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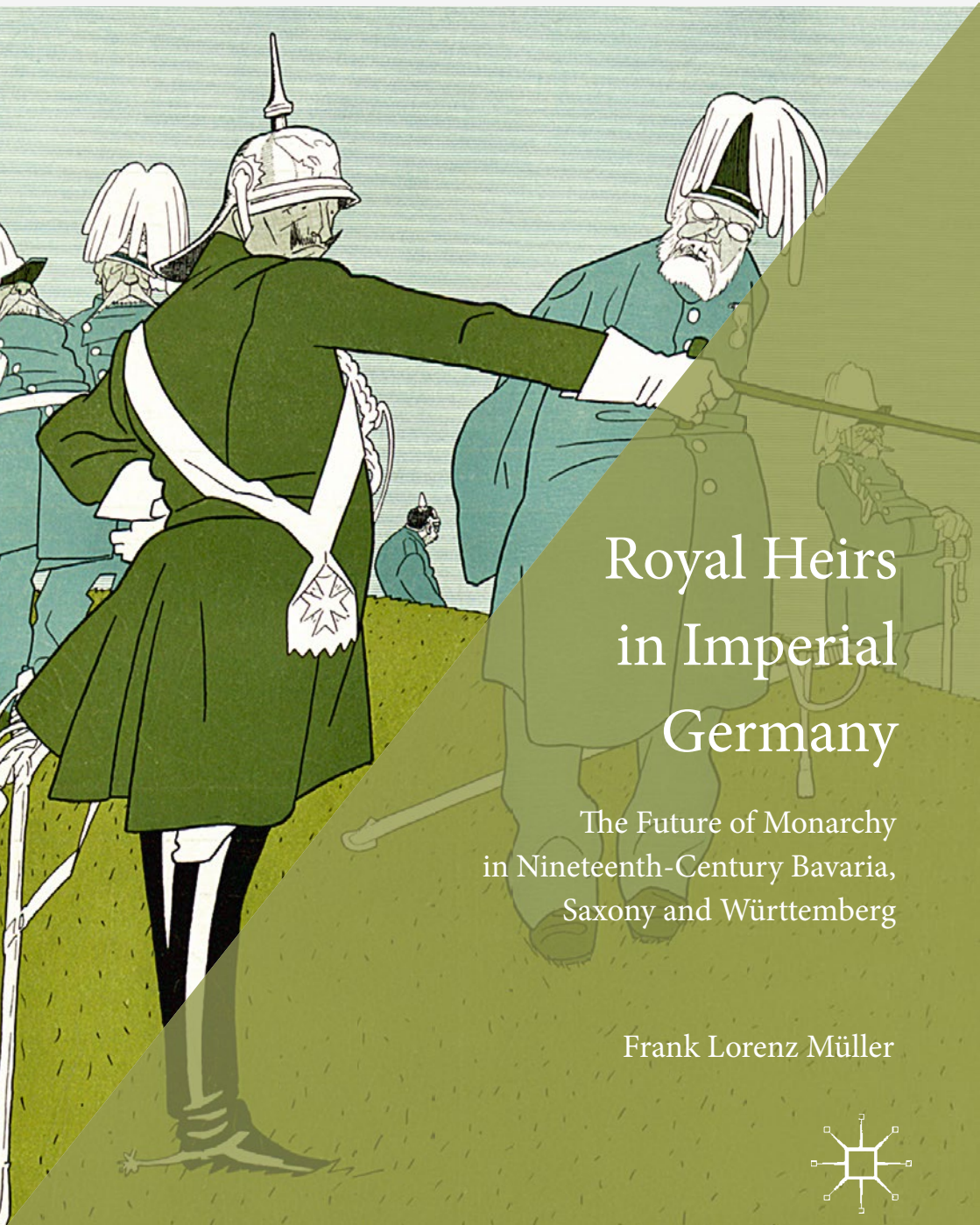

Royal Heirs in Imperial Germany

The Future of Monarchy in Nineteenth-Century Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg

Frank Lorenz Müller

Palgrave Studies in Modern Monarchy

The death of Louis XVI on the scaffold in 1793 did not mark the beginning of the end of monarchy. What followed was a Long Nineteenth Century during which monarchical systems continued to be politically and culturally dominant both in Europe and beyond. They became a reference point for debates on constitutional government and understandings of political liberalism. Within multinational settings monarchy offered an alternative to centralised national states. Not even the cataclysms of the twentieth century could wipe monarchy completely off the political, mental and emotional maps. Studies in Modern Monarchy reflects the vibrancy of research into this topic by bringing together monographs and edited collections exploring the history of monarchy in Europe and the world in the period after the end of the ancien régime. Committed to a scholarly approach to the royal past, the series is open in terms of geographical and thematic coverage, welcoming studies examining any aspect of any part of the modern monarchical world.

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für Nico Müller und Dominik Geppert

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Berlin, September 2016

Note

1. Please see: http://heirstothethrone-project.net/.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

As the First World War drew to a close, the future looked bleak for Germany's crowned heads. Grand Duke Friedrich August, who had ruled half a million Oldenburgers since 1900, made no bones about where the blame should lie. "We are entirely clear that the Kaiser has ruined the Reich", he predicted in October 1918, "that he will be chased away and that we will share his fate".[1] Sadly for the grand duke and his fellow monarchs in the German Reich, Friedrich August had read the runes correctly. Thus, in the autumn of 1918 Germany did not just lose the First World War. After four years of ferocious fighting Germans also witnessed how an ancient and complex landscape of monarchical rule was eliminated within a few short days—never to return. Twenty-two separate monarchies disappeared into the autumn mists—from the grand duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in the north-east to the grand duchy of Baden in the south-west. Amongst the institutional debris the November revolution scattered across post-war Germany there were the remains of no fewer than four former kingdoms. Along with the Kaiser, who also bore the crown of the kingdom of Prussia, and his Hohenzollern dynasty, three other kings and their ancient dynasties left the stage of history for good: King Ludwig III, whose Wittelsbach family had ruled Bavaria for more than 700 years; King Friedrich August III of Saxony, whose departure ended more than 800 years of rule by the Wettins; and King Wilhelm II, whose ancestors had been first dukes and then electors and finally kings of Württemberg since 1495.

