in 1886 seriously ill. The couple were sent to recuperate to the island of Lacroma (present day Croatia, just off the coast of Dubrovnik). By the time they arrived, Stephanie was ill, too. She details in her memoirs that she was “suffering terrible pain”. Doctors were summoned, peritonitis was diagnosed and Franz Joseph ordered that the doctors were not to release this information to anyone. Much care was taken of Stephanie and she recovered [8]. But she was unable to have any more children – she later told her secretary, Julia von Stockhausen, that she had been infected by Rudolf and her fallopian tubes destroyed. [9] Rudolf had almost certainly given his wife gonorrhoea. He did not recover, in fact, he got more and more ill, and may well have had syphilis as well as gonorrhoea [10]. And he started taking large doses of morphine to help with the pain. It was common knowledge at the Court that Stephanie would not have a son. Franz Ferdinand was another rung up the ladder of significance.

Rudolf knew he was incurably ill. He knew he had destroyed his marriage and his chances of having an heir. He knew he had let his country down. It was all too much for this fragile man and the inevitable happened. He invited his new young besotted mistress, Baroness Marie Vetsera, to join him in this hunting lodge, Mayerling, in the Vienna Woods. On the night of 29/30th January, 1889, Rudolf shot Mary, then he shot himself, in a bizarre suicide pact. [11] Franz Ferdinand was now the son of the heir to the throne. In reality, he was the heir to the throne. Karl Ludwig had no intention of

becoming Emperor and it was widely believed he would step aside and let Franz Ferdinand take over if he outlived his brother [12].

Rudolf had been a popular figure. No one knew who this new heir on the scene was – the press and public were suspicious. Franz Joseph did not help. He had never much liked his reserved nephew and their first meeting after Mayerling was uncomfortable for both, “I have never been treated so coldly before. It seems the mere sight of me awakens unpleasant memories”, Franz Ferdinand complained [12]. To emphasise how difficult Franz Joseph found it to accept Franz Ferdinand as the heir, he never made him Crown Prince. He was always, even up until 1914, known as the “Thronfolger” or heir to the throne, as if to emphasise his insignificance.

Even Franz Ferdinand felt insignificant. He was aware that his education was not good enough to equip him to be Emperor. He knew he would have to curtail any aspects of his lifestyle that could be called “hedonistic” – especially with the example of Rudolf before him. He buckled down to being sensible. He was promoted to Colonel in the army and given command of the 9th Hussars Regiment stationed at Ödenburg (now Sopron) in Hungary for two years. He was sent on official visits to Stuttgart, St Petersburg and Berlin [13]. Then he hit on the idea of a round the world trip to get to learn about the policies and peoples of the countries he would have to deal with once he was Emperor. Franz Joseph saw this as a jolly but eventually agreed to let his nephew go. India, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, and America were visited. And it was America that really made an impact on Franz Ferdinand. It was not a country he liked – the press pursued him relentlessly and he was appalled at how the poor were left to starve, “For the working class,” he wrote, “freedom means freedom to starve” [14]. But he was very impressed with the idea of a union of federal states under centralised authority – this could work very well as a model to keep the Austro-Hungarian Empire together.

If Franz Joseph was still ambivalent to his heir, there were a number of eligible young Princesses and their mothers who were not. Princess Mathilde of Saxony was suggested. And rejected. On a visit to the British court in 1894, Franz Ferdinand was relentlessly pursued. “... the designated fiancées moved about in a great herd and showed worrisome levels of persistence. I sat next to one of the victims on the prowl”, he wrote to a favoured friend, Countess Marie Thun-Hohenstein née Chotek [15]. Franz

Ferdinand was not looking for arm candy – he did not want to replicate the mistakes made by Franz Joseph and Rudolf. He wanted to marry someone like his stepmother – good, kind, supportive, intelligent and someone whom he actually loved. He knew himself well enough by now to know the personality of the wife he needed to help him become a good Emperor – “she should not be too young and her character and views should be fully mature. I know of no such princess” [16].

