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The Court in the Nineteenth Century : return to the Limelight

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The nineteenth century has been called the age of capital, the age of revolutions, "l'éveil des nationalités". It was also an age of monarchy. Napoleon, often hailed as 'the enlightenment on horse-back', was in practice an ultra-monarchist. Having seized power by a military coup on 9 and 10 November 1799, at the same time as governing through a constitution, with Senate, Tribunate and Corps législatif, he established a court system. The crucial step was the creation of a privileged guard in December 1799 ; next came the move to the Tuileries palace in 1800 ; regular receptions and embroidered official costumes in 1801 ; establishment of an Imperial dynasty and of households for each of its members "conforme à la dignité du trône et à la grandeur de la nation" by the 'constitution of AN XII" in May 1804 [1] ; coronation as hereditary Emperor in December 1804 ; last, because it was more controversial than monarchy, foundation of a nobility in 1808. Former anti-nobles such as Sieyès, author of *Qu'est-ce que le tiers état ?* of 1789, and Carnot, a regicide and Minister of War during the Reign of Terror, became 'Comtes de l'Empire'.

Napoleon I not only appointed members of his dynasty rulers of Lucca (1805), Holland (1806), Naples (1806), Westphalia (1807), Berg (1807) and Spain (1808). He also abolished all remaining republics in Europe, both old and new : Venice (1797), France (1804), Genoa (1805), Lucca (1805), Dubrovnik (1806), and the Cisalpine (1805), Batavian (1806) and Septinsular

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(1807) republics. He made the city of Frankfurt into a Grand Duchy (the heir of which would have been his stepson Eugene-Napoleon) and allotted the 52 other former 'free cities' of the Holy Roman Empire to different German rulers. Thus he placed every city in Europe under monarchical authority ; even Swiss cities acknowledged him as 'mediator of the Helvetic Confederation'. Until the fall of the Second Empire in 1870, Europe was more monarchical than at any time since the rise of the Italian city states in the early middle ages.

The French republic of 1792-1800 had been an interlude caused by the failure of Louis XVI and the radicalism of the assemblies. Thereafter, under three dynasties, Bonaparte, Bourbon and Orleans, France repeatedly tried different forms of monarchy. Each reign, even that of the ultra-reactionary Charles X, began with a wave of popularity for the monarch, and the vote of a generous *Liste civile*. Because they had to compete with possible alternative regimes, each dynasty tried harder to make its court more splendid or appropriate - more than Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had done before 1792. In order to make it more inclusive and appealing, the entire *Maison du Roi* was reformed, for the only time in its history, in 1820.

Nineteenth-century Paris was a court city as well as a revolutionary capital, with functioning royal palaces such as the Tuileries, the Palais-Royal and, in the Ile-de-France, Saint-Cloud, Fontainebleau and Compiègne. The last illness, lying-in-state and funeral procession of Louis XVIII in Paris in 1824 were

watched by larger and more respectful crowds than those of Louis XIV and Louis XV in Versailles in 1715 and 1774 - and there were fewer mocking 'chansons'. According to Thiers "La population entière de Paris a pris le deuil...Toute la semaine on a assiégé les Tuileries pour voir la salle du Trone [2]". The court remained a vital test of allegiance, meeting-place, and news centre for the elite. In 1827 the Comte de Castellane wrote "as it was Sunday, I went to the palace." By 1830 the state apartments of the Tuileries were too small to contain all those wishing to attend or watch the King's reception after mass on Sunday [3].

Under Napoleon I French politics was in part court politics, dominated by the struggle between peace and war factions at court, headed by Talleyrand, former *Grand chambellan*, and Maret duc de Bassano, the Emperor's *Ministre secrétaire d'état*, who ran his private government machine within the *Maison de l'Empereur*. Court officials could have decisive influence. Anatole de

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Montesquiou, according to his memoirs, physically dragged his undecided master the Duc d'Orleans back to Paris on 29 July 1830, thus setting the stage for him to become King of the French [4].

In 1830 Louis-Philippe decided to abolish the entire *Maison du Roi*, even the royal chapel and royal hunt : he was a king without a household, with no more than a few ADCs. Nevertheless, when he wished, the citizen king entertained in a style which made all English court entertainments, according to the diarist Charles Greville, appear "mean in comparison" [5]. Architecture shows the continued vitality of court life. A court theatre was erected in the palace of Compiègne, in 1832 for the celebrations of the marriage of Louis-Philippe's eldest daughter to Leopold I of the Belgians. He also built a new wing in his *château* of Eu in Normandy, to accommodate the ministers who followed him there.

Like Napoleon I, his nephew in 1852 -1870 presided over a court society centred on the *Maison de l'Empereur*. In 1851 the future Napoleon III's courtiers Morny, Maupas and Persigny helped organise the coup d'état which kept him in power [6]. In 1852 Horace de Vielcastel, a curator in the Louvre, wrote in his diary : "la cour se forme, c'est à qui endossera l'habit brodé. La France n'a jamais été républicaine car c'est le royaume de la vanité". The court was one of the most entertaining in Europe : the Austrian court, the Austrian ambassadress Princess Metternich remembered, could not compare. 1867, when the crowned heads of Europe visited the *Exposition universelle*, was another apogee of Paris as court city [7]. The court's autumn visits to Compiègne were so popular that, Princess Metternich wrote, when guests arrived, it seemed as if the city of Paris itself was moving house [8]. Since Louis-Philippe's theatre was not large enough to contain all the guests of Napoleon III, a second court theatre was built, with a corridor connecting it to the palace - it was ready by the autumn of 1870, by which time the regime had been overthrown [9].