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The various hasty last-minute attempts to salvage a monarchical future by introducing parliamentary systems in October 1918 came to naught—both at Reich level and in the separate member states. They were undone by the refusal of the now toxically unpopular Kaiser to abdicate in time. Held responsible for a humiliating and unexpected defeat and perceived as standing in the way of a benign peace settlement, Wilhelm II became the main reason why the revolutionary movement that engulfed Germany in November 1918 developed its anti-monarchical edge. This sudden strength of feeling amid a war-weary country and the peculiar resignation of both the ruling houses and their erstwhile supporters combined to bring about Germany's almost instantaneous "de-crowning". No-one, it seems, was prepared to rally to the defence of the kings, grand dukes, dukes and princes, who lacked the stomach for a fight themselves. Centuries-old dynasties yielded with barely a whimper. Confronted by fairly small groups of revolutionaries acting on behalf of the newly founded workers' and soldiers' councils, Germany's monarchs simply called it a day and abdicated.[2]

The Reich, the Prussian-led all-German umbrella monarchy that had united them since the victory over France in 1870/1871, disappeared together with its monarchical members. It had been proclaimed with much fanfare in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles almost half a century earlier. The Prussian king—in his new role as German Kaiser—had stood at the helm of this federation of 22 monarchical states and three Free Cities. Nominally at least, he was to have acted merely as the first amongst a fraternity of equal and allied monarchs. In due course, it was hoped, a wider, all-German identity and imperial pride would complement and heighten the existing regional patriotisms and feelings of dynastic attachment. In turn, this hoped-for national-cum-monarchical support for the Reich was to continue to draw on traditional forms of regional loyalty flourishing across the many German monarchies—in Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg, Baden or Oldenburg and even in tiny Saxony-Weimar or tinier-still Waldeck-Pyrmont (Fig. 1.1).

All of this came to an end in November 1918, in the course of a peculiarly non-violent, low-key process. In most of Germany's many capitals, the monarchs' reluctance to use force to defend their thrones was matched by the revolutionaries' lack of resentment against the individual princes. The spokesman of the workers' and soldiers' council in Darmstadt, for instance, assured Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig that "the people's anger was not directed against the duke". When, in November 1918 Arthur Crispien, a leader of the Independent Social Democrats in Württemberg bumped

Fig. 1.1 © German Historical Institute, Washington, DC / James Retallack, 2007; cartography by Mapping Solutions, Alaska; with kind permission.

into a group of workers noisily demonstrating outside King Wilhelm's palace in Stuttgart, he barked at them to leave the old man in peace. After all, the king had not done anyone any harm. Thereupon the protesters dispersed. The most famous scene of this series of royal endgames reportedly took place when King Friedrich August III of Saxony abdicated—with characteristic bathos—during a telephone conversation. When the new provisional government confirmed to him that he was no longer in charge, the ex-monarch allegedly replied with nothing more than a sulky shrug: "Aha, well, you can deal with this rubbish yourself then."[3]

The somewhat undignified and lackadaisical parting words of the Saxon king epitomise a wider process that was, at the same time, as astonishing in its historical momentousness as it was strangely humdrum in how it unfolded. This applied to the demise of all three of the Reich's smaller kingdoms: Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony. On 7 November 1918 King Ludwig, the 73-year-old Bavarian monarch, was walking in Munich's Englischer Garten, when a policeman on a bicycle caught up with him and

urged him to return to the palace for his own safety. The king had been aware that the situation in the capital was combustible. Munich's police commissioner had advised Ludwig to choose the quiet Englischer Garten instead of strolling through the streets of the restive city for his afternoon constitutional. The previous day the mayor of Nuremberg, Otto von Gessler, had warned him that the situation was explosive, especially amongst the workers, who were hungry and yearning for peace. Even though hundreds of demonstrators had already shouted anti-monarchical slogans when marching through the capital on 3 November and the mood in Munich was palpably turning against the dynasty, both the king and his government remained passive. Gessler's warning was unheeded and events took their course. Ludwig went on his walk, returned home and joined his family for a bleak dinner. Later that evening—acting on the urgent advice of his ministers—the king, his family and a handful of courtiers fled Munich in three motorcars. The night soon turned into a farce: Ludwig had brought nothing but a box of cigars; after having taken a wrong turn, two of the cars had to be dragged out of a muddy field by a team of cart horses; and the car carrying the princesses ended up at the wrong palace. Back in Munich, Chief Chamberlain Wilhelm von Leonrod, who had missed Kurt Eisner's proclamation of the Bavarian Free State, reported for duty as usual on 8 November only to learn that the king had fled. Four days later, Ludwig, who had since crossed into Austria, signed a document releasing all the soldiers and civil servants from their oath of loyalty to him. This effectively ended the rule of the Wittelsbach dynasty.[4]