Just as our insignificant Archduke was gaining some confidence and understanding of his new role, fate dealt him a cruel blow. He developed tuberculosis – the dread disease that had killed his mother. There was nothing for it but for him to be put under the supervision of a specialist doctor and to recuperate in climates warmer and less polluted than Vienna. He was sent to the Tyrol, to the south of France and to Egypt. He was forced to spend hours and hours just resting – but it worked. He recovered completely although it took a good two years – a miserable and frustrating two years for it seemed that all he had worked for was lost to him.

Back in Vienna, Franz Ferdinand’s younger brother Otto had not hesitated to step into his shoes. He was another Rudolf – popular, charming, unhappily married and a victim of venereal disease. Both the Lord High Chamberlain, Prince Alfred Montenuovo, and the Foreign Minister, Count Agenor Goluchowski, supported Otto. Otto started carrying out official duties in the Emperor’s name. He was given a palace to live in whilst Franz Ferdinand just had a suite of rooms at the Hofburg. It was he and not Franz Ferdinand who entertained the Russian Imperial couple on their official visit to the court. To Countess Marie, Franz Ferdinand wrote, “I am deeply wounded and angry at being treated, although I am still alive, as if ‘past my expiration date’ ” [15] And yet Franz Ferdinand was nearer than ever to the throne – his father died in 1896, so now he was officially the heir.

By 1897, Franz Ferdinand was back at court and trying to reestablish himself. He was made Colonel-in-Chief of the 7th Regiment of Uhlans. He was sent, as Austria’s representative, to the celebrations of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897. An imperial edict of 1898 appointed Franz Ferdinand to undertake some duties on behalf of the High Command so that he could become better acquainted with the armed forces of the Empire. He would be granted access to all appropriate state papers [17].

Princess Sophie Hohenberg not long after her marriage

Our belittled and insignificant archduke was on the up again, being treated with the respect his position deserved. But then it nearly all came tumbling down by his choice of consort. The Habsburg court was very particular about who a member of the family could marry – it was restricted to any Catholic royals in the first section of the Almanach de Gotha – leading to many Habsburgs intermarrying with cousins (Franz Joseph and Sissi were first cousins for example), and there were many consequent genetic problems and miserable relationships. Franz Ferdinand had an antidote to this because he had fallen in love with a lady-in-waiting. She was not just any lady-in-waiting, she was a Bohemian Countess, the daughter of the above mentioned Ambassador to Belgium, and her name was Sophie Chotek. It is impossible to say when this relationship started. The standard assumption is that they met at a ball in Prague in 1894 though it should be noted that Sophie's sister, Countess Marie, married Franz Ferdinand's hunting companion, Count Jaroslav Thun-Hohenstein, in 1887. And in 1888, Sophie began working at court for Archduchess Isabella [18]. We will never know; they never told their children. What we do know is that Franz Ferdinand's doctor reported that his two year tuberculosis exile was enlivened by regular letters from somebody – he assumed a lady. And Archduchess Isabella was aware that Franz Ferdinand's regular visits to her home in Pressburg (now Bratislava in Slovakia) were not just jovial family events. She knew she had to make sure Sophie was present whenever Franz Ferdinand was around [19].



Time was ticking along though. Franz Ferdinand was in his mid-thirties and Isabella hoped that, despite Sophie's presence, the archduke would marry her eldest daughter (1 of 6 daughters!), Maria Christina. This was not to be. In April 1899, Franz Ferdinand left his watch chain behind after a tennis party in Pressburg. A servant handed it to Isabella. Noticing a locket attached to the chain, she opened it. Sophie's photo was contained inside. Isabella flew into action, banishing Sophie from her home and going to Franz

Joseph to demand action. Action was taken, Franz Joseph asked his nephew to renounce the Countess. Franz Ferdinand refused. Months of wrangling followed with Franz Ferdinand supported only by his stepmother, Maria Theresa, and Rudolf's unhappy widow, Stephanie. Eventually, a compromise was reached – Franz Ferdinand had to agree to a morganatic marriage swearing an oath that he would never raise his wife to be his equal, that she would never be his Empress, and that his children would never be able to “lay claim to those rights, honours, titles, coats of arms, or privileges” [20] that other Habsburg children would acquire. Their wedding took place on 1st July, 1900, far from Vienna, much more quietly and insignificantly than the Heir to the Habsburg throne's nuptials should have been.