As in traditional court societies, power and biology were connected. The Emperor's illegitimate half-brother the Duc de Morny, and Napoleon I's illegitimate

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son Count Walewski, were the last powerful dynastic bastards in European history. In 1859, discussing the political influence in favour of a united Italy of Madame de Walewska, wife of the Foreign Minister and one of the Emperor's mistresses, Vielcastel wrote : "coucher avec l'Empereur mène à tout [10]".

The Empress Eugénie was more visibly powerful than any consort of modern times. Her initial 'E' can be seen on the facades of the Louvre and the Paris opera, a distinction not accorded to other recent consorts. She was also the first French consort to sit in the council of ministers at the same time as, as well as in the absence of, her husband. When Regent in August 1870, she dismissed her husband's ministers and nominated her own government under the Comte de Palikao [11].

The principal cause of the fall of French monarchs, in 1792, 1814, 1815, 1830, 1848 and 1870 was not political but military : defeat, or alleged lack of nationalism. On 4 September 1870, for example, it was the news of Napoleon III's surrender at Sedan - seen as unforgivably cowardly - that discouraged his government and troops from defending his regime. They allowed a revolutionary crowd to invade the *Corps législatif* and proclaim a republic [12].

Another factor weakening French monarchies was dynastic chance : the death in a riding accident of the Duc d'Orléans, Louis-Philippe's popular heir, in 1842 ; the deaths without children of two pretenders, the *Prince Impérial* in 1879 and the Comte de Chambord in 1883. Monarchs' errors also helped : Louis XVI's and Louis-Philippe's refusal to change unpopular ministers in 1792 and 1848 respectively ; Charles X's ill-

prepared coup, while his best troops were in Algiers, in 1830. After 1870 Chambord's rejection of constitutional monarchy, and the lack of charisma of the Orleanist candidate his cousin the Comte de Paris, as much as popular republicanism, helped ensure the survival of the Third Republic - defined by one politician as "the regime which divides us the least".

Until 1870, however, France provided the principal model for European monarchies, and European constitutions. From the point of view of courts, there was no national history, only European history. The grandiose coronation of Napoleon I in 1804, for example, inspired both the coronation

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of George IV in 1821 and of Pedro I as Emperor of Brazil in 1824. The Austrian and British civil uniforms, created in 1814 and 1818 respectively, were based on French uniforms. Paris was a model for other capitals [13].

The challenge of nineteenth century monarchy was to have three elements working at the same time : dynasty ; army ; constitution. Dynasties without effective constitutions usually failed, even when they had a loyal army, as was the case with the Bourbons of Naples in 1860-1861. For many monarchs constitutions could act as screens, protecting monarchical and aristocratic power more effectively than the nakedness of absolutism - as Leopold I of the Belgians reminded Prince Metternich in 1848, when the latter took refuge in constitutional Belgium from revolution in absolutist Austria [14].

While the Bonapartes favoured plebiscites, the Bourbons and Orléans helped to introduce parliamentary monarchy into Europe. The *charte* of Louis XVIII in 1814 was the principal model for the constitutions of 1818 in Bavaria, 1831 in Belgium, 1848 in Piedmont, 1850 in Prussia and 1876 in the Ottoman Empire. Conversely revolutions in Paris in 1830 and 1848, far more than those of 1789 and 1792, helped trigger revolutions in other countries. As Metternich said : "when Paris sneezes, Europe catches cold [15]".

Successful dynasties created nations as well as constitutions : after 1831 the Coburg kings strengthened Belgian identity ; the Hohenzollern united Germany, the Savoy Italy. German unity was achieved in the *galerie des glaces* of Versailles on 18 January 1871 when Wilhelm I was acclaimed German Emperor by his fellow monarchs. As the celebrated 1885 picture by Anton von Werner confirmed, not one civilian or parliamentarian was present. Despite his civilian office, Bismarck wore military uniform, as he generally did in Berlin, even in the Reichstag - thereby proclaiming the primacy of the army and royal service in the public life of the new Germany [16].

Material culture confirms the power of court society and its expansion into new classes. There was an increase in the number of people wearing court dress and uniforms, and court mourning, in the capitals of Europe before 1914. The sight of a civilian on the streets of Berlin could become a subject of caricature [17]. There was a similar expansion of honours systems - Orders, medals, titles, audiences - signs of power linking subjects directly to their monarchs.

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Capital also reflected the importance of courts. The Rothschilds rose to be the 'world's bankers' through their role as court bankers - to the Elector of Hesse Cassel, the British and Austrian governments and successive French monarchs. Rothschilds paid for Louis XVIII's return to France in 1814 and Charles X's departure in 1830. As one Rothschild wrote to his brother in 1816 : "A court is always a court and it always leads to something". James de Rothschild was banker to Charles X, Louis Philippe and Napoleon III and a frequent guest of all of them in the Tuileries. The Rothschilds themselves, as the decoration of their hotel in Paris showed, saw themselves as new Medici - a family of bankers which became a sovereign dynasty [18].