The events in Munich had a domino-like effect. The political temperature in Saxony had been rising for some time and the exchanges in the chamber, where last-minute constitutional changes were being debated, produced a number of sharply anti-monarchical utterances. When the news of King Ludwig's flight reached Dresden on 8 November 1918, King Friedrich August III of Saxony thought it wiser to leave the capital. Sneaking out of the palace through a back door, the royal family first made for Moritzburg Palace, some 10 miles outside Dresden, and then moved—for added safety—to Guteborn Palace in the Prussian province of Silesia. Friedrich August's absence from Dresden did not, of course, halt the political developments there. A revolutionary council of workers and soldiers had formed. On 10 November 1918 it declared that the monarchy had ceased to exist. Two days later, Finance Minister Max Otto Schröder, acting on behalf of the provisional government, finally managed to get hold of the elusive king on the telephone. Friedrich August readily

agreed to release Saxony's civil servants from the oath they had sworn to him and then, "accompanied by a rough, hoarse cough" uttered the words for which he is still best remembered. The statement of abdication the last king of Saxony signed after this exchange was of unsurpassable brevity: "I renounce the throne. 13 November 1918. Friedrich August".[5]

The constitutional development in Württemberg had been more rapid. A coalition of parties represented in the parliament of the kingdom had already formed in late October 1918, with a view to taking over the government. The king's existing ministry eventually agreed that the transition towards a parliamentary constitution could no longer be delayed and advised the monarch accordingly. On 8 November Wilhelm II still walked his dog unaccompanied in the public Schlossgarten, but the mood of the crowd of demonstrators was to become more excitable. When the king was meeting the new parliamentary ministry in his Stuttgart residence, the Wilhelmspalais, the following day, a group of revolutionaries forced their way inside and insisted that the royal standard flying atop the building be replaced with the red flag. King Wilhelm sent word that, if the intruders wanted a different flag, they had better hoist it themselves. This they did and then left the Wilhelmspalais without causing any damage or confronting the king in person. Wilhelm II nevertheless requested that he be granted secure passage to his palace at Bebenhausen near Tübingen. Albert Schreiner, the chairman of the soldiers' council, was happy to oblige and sent an armed guard to escort the king. Wilhelm II left his home at 7:00 p.m., shook hands with the revolutionary soldiers now guarding the Wilhelmspalais and climbed into the second of three motorcars which took him and his family to Bebenhausen. A week later he released Württemberg's civil servants from their oath of loyalty and formally abdicated on 30 November 1918.[6]

For Ludwig, Friedrich August and Wilhelm, the focal points of this study, November 1918 thus marked the end of a very long line of monarchical rule. They turned out to be the last kings of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg. The suddenness, completeness and inglorious listlessness of this collective demise have given rise to damning verdicts on these and the other German monarchs and the kind of rule they embodied. Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hessen did not pull his punches. Most of the German monarchs who were dethroned alongside him in 1918 were "complete nonentities", he observed. Lothar Machtan has come to similarly critical conclusions about the viability of Germany's monarchies. Towards the end of the Reich, he has argued "this bizarre form of political life" was crying

out for some kind of remedy. The agony of the system was deep-rooted and multi-dimensional: (1) monarchs were unwilling to transition from their "arrogation of political power" to providing a mere representation of the state with limited political influence; (2) the Kaiser's monarchical colleagues—men like Ludwig, Friedrich August or Wilhelm—had failed to become national "co-sovereigns" and also refused to accept that their dynasties could no longer "have state-building effects or generate identity at regional level"; finally, (3) living as they did within a hermetically sealed parallel world of high-aristocratic kinship, princes were "hardly capable of developing an even half-way elastic mind and a realistic perspective on the wider world".[7]

Machtan's book-length study of the issue concludes with a forceful summary of his central argument: "The decomposition of monarchy in Germany was no natural catastrophe, was not fate, but to a large extent the result of the institution having been actively and passively ruined by its most distinguished protagonists. […] At the end one was riding a horse that had been run into the ground." Seeking to account for the deeper causes of the events of 1918, Heinz Gollwitzer has pointed to the "imbalances of the German pluralism of states" and how this had discredited the monarchical element. Every intelligent citizen had to wonder, he argued, what purpose the small dynasties served in a Reich dominated by centralising forces and a powerful Prussia. Ernst Wolfgang Böckenförde has also interpreted the demise of the German monarchs as the culmination of a long-term process of delegitimisation. Still guided by the increasingly pale lodestar of the "monarchical principle", they had never managed to take the step that separated their increasingly outdated forms of rule from a parliamentary-democratic system. The princes, as Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig put it, simply "had no idea how to go with the times" and so in the autumn of 1918 they got their just and, frankly, overdue desserts.[8]

Rather than adding to these post-mortem examinations of Germany's monarchies, which all bring the acuity of hindsight to the task in hand, this study seeks to explore the monarchical future that was believed to lie ahead of the Reich's three smaller kingdoms and their heirs. While the First World War undeniably resulted in a mass extinction event for the crowned heads of central Europe, this was anything but a predictable outcome. It happened, after all, at the end of a Long Nineteenth Century that was characterised not by monarchical decline, but by royal success. Notwithstanding the fact that they would end up as the last of their kind, the three princes predestined to ascend the thrones in Munich, Stuttgart

and Dresden one day had every reason to expect that they and their families had a rich future ahead of them. Their contemporaries—both supporters and opponents of monarchy—would likewise have reckoned on these future rulers when formulating their hopes and fears. The century that preceded the events of 1918 was an age of monarchy. Sure, the depth and breadth of the constitutional, political, economic, cultural, social, technological and demographic changes that characterised the nineteenth century meant that the notion of divine ordination lost almost all traction, executive power was increasingly in the hands not of princes but of ministers and laws could no longer be made without some form of parliamentary cooperation. In spite of all of that, monarchy, as a system of government and—more widely—as a complex of cultural, emotional and legal structures, proved astonishingly resilient.