And in the pattern we have seen emerging in Franz Ferdinand's life, he had moments of significance and insignificance as he spent the next fourteen years as heir. There is no doubt that his marriage was the best thing for him. He himself declared this in a letter to his stepmother – “Sophie is a treasure and I am indescribably happy! She takes such good care of me ... I feel as though reborn” [21] But Sophie was condemned to a twilight world where she could appear at court but was unable to accompany her husband due to her lowly status. She could not enter a room on his arm, she could not sit next to him at dinner, she could not take part in any State functions. So Franz Ferdinand kept away from court as much as he could, which diminished his influence and kept him out of the public light.

Protocol was a real issue at the Austrian court but so was the Emperor's age – he was 70 in 1900. If the Court could not recognise that it needed to look to the future, the rest of Europe did. The rest of Europe was rather more open minded as well – for example, the Duke of York in Great Britain was married to the granddaughter of a mere Countess, too. So Franz Ferdinand found that he was significant enough to be courted by other rulers. It started in 1903 with the Kaiser arriving on a state visit. Bernhard von Bülow, his chancellor, advised Wilhelm that if he paid attention to Sophie, he would win the friendship of Franz Ferdinand for life. The Kaiser was horrified by the idea, but as he was greeted by Franz Ferdinand at the railway station in Vienna, he asked when he would be able to meet Sophie. They all had tea together later that day. Sophie and Franz Ferdinand were later invited to visit the court in Berlin where she received all the honours due to an heir's wife. In 1909, they were both invited to Romania by King Carol

I and in 1913, there was a visit to the above mentioned Duke of York who was now King George V. These visits were mainly considered private, or at least semi-official and became known as Franz Ferdinand's "shooting box diplomacy" as all visits involved some kind of shooting diversion – shooting being Franz Ferdinand's favourite hobby. And through these visits Franz Ferdinand established diplomatic relationships abroad both for himself and his country.



An older Franz Ferdinand in naval uniform 1913

At home, Franz Ferdinand was still aware that his education had been somewhat lacking and sort to remedy that by setting up his own alternative chancellery at his official residence, the Belvedere Palace in Vienna. It was headed by Major Alexander Brosch and intended to develop policies that Franz Ferdinand would implement when he became Emperor. Many saw it as a rival to the government of Franz Joseph but it was more akin to Franz Ferdinand doing a degree in being an Emperor. Gradually, Franz Ferdinand was allowed to see more official papers. Brosch stated, "The Archduke is highly gifted; he has a really incredible quickness of perception and a sure eye, especially for military conditions" [22]. Franz Ferdinand's most astute act in the run up to 1914, was his perpetual opposition to Franz Joseph's Chief of Staff, Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf. Conrad was determined to wage war on Serbia, especially after it opposed Austria's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. Every few months, he would suggest it, every few months Franz Ferdinand would vehemently argue against it. The Archduke understood the bigger picture – if Austria went to war with Serbia, Russia would rush to support its Serb brothers and declare war on Austria. The treaties tying Europe together would create a pan-European war that would probably lead to the downfall of at least the Habsburg monarchy if not others too. If only Franz Ferdinand's warnings had been remembered in July 1914.

By June 1914, Franz Ferdinand had been made Inspector-General of the Armed Forces – he was delighted by this and it was a hugely important recognition of his position and