Courts remained centres of artistic inspiration as well as economic power. Courtier writers who celebrated French monarchs and dynasties included Stendhal under Napoleon I ; Chateaubriand, Lamartine and Alfred de Vigny under the Bourbons ; Victor Hugo for Louis Philippe ; and Mérimée and Théophile Gautier under Napoleon III. Liszt was a court musician in Weimar ; Wagner's most useful patron was Ludwig II, King of Bavaria. The best-selling writer of his day, Sir Walter Scott was a friend of George IV, helped arrange his historic visit to Scotland in 1821 and frequently wrote about courts in his novels. Tennyson, the Poet Laureate, celebrated the court of King Arthur in *The Idylls of the King*. The list is endless.

Architecture confirms the re-monarchisation of Europe. After a retreat in the second half of the eighteenth century - when monarchs had preferred the relative privacy of Kew, Paretz, or the Hermitage - they

started to build or expand palaces again. In Venice, Napoleon installed a royal palace (now the Museo Correr) on the Piazza San Marco in 1805-7- as, breaking with dynastic traditions, did Carlo Felice King of Sardinia in the Palazzo Durazzo in Genoa. It became his much-visited Palazzo Reale in 1823 [19].

In Amsterdam, a city with a tradition of municipal independence as great as Venice or Genoa, King Louis Napoleon made his "plechtige inkomst" [sommptueuse entrée] on 20 April 1808. At his request, against the citizens' wishes, the town hall built in 1648-1655, with friezes of oceans and continents paying homage to Amsterdam, became a royal palace, as it still is. The town council was expelled. The Citizens' Hall became the 'grande salle de réception', with magnificent Empire furniture ; the High Court of Justice was turned into the

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Royal Chapel. The Dutch monarchy is a nineteenth century creation [20]. Ignoring parliament and ministers, King William I of the Netherlands, known as 'the decree king', was more autocratic than Charles X of France : the orb, sceptre and mantle of the Dutch monarchy were created for his son's inauguration in the New Church in Amsterdam in 1840 [21].

Brussels, as well as Amsterdam, experienced a monarchisation process. In 1790, after a successful revolution against Austrian rule, the Southern Netherlands proclaimed the first modern republic in Europe. Its name - the Etats Beliques Unis - showed its American inspiration. After their next successful revolution, however, against Dutch rule in 1830, the Southern Netherlands, spurning a republic, turned to monarchy, finally accepting as King the candidate of the Great Powers of Europe, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. The Belgian monarchy, like the Royal Palace in Brussels, is a nineteenth-century creation [22].

A similar process took place in Athens. In 1834 the first government building erected in the new capital after the Greek war of independence, before a parliament, ministries or university, was the massive royal palace, designed by the Bavarian court architect Leo von Klenze for the new King Otto, younger son of Ludwig I of Bavaria. New monarchies and palaces were also installed, after 1850, in Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia, Oslo, Cetinje and Tirana [23]. Monarchy was an expanding, not a contracting system. One reason for the choice of foreign, rather than native, monarchs by Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Norway was their desire to join the European family of kings - still a valid concept before 1914.

There were similar monarchical building programmes, supervised by monarchs and court officials in Munich with the expansion of the Residenz by von Klenze under Ludwig I in 1825-1835 ; in Paris with the completion of the Louvre in 1852-1857 under Napoleon III - covered in crowns and N's, and used as a palace for banquets and the state opening of parliament, as well as a museum ; in Vienna with the construction of the Neue Hofburg and the great

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imperial museums opposite it in the 1880's ; in Budapest with the expansion of the Royal Palace in 1890-1905 ; in London with the expansion of Buckingham palace in 1847 and 1911 and the creation, after the death of Prince Albert in 1861, of the Albert Memorial, Albert Hall and Victoria and Albert Museum. They were monuments to his love of the arts, as the Victor Emanuel monument, inaugurated in Rome in 1911, was a monument to the role of the House of Savoy, the only Italian dynasty with a constitution, in the unification of Italy [24].

In Constantinople the massive palaces of Dolmabahce, Ciragan and Beylerbey, symbols of the Europeanisation of the later Ottoman Empire, were built in 1849-1871 by sultans Abdulmecid and Abdulaziz. In addition an entire city of kiosks, offices, schools and residences, was created after 1878 in the grounds of Yildiz palace, on a hill above the Bosphorus. In its turn Yildiz was surrounded by the houses of ministers and sheikhs. There the Sultan Abdulhamid II, having suspended the Ottoman constitution, ran the Ottoman Empire ; his court officials and secretaries became as influential as government ministers. His civil list became a force in the economic life of the empire, buying up oil-bearing lands in Mesopotamia ahead of western companies [25].

The dynamism of monarchy and court life in nineteenth century Europe was not reflected in historiography until the 1980's. In France the strength of the republican tradition in universities and the fear of appearing reactionary has made it easy to forget that the revolution of 1789 was not at first republican. Revolutionaries wanted Louis XVI to lead them.