For all of the drama and symbolic significance of Louis XVI's mounting of the scaffold in January 1793, the "Age of Democratic Revolution" did not usher in an age of republics.[9] The next great continent-wide wave of revolutions, the multiple upheavals of 1848–1849, did not significantly thin out the royal panoply either. Instead, Europe remained solidly and deeply monarchical. Every European state that was newly formed in the nineteenth century—from Greece (1821) and Belgium (1830) to Bulgaria (1878) and Norway (1905)—chose to take the step into independence under a crowned head. When the continent went to war in 1914, France, Switzerland, San Marino and Portugal constituted the small number of republican exceptions that proved an overwhelmingly monarchical rule.[10] While there were some anti-monarchical movements, and individual rulers were regularly subjected to fierce criticism, monarchy was not, on the whole, existentially threatened. Rather, hereditary monarchical regimes, in which the crown was passed down along a carefully guarded blood line, appear to have enjoyed a significant degree of popularity and occasionally affectionate forms of public endorsement. So, when the cataclysmic conflict that would end up removing vast parts of monarchical Europe broke out in 1914, the continent's crowns, though greatly changed since 1789, were largely in fine fettle.

Over recent years, historians have offered a range of explanations for this resilience of the old regime.[11] On the one hand, they have emphasised the growing importance of an active media culture of monarchical celebrity. Carefully and strategically conceived, nurtured and disseminated, it was designed both to camouflage the rulers' dwindling command of hard power and to project and engender *Untertanenliebe* (subjects' love).

The media analysed range from newspapers and books, to photographs, material objects, souvenirs, museums, a royal politics of memory, (re) invented ceremonies, the staging of anniversaries, public philanthropy, oratory and film. Monarchical systems are now understood to have been fully and successfully engaged in modern forms of mass communication and, seeking to utilise them, also found themselves at their mercy.[12]

Other studies have drawn attention to the significant problem-solving capacity offered by constitutional monarchy. The model "provided an answer to questions arising in various European countries", Martin Kirsch has observed, pointing to issues such as "the financial problems of the absolutist state, national independence, structuring a new—or newly expanded—state or the integration of the people into the formation of a political will". Dieter Langewiesche emphasises the monarchs' record of achieving a completion of the reform processes begun by the revolutions. Moreover, he credits the monarchs with having facilitated "the incremental concentration of power in a small number of states without triggering a great European war", a feat which he recognises as the most important achievement of the monarchs of nineteenth-century Europe. This point is echoed by Johannes Paulmann, who describes the constitutionally "converted" European monarchies post-1815 as a "stabilizing element" within a less bellicose international order. Little wonder, then, that Volker Sellin recently recognised the granting of monarchical constitutions as a legitimising strategy aimed at securing acceptance of the monarchies amongst Europe's citizenry.[13]

This study aims to complement these analyses of the resilience of nineteenth-century monarchies by focusing on a political resource that is specific to the monarchical system: the process of succession and the individuals on whom successions pivot—the royal heirs themselves. The three last kings of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg will form the centre of attention. The book will explore their political lives and contexts, though not during their time as kings but when they were successors. The focus is on the period from the mid-1860s until their respective accessions to the throne: the decades when Ludwig of Bavaria (1845–1921), Wilhelm of Württemberg (1848–1921) and Friedrich August of Saxony (1865–1932) were anticipating and presaging the next generational iteration of monarchical rule. Wilhelm and Ludwig witnessed the foundation of the German Reich (and thus the relegation of their previously sovereign states) as young men and ascended their thrones at the ages of 43 (in 1891) and 67 years (in 1912) respectively. Friedrich August was a child in 1871 and

inherited the Saxon crown in 1904 at the age of 39. Thus, all three of these future monarchs were born before their respective kingdoms were integrated into the German Reich, succeeded during the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm II and would experience the end of Germany's monarchical age in 1918 as kings (Figs. 1.2–1.4).

Succession, the passing on of monarchical rule from one individual to his or her successor, usually from one generation to the next, has always constituted an existential task for monarchies. The figure of the successor was—and remains—central to every dynastic system, embodying both its essential continuity and the inevitability of future change at its very apex. On the one hand, the many men (and few women) predestined to wear a crown one day were strongly conditioned by their origins and by existing dynastic and courtly environments. Successors were not just the products

Fig. 1.2 Prince Ludwig of Bavaria (1845–1921).

Fig. 1.3 Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg (1848–1921).

of ancient practices and traditions, though. The advent of the constitutional age provided a formal, usually codified link between the dynasty (with its own rules of legitimacy and succession) and the executive and legislative organs of the state. Often the heir's rights to the crown and of participation in some of the state's institutions were laid down in these documents—along with the basic rights of the individuals they would one day rule and the role of elected assemblies with whom they would share the exercise of power. The manner in which the integration of future monarchs into their constitutional systems, including the public spheres that grew up around them, was achieved and perceived depended on many factors—not least the heir's personality and ambition.

