

Monarchy, the Court, and the Provincial Elite in Early Modern Europe

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Edited by

Peter Edwards



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Preface

Most of the essays printed in this volume were read at a conference organized by The Society for Court Studies which took place at the University of Cambridge in January 2019. Entitled *Monarchy and Modernity since 1500*, the conference showcased 337 papers dealing with a huge range of subjects associated with monarchical rule. From the available essays choice was dictated by constraints imposed by Brill's requirements, as well as by the wish to contribute to the current discussion of issues concerning the nature of early modern government and the role of monarchy in it. To enhance the coherence, invitation was extended to other scholars currently working in the field of Court Studies. Crucial themes covered in the volume include the theory and practice of monarchical rule and other forms of government; warfare as a device to increase royal power internally as well as externally or, conversely, as a means of curbing arbitrary rule; the roles played by the rulers and the social elite in the government of a country; the incidence and impact of court factionalism; the importance of projecting a sought-for image to embellish the standing of the monarch; and the effect of religion and economics on the exercise of power.

The geographical coverage is exceptionally wide, ranging from Brazil in the West to Poland in the East via Portugal, Spain, France, England, Scotland, France, the Holy Roman Empire, Lithuania, Denmark, Norway and Sweden in between, thereby offering numerous comparative examples of the relationships between rulers and elites. Indeed, individual essays often overlap each other in terms of the discussion of the central issues relevant to the highlighted themes. The volume is divided into three parts, each with a specific focus, giving it a logical structure. If the first part views the relationship from the point of view of the ruler, the second one looks at it from the perspective of the governed, especially the landed elite. The final part examines the relationship between the ruler and two other authoritative bodies, the Church and the urban elite.

In spite of the wide-ranging nature of the essays in terms of their geographical and thematic extent, they are unified in their focus on the central theme of examining the shifting relationship between rulers and the ruled. At a time of personal monarchy, much depended upon character of the ruler as well as upon established political institutions and this interplay is a feature of the essays. If rulers emphasized the concept of absolutism to bolster their authority, subjects put forward the contrary notion of consensual rule. In their own way, every essay in this collection deals with the working through of these opposing views of political power. In practice, too, the essays reveal the gap

between theory and practice. In essence, as these essays indicate, good, stable government was only possible if monarchs gained the tacit if not actual support of those subjects, who possessed their own bases of power, the doctrine of absolutism notwithstanding.

Overall, the essays provide examples of co-operation between the Crown and the provincial elite – landed, urban and ecclesiastical – but also reveal instances in which harmony broke down and individual monarchs, notably members of the Stuart dynasty, paid the price. Indeed, the scope of the volume allows for a discussion of differences in political and administrative structure, whether established throughout the period or evolving during the course of it. One recurring theme, for instance, refers to the relationship between absolutism and growing bureaucratisation and another to the role of political, social and economic institutions in influencing the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. *A priori*, as the remit of the series is to examine the relationship from different perspectives, some essays view it from the point of view of the ruler, others from the standpoint of the ruled but everywhere with an awareness of rival positions. In short, the essays in this volume reflect the aim of the series to make available ‘scholarship that helps us to understand the changing balances between centres of power and the territories under their domination’.

Abbreviations

AGI	Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla, Spain)
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas (Simancas, Spain)
AHSCM	Arquivo da Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Salvador (Salvador, Brazil)
ANTT	Portuguese National Archives (Lisbon)
ASV	Archivo Segreto Vaticano (Rome)
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris)
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid)
BNP	Portuguese National Library (Lisbon)
CA	Chatsworth Archives (Chatsworth House, Derbyshire)
CTB	Calendar of Treasury Books
EHES	European Historical Economics Society
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
L & P	Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII
NRS	National Records of Scotland (Edinburgh)
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
Östa	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Vienna)
RPCS	Register of the Privy Council of Scotland
RPS	Records of the Parliament of Scotland
SAA	Stadsarchief Amsterdam
SRA	Riksarkivet (Stockholm)
TNA	The National Archives (Kew)

Notes on Contributors

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is a post-doctoral research associate and tutor at the Department of Economics of the University of Manchester. He holds an undergraduate degree in History from the University of Minho (Portugal) and a PhD in Early Modern History from the doctoral programme, History: Change and Continuity in a Global World (Lisbon and Évora, Portugal). Besides elites and power, his research interests include economic history, living standards and well-being, labour, gender and war. He has published in journals such as the *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* and the *American Journal of Human Biology*. He is co-editor of *The First World Empire. Portugal, War, and Military Revolution* (Routledge, 2021).

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who gained his doctorate at the European University Institute, specializes in political and military histories of the Hispanic and French monarchies during the sixteenth-century. He is the author of two book chapters about the fortification of Cartagena and the role of its harbour in the Mediterranean strategy of the Hispanic Monarchy. Currently, he is working on a series of papers about the political construction of the Hispanic Monarchy in the kingdom of Murcia and the role of expertise in the fabric of the Hispanic model of Absolutism.

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