A second factor side-lining monarchy in nineteenth-century France is that historians are usually civilians. If they go to archives, they have preferred the Archives Nationales in Paris to the Archives Historiques du

Ministère de la Guerre in Vincennes. They have failed to research the role of armies in politics and to see the nineteenth century as the apogee of military monarchy. The *Garde imperiale* or *royale* could control Paris, as the Imperial Guard controlled Saint Petersburg.

All nineteenth century monarchs were also commanders-in-chief. They knew that, as Voltaire had written, god is on the side of the big battalions.

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Louis Philippe fell in part because he refused to launch wars- and had lost the support of his power-base, the Paris National Guard. Napoleon I and III seized power through military coups and lost it after military defeats.

Architecture is a third factor marginalising the French monarchies of the nineteenth century. The key documents were the palaces of the Tuileries and Saint-Cloud. If they had not been burnt in 1870-1871, during the Commune and the Franco-Prussian war respectively, then demolished by the Third Republic in the 1880's as a conscious repudiation of monarchy, it would have been more difficult to overlook the monarchs who inhabited them. Noone sidelines Versailles.

In contrast the memoirs, diaries and letters of the nineteenth century, frequently quoted by two post-dynastic court historians - Frédéric Masson on the Bonapartes, and Ernest Daudet on the Bourbons - show the importance of dynasties and courts in nineteenth-century France. The court literature of the period includes masterpieces such as the memoirs of Madame de Boigne, an Orleanist ; the diary of the Maréchal de Castellane, who served every regime ; and the Journal of Pierre Fontaine, Premier architecte de l'Empereur (Paris Ecole nationale des Beaux-Arts, 2 vols., 1987), who also worked for subsequent monarchs. One of the most remarkable records of the relationship between monarchy and architecture is a nineteenth century document.

Since 1980, with the decline of Marxism, studies on the French court in the nineteenth century have become more frequent. I myself was drawn to the court by the letters and diaries of the Restoration, above all by the letters preserved in the O3 series (*Maison du roi* 1814-1830) in the *Archives Nationales*. Applying for court offices to Louis XVIII and Charles X, nobles revealed the power of monarchy and royalism in the nineteenth century. Revolutionary losses had increased both monarchs' and elites' appetite and need for court life. In *The Court of France 1789-1830*, (Cambridge University Press, 1989 ; French translation Paris, Tallandier, 1990 ; Italian translation Milan, Rizzoli, 1991), based on my 1978 University of London thesis, I showed that the *maison du roi* grew from 1,860 in 1789 to 2,921 in 1830. Louis XVI had four *premiers gentilshommes de la chambre* ; Napoleon I over 100 *chamberlains* ; Charles X 306 *gentilshommes de la chambre*.

In biographies of Charles X by José Cabanis (Paris, Gallimard, 1972) ; of Louis XVIII by myself (Paris, Pygmalion, 1982) ; of Louis Philippe by Guy Antonetti (Paris, Fayard, 1994) ; of Napoleon III by Louis Girard (Paris, Fayard, 1986) ; of Talleyrand by Emmanuel de Waresquiel (Paris, Fayard, 2003) and the study *The Perilous Crown : France between Revolutions 1814-1848* (London, Macmillan, 2007) by Munro Price making extensive use

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of the Orleans archives in the *Archives Nationales*, the persistence of royal power and court life have been analysed at some length. Antonetti for example shows that, far from being a constitutional monarch, Louis Philippe had become almost all-powerful - and hostile to reforms - in the government by 1847. His sons predicted the revolution which overthrew him a few weeks later [26].

Louis Girard compared the court of Napoleon III to Versailles and described the importance of the Emperor in replanning Paris as an imperial capital, with his devoted Prefect Baron Haussmann. Much of the city became 'court space' [27]. Art historians show the central role of the monarch's civil list in commissioning pictures, sculptures, churches and much else, and expanding museums : for example Marie-Claude Chaudonneret in *L'Etat et les beaux-arts. De la Restauration à la monarchie de Juillet* (Paris, Flammarion, 2000) ; and Catherine Granger in *Napoléon III et les arts* (Paris, Ecole nationale des Beaux-arts, 2005). Every monarchy had a key adviser determined to make the regime the centre of patronage : Denon for Napoleon I ; Forbin and Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld for Louis XVIII and Charles X ; the Comte de Montalivet for Louis-Philippe ; the Comte de Nieuwerkerke, lover of Princess Mathilde, for Napoleon III. Painters serving the court included David, Baron Gérard, Isabey, Ingres and Winterhalter. Still, however, there is no analysis of the monarchy's use of the French army in politics, and plans to

subdue Paris. They culminated in Thiers' ruthless use of force - the revenge of Versailles against Paris - in 1871. There has been no synthesis of the entire period, in France, to compare with Denis Mack-Smith's *Italy and its Monarchy* (London and New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989), which stressed the power of the Kings of Italy over the army, in the council of ministers, in matters of war and peace, and in bringing Italy into the war in 1915 against the wishes of parliament and the people [28]. A start has been made, however, with the publication of proceedings of a conference on nineteenth century monarchies held at the *Institut d'Histoire de la Révolution française*. It includes Nathalie Petiteau on "Les Français et l'empereur" ; Thibaut Tretour on "Louis Philippe et la cour" ; Helene Becquet on Princesses under the Restoration and Munro Price on Madame Adelaide. All articles show the political and artistic importance of the monarchy and the continued role of unofficial dynastic or courtier advisers in decision-making [29].