As the principle of hereditary rule lay at the very heart of Europe's monarchies, heirs to the throne were crucial. They provided these forms of rule not just with a future, but with a characteristic political resource that proved especially relevant in an increasingly media-dominated world: the visible existence, long before the actual moment of transition, of the

Fig. 1.4 Prince Friedrich August of Saxony (1865–1932).

next generation of rulers. Monarchies thus had the ability to anticipate, prefigure and communicate the future in flesh and blood. With their roles defined not just by ancient dynastic convention, but also by new constitutional law, and their lives frequently lived—from cradle to grave—on the stage of the very publicity that now defined the monarchical office, the next-in-line—like the monarch—became "functionalized" (in the words of Martin Kirsch). Crucially, royal heirs often found it easier than serving monarchs to cultivate and deploy those new "soft power" skills on which constitutional monarchies increasingly appeared to depend.[14] For a dynastic system, succession provided a valuable and recurring opportunity for reinvention, recalibration and adaption. Through its heir, it could match its brand to the needs and preferences of the "political mass market" that emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[15] Like the periodic moulting of crustaceans, succession within monarchies was a transformative process accompanied by a temporary vulnerability. If completed effectively, succession resulted in the original structure being better adapted, though still clearly recognisable in its reassuringly traditional form.

The roles played and impacts generated by Ludwig, Wilhelm and Friedrich August *as heirs* provide a particularly revealing and instructive prism: During the decades they spent waiting and preparing for the throne these future kings were acting as the very embodiments of the continuity of their dynastic-monarchical systems. They also functioned as canvases onto which different versions of their kingdoms' futures were projected—both by themselves and by others. Investigating how they fared in this task against the background of the challenges of royal rule in the late nineteenth-century offers a new analytical perspective on the political-monarchical culture of Imperial Germany. An investigation of the future of monarchy as embodied in these royal heirs—portrayed, variously, as studious pupils, as dashing officers, as diligent members of upper chambers, as loving parents, as the quintessential sons of their respective *Heimat* or as all-German patriots—does not just throw light on the biographical journeys of each of these monarchs. Exploring three (near-)contemporary individuals occupying the same dynastic position within three comparable settings will reveal both structural similarities and the specific peculiarities of individual personality and regional-dynastic traditions.

Findings derived from this kind of investigation can lead to a better understanding of a series of wider issues that applied to Europe's constitutional monarchies in general—such as the media-driven publicity of the princes' private lives, the need to be seen to meet expectations of competence and public virtuousness, or the religious dimension of the royal office. On this level, the importance of heirs to the future of constitutional thrones was readily acknowledged by contemporaries across the continent. "It still, I believe, remains true", Britain's liberal prime minister William Gladstone wrote in 1885, "that there has been no period of the world's history at which successors to the Monarchy could more efficaciously contribute to the stability of a great historic system dependent even more upon love than upon strength by devotion to their duties, and by a bright example to the country".[16]

The following pages will also explore questions that arose from the specific status of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg as examples of the German variant of constitutional monarchy in the nineteenth century and especially after 1871. German *Konstitutionalismus* was clearly distinct from the parliamentary model of constitutional monarchy in, say, Britain, as in German monarchies the executive depended principally on the backing of the monarch and was not based on elected parliamentary majorities. The German monarchs, who appointed and sustained the ministers,

retained, at least formally, a much greater degree of political control and initiative—even though, as the century went on, more and more of this was assumed by governmental elites and, in some measure, by parliaments.

At the level of the smaller German kingdoms, issues concerning the viability of this form of the monarchical system, which was in evidence in every princely state of the new Reich, can be observed with great clarity: its ability to accommodate, deflect or resist demands for enhanced parliamentary powers, its relationship with German nationalism, and the role of hereditary monarchs and their families in modern politics. Exploring the workings of monarchy from this angle offers insights into the sources of the strengths and durability (as well as the vulnerabilities) of Germany's monarchies. Was Germany's *Konstitutionalismus* as doomed and incapable of development in line with wider expectations as its swift demise in 1918 suggests? What were the potentials for mobilising continued or fresh political and social support that these monarchies managed (or failed) to utilise? How can both their survival and their eventual demise be explained? Moreover, Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg were sub-national kingdoms with strong regional-dynastic and constitutional identities and all three found themselves integrated—more or less willingly—into the larger, Prussian-dominated national monarchical framework that was the German Reich. The futures their next kings stood for thus address questions about the nature of the relationships between monarchy, region, Reich and nation.

This German Reich, founded by Otto von Bismarck's statecraft in the course of three wars between 1864 and 1871, was a more or less forced marriage of very unequal partners. Their mighty Prussian ally with its 24.7 million inhabitants (in 1871) dwarfed not only miniscule member states like the principality of Schaumburg-Lippe with its 32,000 citizens. The Hohenzollern monarchy also towered over more substantial polities, like Germany's three other kingdoms, focused on in this investigation. In 1871 Bavaria numbered 4.8 million inhabitants, Saxony 2.5 million and Württemberg 1.8 million.[17] The political cultures of these kingdoms also differed clearly—sometimes emphatically—from that of Prussia. The Wittelbachs, Wettins and Württembergs, who ruled in Munich, Dresden and Stuttgart, were ancient dynasties with a pronounced sense of their own history. A notion of distinctiveness was also deeply rooted in their populations and was reinforced by distinguishing factors, such as the emphatic Catholicism of the Bavarian heartlands, the Württembergers' pride in their pronounced constitutional tradition, or Saxony's highly

developed industrial economy. The further development and separate futures of these smaller constitutional monarchies within the new federal nation state remained a controversial and contested issue—for the individual states in question and for the Reich as a whole.

This was even more the case as the new Reich rested on several artfully arranged yet crucial compromises that were bound to generate tensions: compromises between federal diversity and loyalty towards regional dynasties on the one hand and centralising national unity and the prominence of Reich and Kaiser on the other; between the illiberal and authoritarian politics associated with Prussia and the more liberal political preferences in some of the other states; and, more generally, the compromise between monarchical persistence and parliamentary-democratic developments. None of these compromises could be re-balanced, adjusted or defended without involving and securing, at least, the acquiescence of men like Ludwig, Wilhelm and Friedrich August.