his hard work. As such he was expected to go to Sarajevo to observe the military manoeuvres in the hills above the city. It was just a military occasion until the Governor General, Oskar Potiorek, decided it would be a feather in his cap to ask the Archduke and his wife to visit the city itself. Franz Joseph wanted nothing that would overshadow the success of his trip in 1910, and Franz Ferdinand knew Sarajevo was politically unstable, and was not happy about an official appearance. So only a short, half day visit was agreed upon for 28th, and Sophie was to be allowed full honours for the first time. This is not the place to tell the story of that fateful day but it has to be noted that it might not have been so fateful had there been proper security arrangements. For a start, Potiorek had not warned Franz Ferdinand that 28th June was St Vitus day – the Serb national holiday marking the 1389 Battle of Kosovo which ended in their bloody defeat to the Ottoman Empire. Potiorek also declared his police force would be able to cope with the visit – ignoring the 22,000 soldiers manoeuvring nearby who might have been able to assist with security. Half that police force was on a day off as it was a Sunday. Potiorek was warned by both his own officials and by Austrian ones including the Foreign Office, the Ministry of the Interior and military intelligence, that there was definitely a threat to the Archduke – he took no notice as he was supremely confident in his arrangements. And nothing was officially done by anyone to supervise Potiorek because nobody really cared enough about Franz Ferdinand – the security provided for the Emperor's visit had been positively fierce compared to that of 1914.



Franz Ferdinand and Sophie at a flower festival in the Prater, Vienna, June 1914

And so, the only person in June 1914 who saw Franz Ferdinand as significant was Gavrilo Princip and his fellow conspirators – and

they assassinated both Franz Ferdinand and Sophie. When Franz Joseph was told, he remarked, “A higher power has restored the old order that I unfortunately was unable to uphold” [23]. This was, of course, a reference to Franz Ferdinand's marriage but it set the tone for the funeral arrangements. Franz Ferdinand's will left instructions that he

was not to be buried in the Habsburg's gloomy Kaisergruft in central Vienna, but at his castle outside Vienna, Artstetten. This he had planned so he could lie forever next to Sophie who would be denied entrance, in death as well as in life, to her place within the Imperial family. The court officials used this, and Sophie's status, as a wonderful excuse to deny Franz Ferdinand a proper state funeral. The bodies only lay in state in Vienna for four hours compared to a whole day for Rudolf. Military officers were ordered not to take part as the funeral cortege passed through Vienna. The funeral service took place in the tiny Hofburg chapel and not a church capable of holding decent numbers. Foreign royals were asked not to attend – the Kaiser was particularly upset by this. There was rebellion amongst even Habsburg archdukes and they followed Franz Ferdinand's and Sophie's coffins all the way to the chapel in Artstetten for a service followed by internment in the crypt. And there the devoted couple still lie, in identical white marble tombs, engraved with the words "Joined in marriage, they were joined by the same fate".

**Mourning card sold after the
assassination**

This should be the end of the story of Franz Ferdinand's insignificance, but it continues. If you go to Vienna today, it is as if Franz Joseph, Sissi and Rudolf



still live – their images are everywhere. You can look as hard as you like, but you will not find a portrait of Franz Ferdinand in the Hofburg. With the centenary of his assassination, there was one exhibition held in Vienna concentrating on his trip around the world – it took place at the Natural History Museum which was founded on the collection of items Franz Ferdinand brought back. In 2016, the centenary of the death of Franz Joseph, there were 5 exhibitions in and around Vienna about all aspects of his life and reign.

Artstetten is open to the public as a museum to Franz Ferdinand, run by the couple's great granddaughter, HSH Princess Anita Hohenberg. But the couple's favourite home,

Konopiste, is in the Czech Republic and this was seized from the couple's three young children in April 1919, when all Habsburg properties in the Czech Republic were expropriated by the government. Seizure of Habsburg properties was legalised when the Treaty of St Germain-en-Laye was ratified in September of that year. As shown above, the children did not have the right to be called Habsburgs, their family name was Hohenberg. Konopiste was owned by HH Max, Duke of Hohenberg, and the seizure was illegal. Inside were all the family memories, the photographs, the letters, the toys, the clothes the orphaned children lost them all – no officials considered them significant enough to defend them. Like Artstetten, Konopiste is open to the public. Another of Franz Ferdinand's great granddaughters, HSH Princess Sophie Hohenberg, has been fighting for restitution of the castle and its contents to the family. Her case has been rejected by both the Czech and European courts. She will continue to fight, and it would be a significant triumph if she eventually succeeds. She will leave Konopiste open to the public but will make sure that Franz Ferdinand gets the recognition he deserves.