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England also lacks a systematic treatment of the monarchy and the court in the nineteenth century, comparable to Hannah Smith's brilliant *Georgian Monarchy : Politics and Culture 1714-1760* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006) on the period 1714-1760. Yet the composition of the royal household was a crucial political factor on at least two occasions. In 1811 the Whigs' insistence on changing the three senior officials of the royal household - Lord Steward, Lord Chamberlain and Master of the Horse - helped persuade the Prince Regent, despite his Whig antecedents, to keep his father's Tory ministers. It was said they had lost three kingdoms for the sake of three white wands.

On her accession in 1837 one of the first acts of the young queen Victoria was to move to Buckingham Palace. There Lady Granville, wife of the British ambassador to Paris, found the young Queen "perfect in manner, dignity and grace. It is so much more like a Court than any I have seen." The court was a political issue. In the Bedchamber crisis in 1839 Queen Victoria's refusal to dismiss her Whig ladies led Robert Peel to refuse to become Prime Minister. Control of the royal household was felt to be necessary for control of the House of Commons.

Queen Victoria's published letters, and those of their editor the key court official and royal military adviser Lord Esher, allow some glimpse of the power and hidden wirings of the British monarchy. A few days after her marriage in 1840, Queen Victoria assured Prince Albert : "I must always have my court about me [30]".

Analysis is beginning with the work of Walter Arnstein on *Queen Victoria* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) and of William Kuhn on her great Private Secretary Sir Henry Ponsonby (*Henry and Mary Ponsonby. Life at the Court of Queen Victoria*, London Duckworth 2002). In *Power and Place : the Political consequences of King Edward VII* (London Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1998) Simon Heffer has shown the importance of Edward VII in international affairs - often working through favoured lesser officials such as Charles Hardinge, in the Foreign Office, husband of one of his wife's ladies in waiting, and Lord Esher. He insisted on seeing despatches and being consulted on appointments. Heffer also shows the desire of ministers, in particular A.J. Balfour, to diminish the King's role in history books and take credit for his policies [31].

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As Marxism and the history of the masses have lost their hold on hearts and minds, the political role of monarchs and dynasties, elites and emotions, has been reassessed. Arno Mayer in *The Persistence of the Old Regime* (London, Croom Helm, 1981) despite many inaccuracies, described the persistence of aristocratic power in armies ; the expansion in numbers of imperial households ; and the role of courts as 'control centres' of official culture of Europe [32]. The volumes edited by Cesare Mozzarelli and Karl Möckl also showed the persistence of the court system in Rome, Berlin and Vienna in the nineteenth century [33].

In Russia the work of Dominic Lieven and Richard Wortman has led to a reevaluation of the role of the monarchy and the court. In *Russia's Rulers under the Old Regime* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1989), Dominic Lieven showed the importance of guards officers and nobles in the bureaucracy. There was no cooption of the bourgeoisie as in Bavaria or Prussia. In his magnificent two volume *Scenarios of Power : Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 2 vols., 1995-2000), Richard Wortman penetrated below official and administrative history to show the emotions driving them. The number of chamberlains, and the size of the Imperial Guard grew from the reign of Alexander I as did the number of ministers and officials given senior court posts. Court and

government became closely linked [34].

In a highly original fashion, he uses ceremonies - interior decoration - sculpture - photographs to show how the tsars saw themselves their court, empire, and subjects. The Tsar 'used the court and the drill ground [often on daily parades] to give constant revalidation to the mythic grounding of his power'. Other ceremonies like the coronation, icon kissing, the taking of the oath of majority by the heir to the throne, frequently performed in tears, affirmed the 'bond of love' between Tsar and people [35].

Parades were 'magnificent shows of mutual loyalty' and recognition, when the emperor used the second person singular, and embraced favoured guards, calling them his children. On 1 March 1881 Alexander II was killed by his insistence, despite warnings, on attending a guards review which exposed him to a nihilist's bomb [36]. Nicholas II was in love with army life :

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"there exists no better place on earth than Kranose Seloe". He believed that the *duma* - opened at a court ceremony in the Winter Palace in 1906 - was the expression of his will, and that he should run the army and the navy himself. He also believed in "the wonderful hymn of mutual love" between Tsar and people, expressed during the Romanov tercentenary of 1913 and the ceremonies of the proclamation of war in 1914. Like Charles X in 1830, he believed his own myth and in the "sacred duty of the Russian Tsar to be among his troops" - until, after the outbreak of revolution in February 1917, reality broke through and he wrote in his diary : "all around there is treason, cowardice and deceit [37]".