The findings presented in this study are largely based on source material located in a number of archives in Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg and Berlin as well as on the work of nineteenth-century journalists and writers. While source material is plentiful, the available secondary literature is limited. Imperial Germany has spawned a very large and highly sophisticated body of scholarly research. The focus is largely on Prussia, the Reich or even wider transnational or global dimensions though, with the smaller states—and especially their monarchies, let alone the role of heirs to the throne—attracting relatively little attention.[18] Apart from Simone Mergen's comparative study of monarchical jubilees and a collection of concise biographical sketches, there is almost no recent work on the late Saxon monarchy. On the monarchy in Württemberg, there is little more than Paul Sauer's informative biographies of Karl I and Wilhelm II.[19] In line with the Wittelsbachs' greater prominence, the state of research on the Bavarian monarchy is much more satisfactory. Even beyond the vast literature devoted to the mercurial figure of King Ludwig II (1845–1886), studies by, amongst others, Werner K. Blessing, Alois Beckenbauer, Manfred Hanisch, Hans-Michael Körner, Bernhard Löffler, Stefan März, Karl Möckl, Katharina Weigand and Dieter J. Weiß have contributed to a sophisticated understanding of the workings of the Bavarian monarchy in the second half of the nineteenth century.[20] Research on the (monarchical) federalism of nineteenth-century Germany has long been dominated by constitutional historians whose approach is rooted in debates amongst

contemporary jurists about the legal character of the Reich.[21] However, more recently, this has been complemented by a number of seminal studies that have taken a wider perspective on the culture, politics and psychology of Germany's characteristic multiplicity of *Heimat*.[22]

Though this study employs the lives, roles and functions of three prominent individuals as its central prism, it is not a biographical undertaking. So, rather than proceed in a chronological fashion, the monarchical futures suggested by the last heirs to succeed to the thrones of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg will be explored through a discussion of five themes. Chapter 2 will investigate a series of problems and challenges these future kings had to confront within the contexts of late nineteenth-century monarchy. The third chapter will examine one manner in which these kinds of problem were tackled: through communicating, in a number of complementary ways, the competence of the future sovereign to fulfil his proper function. Chapter 4 locates each of the three successors within the distinct monarchical narratives generated by the Wittelsbach, Wettin and Württemberg dynasties in order to forge a bond with the people of their respective regions. That, within the framework of the German Reich, an emphasis on regional distinctiveness and dynastic tradition could produce tensions and the charge of unpatriotic particularism is the focus of Chap. 5. Here a range of positions—from Friedrich August's noiseless integration into the Reich to Ludwig's repeated assertion of Bavaria's autonomous role—will be examined. The sixth chapter will explore which specific manifestation of constitutional kingship each of the three future kings foreshadowed while anticipating his accession and how this could tap into new sources of support.

Some of this support was in evidence in 1916, when King Wilhelm II of Württemberg celebrated the 25th anniversary of his succession. Perhaps the warmest words of congratulation came from the leader of the Württemberg Social Democrats, Wilhelm Keil. In a long front page article published by the party's *Schwäbische Tagwacht*, the king was commended for his support of the kingdom's constitutional development and for displaying the "kind of reserve which everyone would wish to see in a non-partisan servant of the state". Giving up the monarchy for a republic would not improve things, Keil asserted and predicted that "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".[23] In November 1918, after two more years of warfare, the

situation was dramatically different. By then, there was no monarchical future anymore, not even for the quasi-presidential and non-partisan king of Württemberg.

Notes

1. Horn, 2010, p. 277.
2. Sösemann, 1991, pp. 145–170; Pyta, 2010, pp. 363–381; Machtan, 2008, pp. 131–350; Neuhaus, 1991, pp. 102–136.
3. Wecker, 1928; Haren, 2003, p. 80; Sauer, 1994, p. 295; Machtan, 2008, p. 311.
4. März, 2013, pp. 486–510; Beckenbauer, 1987, pp. 242–280; Machtan, 2008, pp. 239–263.
5. Machtan, 2008, pp. 304–313.
6. Sauer, 1994, pp. 285–308; Machtan, 2008, pp. 313–323.
7. Franz, 1983, p. 8; Machtan, 2010, pp. 228, 230, 233, 238.
8. Machtan, 2008, p. 351; Gollwitzer, 2008, p. 366; Böckenförde, 1985, pp. 2–9; for a detailed and sophisticated interpretation of Bavaria's regency period (1886–1913) as a long-term crisis leading up to the events of 1918 see: Möckl, 1972; a similar argument is presented by Schneider, 1975.
9. Palmer, 1959/1964.
10. Langewiesche, 2013, p. 6.
11. For an early (and controversial) exploration of the overall phenomenon of *ancien regime* resilience in nineteenth-century Europe see: Mayer, 1981.
12. Büschel, 2006, who is sceptical about whether the existence of this emotional response can ever be proved or disproved; for work on monarchy and media see: Plunkett, 2003; Kohlrausch, 2005; Giloi, 2011; Unowsky, 2005; Mergen, 2005; Petzold, 2011; Obst, 2010; Schwarzenbach, 2012.
13. Kirsch, 2007, p. 87; Langewiesche, 2006, pp. 26, 28; Paulmann, 2001, pp. 153, 157; Sellin, 2011, p. 294.
14. Müller and Mehrkens, 2016.
15. Retallack, 2011, pp. 83–96.
16. *The Times* (13 August 1885).
17. Figures after: Kiesewetter, 2004, p. 126.
18. For recent surveys of research on the German Reich see: Jefferies, 2015, 2007; Müller and Torp, 2009; Heidenreich and Neitzel, 2011; for a brief general introduction to the monarchical dimension of Imperial Germany, see: Müller, 2015.
19. Mergen, 2005; Kroll, 2004; Sauer, 1999, 1994; there are some interesting perspectives on monarchy in Schmoll, 1995.
20. Blessing, 1982; Beckenbauer, 1987; Hanisch, 1991; Körner, 1992; Löffler, 2011; Möckl, 1972; Weigand, 2001; Weiß, 2007; März, 2013.