The tombs of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie in the crypt at Artstetten on 28th June 2014

- [1] *The Austrian Court from Within* by Princess Catherine Radziwill. New York, Frederick A. Stokes, 1917, pg 57
- [2] quoted in *A Nervous Splendour* by Frederic Morton, Boston, Little Brown, 1979
- [3] *The Assassination of the Archduke* by Greg King and Sue Woolmans, New York, St Martin's Press, 2013, pg 17
- [4] *The Reluctant Empress* by Brigitte Hamann, New York, Ullstein, 1986, chapters 5 & 6
- [5] *Twilight of the Habsburgs* by Alan Palmer pg 158, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson

1994

[6] For more on Archduke Max, see Heidi Mehrkens' "Heir of the Month" April 2015 – *Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Habsburg: A Family Affair*

[7] *A Habsburg Tragedy – Crown Prince Rudolf* by Judith Listowel, London, Ascent Books, 1978, pg 92

[8] *I Was To Be Empress* by HRH Princess Stephanie, London, Nicholson & Watson, 1937, pg 197

[9] *A Habsburg Tragedy – Crown Prince Rudolf* by Judith Listowel, London, Ascent Books, 1978, pg 147

[10] *A Habsburg Tragedy – Crown Prince Rudolf* by Judith Listowel, London, Ascent Books, 1978, pg 205

[11] This is the accepted version of events, there are many other theories as to what exactly happened that night, none of which really fit the facts as known. There is a forthcoming book on Mayerling by Greg King and Penny Wilson which examines the events of that night in detail. It will be entitled, *Twilight of Empire: The Tragedy at Mayerling and the End of the Habsburgs* to be published on 14th November, 2017 by St Martin's Press in New York

[12] *The Assassination of the Archduke* by Greg King and Sue Woolmans, New York, St Martin's Press, 2013, pg 20

[13] *Victims at Sarajevo* by Gordon Brook-Shepherd, London, Harvill, 1984, pg 22

[14] *Tagebuch Meiner Reise um die Welt 1892-3*, Vienna, A. Hölder, 1895-6

[15] Letter of June 27th, 1894, quoted in "Aus den Briefen des Thronfolgers Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand an die Gräfin Marie von Thun und Hohenstein" by Ernst Rutkowski, pg 257, of *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, Vienna: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, 2007

[16] *The Glory of the Habsburgs* by Princess Nora Fugger, London, Harrap, 1932

[17] *Victims at Sarajevo* by Gordon Brook-Shepherd, London, Harvil, 1984 pg 58

[18] *Habsburgs größte Liebesgeschichte: Franz Ferdinand und Sophie* by Beate Hammond, Vienna, Ueberreuter, 2001, pg 49

[19] *The Assassination of the Archduke* by Greg King and Sue Woolmans, New York, St Martins Press, 2013, pg 45

[20] *The Secret of Sarajevo* by Hertha Pauli, London, Collins, 1966, pg 143

[21] Franz Ferdinand to Maria Theresa, letter of July 9th 1900, quote on pg 35 of *Franz*

Ferdinand der Erzherzog Thronfolger by Theodore von Sosnosky, Munich, Oldenburg, 1929

[22] *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinands Wirken und Wollen* by Leopold von Chlumecky, Berlin, Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1929, pg 366

[23] *The Emperor Franz Joseph and his Time* by Albert Margutti, London, Hutchinson, 1921 pg 138

Note some references are cited twice intentionally

Suggested Reading

- *The Assassination of the Archduke* by Greg King and Sue Woolmans, New York, St Martin's Press, 2013
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- *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand von Österreich-Este 1863-1914* Band 1-3 by Wladimir Aichelburg. Verlag Berger, Vienna, 2014
- *Willkommen im Schloss* by Christiane Schiller and Anita Höhenberg, Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand Museum, Schloss Artstetten, 2011
- *Die Verhinderte Dynastie: Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand und das Haus Höhenberg* by Lucian Meysels, Vienna, Molden, 2000
- *Franz Ferdinand und Sophie von Hohenberg – Verbotene Liebe am Kaiserhof* by Erika Bestenreiner, Piper, Munich, 2004
- *Habsburgs Größte Liebesgeschichte – Franz Ferdinand und Sophie* by Beat Hammond, Ueberreuter, Vienna, 2001