Since they have so many palaces and palace objects to look after, museum curators are often more interested in courts than historians. The splendour and confidence of the Russian court, and its continued patronage of the arts, was confirmed in 2009 by the popular exhibition, organised by the Hermitage Palace Museum staff at the Amsterdam Hermitage : *At the Russian court : Palace and Protocol in the nineteenth century*. It gathered an army of pictures, menu cards, statues, uniforms, furniture drawings, photographs, jewels, hunt cards, to show that the court was, in the words of the Director of the Hermitage, 'an important symbol of Russia's oneness with Europe'. Peasants and workers hardly appear. The bibliography at the end of the catalogue shows the number of books about the Russian court and monarchy published since the fall of communism in 1991 - part of the desire to reconnect with Russia's imperial past also shown in the readoption, as Russian national symbols, of the crowned double-headed eagle and the old Russian flag ; and the reburial in Saint Petersburg (as Leningrad was renamed in 1991, in preference to its 1914-24 name of Petrograd) of executed or exiled Romanovs.

A similar exhibition ten years earlier in Copenhagen, about the last Tsar's mother Marie Feodorovna, was more realistic. It showed not only her dresses, uniforms - she was colonel of two regiments - jewels, portraits and photographs ; but also her active role in securing contracts for Danish companies and encouraging the revival of Russian decorative arts ; her charities ; her relations with Dostoyevsky ; and her diary lamenting the madness and blindness of her daughter-in-law the Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna. Here we see how, through the court system, one woman of limited intellect could have a central, multidimensional and international impact. Two Russian ambassadors to her father the King of Denmark became Foreign Ministers of her son Nicholas II [38].

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In Austria William Godsey has described the continued power and growing exclusiveness of the court aristocracy before 1914 [39]. Recent biographies of the Empress Elizabeth by Brigitte Hamann (*The Reluctant Empress*, Berlin, Ullstein, 2000) and of Francis Joseph by Jean Paul Bled (Paris, Fayard, 1987) have described the reinforcement of the court system during the nineteenth century. It helped the Emperor keep his prestige, despite his many mistakes and defeats. For her part, using her Hungarian ladies in waiting, the Empress Elizabeth played a key role in rallying to the Habsburg monarchy Hungarian nationalism in general and Count Andrassy in particular [40]. The great Viennese historian Heinrich Friedjung told Chancellor Prince Bülow that the Empress's lady in waiting Marie Festetics "knew more interesting and important things about Austrian history in the second half of the nineteenth century than the whole Imperial Academy of Sciences [41]". However many papers have been destroyed. Above all Germany has seen a revival of court history, launched by two conferences in Corfu in 1979 and Darmstadt in 1982. Finally historians realised, what should have been self evident : that the most advanced industrial country in Europe was also a fully functioning monarchy. Much work has been done

on the courts of Bavaria and Württemberg, which remained central to the politics and culture of their countries [42]. In *Pomp und Politik. Monarchenbegegnungen in Europa zwischen Ancien Regime und Erstem Weltkrieg* (Paderborn, Ferdinand Schoningk, 2000), Johannes Paulmann described ceremonial and ritual relations between monarchs, as well as diplomacy and state militarisation.

The greatest change, however, has been in treatment of the reign of Wilhelm II. When working on the political history of the second Reich - and the correspondence of the Kaiser's closest friend Prince Philipp zu Eulenburg - in the 1960's, at the height of left-wing fashions in history, John Rohl realised that he was in reality dealing with a court society. As in nineteenth century France, key decisions could be influenced by courtiers, favourites and ADC's. Chancellor Prince Bülow was a courtier who called the Kaiser

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"the most important Hohenzollern that ever lived" and "the bearer of the national idea and the future of the German People [43]".

In *The Kaiser and his Court : Wilhelm II and the Government of Germany* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), John Rohl described the massive civil lists, which funded the 'monstrous flowering of court culture' and 'the kingship mechanism' of flattery, intrigue and imperial control of appointments which dominated Germany. "Above the administrative bureaucracy with the Reich chancellor and Prussian Minister President at its head, there existed a further structure, namely court society without which the whole system cannot be understood [44]".

Rohl's pupil Isabel Hull in 1982 had already shown that the Kaiser's ADC's [aides de camp] and military household - generally good-looking noble guards officers - had helped make him more conservative and more isolated from modern developments. Confident of German victory, the 'cerberuses at the gate' helped push or shame him into preventive war after 1912. "The earlier the better, the great liquidation must come sometime", as General von Plessen said in November 1912 - a month before the Kaiser said "war, the sooner the better". "*Gegen Demokraten helfen nur Soldaten*" was their belief [45].

In his magisterial biography of the Kaiser (Frankfurt, C. H. Beck, 3 vols., 1993-2008), two volumes of which have appeared in English, Rohl confirms the political importance of the Kaiser, the court and the minister of the royal house. His speeches became major and disastrous political events. Rohl quotes lucid letters from his liberal mother, lamenting his megalomania and prophesying revolution, dictatorship and 'God knows what ravages' [46]. Rohl shows that "in the military and naval spheres and in the making of foreign policy his decisions went virtually unchallenged". He was an originator of the Schlieffen plan to knock out France and the Tirpitz plan to challenge British naval supremacy ; and between 1912 and 1914 encouraged plans to launch war (revealed by threats made to the King of the Belgians in November 1913) - even before the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in July 1914.