21. Fenske, 1974; Boldt, 1991; Dietrich, 1984; Haardt, 2011.
22. Applegate, 1990; Confino, 1997; Green, 2001; Weichlein, 2006.
23. *Schwäbische Tagwacht* (5 October 1916).

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CHAPTER 2

Symptoms of the "Unnaturalness of an Institution"?

Trials and Tribulations on the Way to the Throne

The year 1889 was a festive one in the kingdom of Saxony. Eight hundred years had passed since Heinrich I, a member of the Wettin family, had received the margravate of Meissen from the hands of Emperor Heinrich IV. For the Wettin dynasty, 1089 marked the beginning of an uninterrupted rule of unparalleled duration. Heinrich's descendants, who were elevated to the rank of kings of Saxony in 1806, marked the anniversary with great splendour. On the evening of 19 June 1889 fireworks lit up the sky above Dresden. Against the famous backdrop of the Saxon capital a pyrotechnical display depicted glorious moments of the grand history of the dynasty.[1] "Full of the most cordial, festive joy, the Saxon lands now greet their royal house", a pamphlet published for the occasion proclaimed: "Gratitude and reverence are being laid at the steps of the throne, wishes and prayers for rulers and people rise up to the ruler of all lands. May the gracious god, who granted us a regiment of wisdom and love and has maintained it until this day, so far as it pleases him, let the royal lustre of the Wettins shine on Saxony for a long time to come."[2]

Within a few short years, though, the mood would sour dramatically. Now the Saxon dynasty, far from being showered with pious praise, became the target of excoriating criticism. In December 1902 Crown Princess Luise, the pregnant wife of Crown Prince Friedrich August, eloped with a young French teacher, leaving behind her five children, her husband and the certain prospect of a throne. The affair soon ballooned into the

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scandal of the decade. Enemies of monarchism gleefully seized upon this crisis to diagnose a fundamental malaise. "Monarchical marriage and family scandals have been the steady companions of monarchy", the Social Democrat *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, observed with grim satisfaction, "as if nature wanted to exact revenge for the unnaturalness of an institution, where a single individual should decide the fate of a whole nation".[3]

To make matters worse, it was the young Crown Prince Friedrich August, the personified future of the House of Wettin, who soon stood at the centre of a crisis that engulfed the whole royal family. "There is no washing all the guilt off the husband in such a marriage affair", a correspondent for *Die Zeit* reported from the Saxon capital in January. The aggressively anti-monarchical mood generated by the scandal caused a sense of deep unease among some defenders of the status quo. The heir to the throne would need a long time "to regain the favour of the masses", the Prussian envoy to Dresden predicted to Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow in February 1903. Saxony's "educated, loyally monarchical circles", he concluded, "are therefore looking to the future with some concern".[4]

Though the problems faced by Crown Prince Friedrich August's after Luise's flight from the Saxon court marked a low point in the history of Imperial Germany's royal heirs, the experience of the young Wettin prince was part of a wider phenomenon. While it was a central claim of those in favour of monarchy that hereditary succession provided for smooth transitions from one generation of rule to the next and into a well-ordered future—delivering steadiness and continuity, rather than disruption—the process was often fraught with difficulties and controversy. It was true that future monarchs benefited from an arsenal of resources which they could bring to their political task—amongst them careful preparation, celebrity, wealth, privilege, status, access to media and governmental support. But the changed background of late nineteenth-century politics meant that not enough was left of the "divinity [which] doth hedge a king" to guarantee a smooth passage for the future bearer of a royal crown. Rather, the changed constitutional, political, economic and cultural circumstances under which monarchies had to operate in the late nineteenth century meant that issues often considered inherent to the dynastic system now emerged—and were publicly perceived—as problematic. All three of the future monarchs analysed here had to grapple with problems which were directly connected with their dynastic backgrounds. What appeared, to some observers, merely as unfortunate matters of individual contingency was, to others, evidence of a systemic crisis of monarchy that posed fundamental questions.

The following discussion will explore controversies and difficulties that arose for Prince Ludwig, Prince Wilhelm and Prince Friedrich August ahead of their accession. These will be grouped into three thematic blocks: (1) Issues that arose from the mismatch between the ostensibly normal pattern of royal succession and the rather different biological realities. While the seamless passing of the crown from father to son was an idealised element of the monarchical narrative and enshrined in the legal documents that codified the workings of constitutional monarchy, royal families frequently failed to deliver this longed-for normality. Against the background of the institutions, politics and media that had grown up alongside the modern constitutional state, this failure exposed royal heirs—and the monarchical system more widely—to criticism and intrusion. (2) By the mid-nineteenth century, "*cuius regio, eius religio*", the formula adopted at the peace of Augsburg in 1555, had ceased to be a valid solution for discrepancies between the religious beliefs of the rulers and the ruled. Religious affiliation continued to be an important factor shaping collective identities and cultures—and often the central element of individual identities.[5] However, for the monarchical office to be exercised credibly in a constitutional context encompassing societies characterised by religious and confessional diversity, tolerance, tact and impartiality had become necessary conditions. When this expectation was perceived to clash with heirs' deeply held personal preferences or established family traditions, tensions could quickly escalate. (3) For the highly visible princes and princesses of the media age that was the late nineteenth century, the "Happily-Ever-After" had effectively become a compulsory element of their public role. If they failed to shine as credible examples of the virtues of a happy marriage and a joyous family life they undermined an increasingly important pillar propping up monarchical rule. As Wilhelm of Württemberg and Friedrich August of Saxony were to find out, this task was made even harder by the continued importance of restrictive dynastic practices such as the insistence on spouses of equal rank.