Christopher Clark in *Kaiser Wilhelm II* (Penguin, 2009) has tried to minimise the Kaiser's desire for war in 1914. Yet he confirms the Kaiser's continued control over nominations. Even the chancellor was dependent on royal favour, not a

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parliamentary majority. Of Bethmann Hollweg - a civilian chancellor who like Bismarck frequently wore military uniform - it was said : 'The root of his strength was his relationship with the Emperor'. Even in 1910, two years after a public storm over 'the Daily Telegraph affair' which had made him contemplate abdication, the Kaiser made a public speech in which he described himself as "the chosen instrument of heaven", holding "the Prussian crown by grace of god alone not through parliament [47]".

Another sign that Germany and Europe were still in part a court culture was the role of pleasure in politics. Monarchs frequently took decisions while on holiday, hunting, yachting or 'taking the waters' at a spa : at Balmoral or Osborne, Bad Ems or Bad Ischl, Biarritz or Kiel. The Kaiser spent under half the year in Berlin and Potsdam : he often visited favourites in their castles, such as Liebenberg (Prince Eulenburg) or Donaueschingen (Prince Fürstenberg) [48].

Before 1914 most countries experienced a growing number of strikes, Socialist deputies and Socialist party and trade union members. In 1889 in Rio de Janeiro and in 1910 in Lisbon monarchies had been overthrown and republics proclaimed. At the same time, however, a series of national celebrations of dynastic occasions, organised by court officials and politicians, demonstrated the continued popularity of monarchies : the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, the coronations of Edward VII in 1902 and George V in 1911 and the Delhi Durbar acclaiming George V as Emperor of India later that year ; the 60th

anniversary, in 1908, of the accession of Franz Joseph when, as Stefan Zweig would remember in exile during the Second World War, eighty thousand Viennese school children sang 'Gott erhalte Franz dem Kaiser' on the lawn of Schönbrunn palace, and there was a massive historical parade before the Emperor in front of the Hofburg [49] ; the fiftieth anniversary of Italian unity and inauguration of the Victor Emanuel monument in 1911 ; the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Kaiser's accession and his daughter's wedding to the Duke of Brunswick in 1913 ; and the tercentenary of the House of Romanov in 1913. In 1914 Europe was still - for some - a court society.

If Europe had not still appeared to be a court society, Nicholas II, Francis Joseph and Wilhelm II, and their ministers and generals, would not have

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risked revolution and gone to war in 1914. Making the same mistake as Charles X in 1830 and Napoleon III in 1870, they put prestige and conquest before self-preservation. The success of the court system led to its destruction. Like the First and Second Empires in France, the Russian, Austrian, German and Ottoman Empires fell as a result of military defeat. The end of court society and royal households in Europe came not in 1789, nor in 1848, but in 1917 and 1918.

Even then, however, court society remained a political factor. Many twentieth century national leaders had previously been monarchs'ADC's or guards officers. They included Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Marshal Mannerheim, Marshal Hindenburg, Admiral Horthy and General Franco. They could not continue to serve their monarchs ; but they did try to preserve a social order. In Spain Franco also arranged, what other leaders (except Mustafa Kemal) may have hoped for in their countries : the restoration of the monarchy.

Notes

[1] *A la table d'Eugénie. Le service de la Bouche dans les palais impériaux*, Paris RMN, 2009, p. 21.

[2] Robert Marquant, *Thiers et le Baron Cotta*, Paris PUF, 1959, p. 177 : Thiers to Cotta, 24 September 1824.

[3] Philip Mansel, *The Court of France 1789-1830*, Cambridge ,Cambridge University Press 1989, p. 197, 203.

[4] Comte Anatole de Montesquiou, *Souvenirs sur la Révolution, l'Empire, la Restauration et le règne de Louis -Philippe*, Paris Plon 1961, p. 466-7.

[5] Charles Greville, *Memoirs*, London Macmillan, 8 vols, 1938 ; vol. III p. 343, 2 February 1837.

[6] Mansel, *Paris capitale de l'Europe*, Paris Perrin 2003, p. 464-6.

[7] Princess Pauline de Metternich, *Souvenirs*, Paris Plon, s. d., p. 134.

[8] Ibid, p. 78-9.

[9] Cf for an overview on the court and its visits to Compiègne, *A la table d'Eugénie*. passim.

[10] *Mémoires sur le règne de Napoléon III* ed Eric Anceau, Paris Robert Laffont, 2005, p. 235, 804, 824, 2 December 1852, 15 August 1859, 6 September 1859.

[11] Louis Girard, *Napoléon III*, p. 375.

[12] Fabien Cardoni, '1870 : la révolution de velours', dans *L'Histoire*, 348, December 2009, pp 83-5.

[13] Philip Mansel, *Dressed to Rule : Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II* London and New Haven Yale University Press, 2005, p. 98, 100.

- [14] Carlo Bronne, *Leopold Ier et son temps* Brussels Les Oeuvres 1942, p. 222.
- [15] Mansel, *Paris capitale de l'Europe*, p. 311.
- [16] Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, p. 123.
- [17] Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, p. 111-141.
- [18] Philip Mansel *Paris capitale de l'Europe* p. 214, 302, 396.
- [19] Commemorated in the inscription on the staircase : Rex Carolus Felix Aug. Palatinam hanc Domus sibi suisque Successoris Constituit A MDCCCXXIII.
- [20] Harry Kraaj, *The Royal Palace in Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, Royal Palace, 1997, passim ; *Empire in the Palace. The Decoration and Furnishing of the Royal Palace at the time of Louis-Napoleon*, Amsterdam Royal Palace 1983, passim.
- [21] Hans van Bree and Piet Lekkerkerk, *The House of Orange*, Amsterdam 2006 p. 41.
- [22] Tom Verschaffel, 'The Embellishment of Brussels under Leopold I and Leopold II', dans *The Court Historian* 12, 2 December 2007 p. 193-214.
- [23] George Vassiades, 'Athens ; the creation of a royal capital 1834-1914', dans *The Court Historian*, 15,1, 2010 and John Hamilton, 'False Starts and Failed Hopes'. The Rise and Fall of Royal Sofia', dans *The Court Historian*, 13,1, June 2008, p. 61-73.
- [24] See the articles on Munich by David Watkin, Paris by Philip Mansel, Vienna by Alan Sked , Buckingham Palace by Steven Brindle and Rome by Terry Kirk in *The Court Historian* ('Courts and Capitals 1815-1914'), issues 11, 1 July 2006 and 13, 1 June 2008
- [25] Philip Mansel ed., *Constantinople City of the World's Desire* , London John Murray 2006, p. 272-3, 313-345 ; Francois Georgeon, *Abdulhamid II Le sultan calife*, Paris Fayard 2003, p. 89, 127-146, 164-9, 264,
- [26] Antonetti, *Louis-Philippe*, p. 902, 910.
- [27] Girard, *Napoleon III*, p. 190-216, 338-352.
- [28] Ibid, p. 27, 66, 84, 94, 99, 214
- [29] Helene Becquet et Bettina Frederking eds., *La dignité de roi. Regards sur la royauté au premier XIXe siècle*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009.
- [30] Robert Rhodes James, *Albert Prince Consort*, London Hamish Hamilton 1983, p. 76.
- [31] Simon Heffer, *Power and Place : the political consequences of King Edward VII* , London Phoenix 1998 p. 48, 102, 131, 156, 163, 212, 246-7, 302.
- [32] See e.g. Arno J Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime Europe to the Great War*, p. 150-2, 185.
- [33] Mozzarelli *Antico Regime e Modernita*, Rome Bulzoni 2008 ; Mockl ed., *Hof und Hofgesellschaft in den deutschen Staaten im 19. Jahrhundert*, Bompard am Rhein H. Boldt 1990 ;
- [34] Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, vol. 1, 203, 227-9, 322, 540, II 51.

- [35] Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, vol. 1, 205, 220, 269, 285, 359, II, 37, 231, 338, 425.
- [36] Ibid, vol. 2, p. 132-3, 155.
- [37] Ibid, vol. 2, p. 320, 412, 413, 421, 478-91, 503, 516, 522
- [38] *Marie Feodorovna Empress of Russia*, Copenhagen Christiansborg Palace 1997, p. 260 -272.
- [39] 'Quarterings and Kinship : the Social Composition of the Habsburg Aristocracy in the Dualist Era', dans *Journal of Modern History*, 71, 1999, p. 56-104.
- [40] Bled, *Francois Joseph*, p. 461-496 ; Hamann, *Reluctant Empress*, p. 147-153.
- [41] Prince von Bülow, *Memoirs 1849-97*, 1932, London and New York Putnam 1932, p. 407.
- [42] Karl Ferdinand Werner ed., *Hof, Kultur und Politik im 19. Jahrhundert*, Bonn L. Rohrscheid 1985 ; *Kaiser Wilhelm II. New Interpretations* Cambridge Cambridge University Press 1982 eds. John Rohl and Werner Sombart , p. 52 , 234 ; cf. Gisela Herdt, *Der Württembergische Hof im 19. Jahrhundert*, Ph D thesis Göttingen 1970.
- [43] Interview with Philip Mansel, dans *The Court Historian*, 2, 1996, p. 1-2 ; *Kaiser Wilhelm II. New Interpretations*, p. 27, 223.
- [44] *The Kaiser and his Court*, p. 77, 103, 125, 159, 127.
- [45] Isabel V. Hull, *The Entourage of Kaiser Wilhelm II*, Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 6, 30-1, 156, 190, 223, 239, 261, 287, 304.
- [46] *Wilhelm II. The Kaiser's Personal Monarchy 1888-1900* Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 511 and preceding pages.
- [47] Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, p. 29 ,47,100, 113, 152-3, 247, 249.
- [48] Heffer, *Edward VII*, p. 212, 251 ; Hull, *Entourage*, p. 3 ; Clark, *Kaiser*, p. 177 ; Rohl, *Kaiser and his Court*, 1994 p. 128.
- [49] Stefan Zweig *The World of Yesterday*, London Cassell 1943, p. 217 ; cf Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, London IB Tauris 2008 p. 96-101.