"Who Does not Bear the Title 'Crown Prince'": The Problems of Succeeding Circuitously

In July 1902, a few weeks after the death of King Albert of Saxony, the *Dresdner Nachrichten* commented on a surprising fact. Friedrich August, the oldest son of the new King Georg, who had succeeded his childless older brother, was the first German prince outside Prussia in many decades

to bear the title "crown prince". "Since the accession of the late King Albert on 29 October 1873 Prussia was the only one of the four German kingdoms to have had a direct heir to the throne. Neither in Bavaria nor in Württemberg had anyone held the title 'Crown Prince' since 1864."[6] As King Albert's nephew, Friedrich August had been merely the heir-presumptive and it was only his uncle's death in 1902 that made him crown prince. If anything, the situation was more complicated in Bavaria and Württemberg, where Ludwig's and Wilhelm's paths to the throne were even more circuitous than that of Friedrich August. In all three cases, the deviation from the ideal of a seamless transfer of monarchical authority from royal father to son—a notion present not just in normative royal narratives but in legal and constitutional texts—gave rise to friction and caused the heirs to the throne considerable embarrassment.

Nowhere was the issue of succession more fraught and embarrassing to the dynasty than in Bavaria. When King Ludwig II died under suspicious circumstances in June 1886, only hours after being removed from office on the grounds of mental incapacity, the crown passed to his younger brother Otto. The new king, however, had been sectioned since 1875 on account of his own severe mental health issues and was patently incapable of discharging his monarchical duties. So, in line with articles 9–22 of the Bavarian constitution of 1818 King Otto's uncle, Prince Luitpold, took over the reins of the monarchical office as "Regent of the Realm" (*Reichsverweser*).[7] Prince Ludwig, the eldest son of the 65-year-old Luitpold, suddenly found himself closer to the throne than at any time since 25 August 1845. On that day, so the story goes, his ambitious mother had announced the birth of his cousin and name-sake, the later King Ludwig II, to her seven-month-old son. By 1886, her frustrated comment, that her own son was—dynastically speaking—a nonentity, had been overtaken by events.

Public opinion in Bavaria was quick to welcome Prince Ludwig as the future monarch. "This much is certain, though", the *Münchner Tageblatt* insisted only days after King Ludwig II's death, "that sooner or later Prince Luitpold's eldest son, Prince Ludwig, will ascend the throne of Bavaria as King Ludwig III and we believe that we are able to say now that then a blessed era will begin".[8] The new heir-presumptive to the Bavarian throne certainly lost no time to make the world take note of his elevated status. In November 1886, shortly after he had already received a hunting invitation from the Kaiser, Prince Ludwig lodged a complaint with the Reich government to ensure that, during naval reviews, as many guns would

be fired to salute him as would for a Prussian prince. Bismarck, who had already considered appointing Prince Ludwig to the honorary colonelcy of the 8th regiment of Hussars and decorating him with the order of the Black Eagle, was happy to oblige.[9]

Prince Ludwig now threw himself into the role of the "future king of Bavaria",[10] as the *Münchner Tageblatt* called him in 1886, giving speeches, travelling the length and breadth of the country and running a much-admired model farm at Leutstetten.[11] That his labours were bearing fruit appeared to be confirmed in February 1893, when Ludwig and his wife Marie Therese celebrated their silver wedding anniversary. For Count Pückler, Prussia's deputy envoy in Munich, the congratulations flooding in from all parts of Bavaria were evidence that the prince had "understood to maintain or regain the people's affections for the branch of the House of Wittelsbach to which he belongs". Ludwig's happy marriage and his keen interest in the concerns of the people had played a part in this, Pückler explained, but also the adroitness with which he frequently invoked the memory of Ludwig II. By pointing to the different branches of the dynasty and the continuing popularity of the enigmatic late king, the Prussian diplomat perceptively laid his finger on Bavaria's dynastic wound: the fact that the deposition and death of the "Swan King" had both paved the way for and tainted the regency and thus Prince Ludwig's royal prospects.[12]

Vilified as a regicide, Prince Luitpold had not dared to show himself in public during the first days of his regency. No-one expressed the revulsion against the regent with more vitriol than Empress Elisabeth of Austria, a fellow Wittelsbach by birth and a confidante of the late King Ludwig II. In a poem she composed in 1887 she pilloried Luitpold as a perfidious "hypocritical old man" who had "treacherously pushed his nephew, his king from the throne" in order to take his place. If the people of Bavaria were to accept this deed, the empress wrote, then they would deserve "to stand in the stocks, dishonoured for eternity".[13] The veneration of the late Ludwig II, which, in some quarters, came close to resembling a cult, was not simply a naïvely spontaneous response amongst simple rural folk, but was also carefully nurtured for political reasons. It amounted to "a radical critique of the Prince Regent and his circle" and functioned as both "a weapon and valve of a popular political-societal protest".[14]

The aged Prince Luitpold responded to this challenge by exercising his office as regent in a manner that would eventually gain him great personal popularity and affection: patient, modest and approachable, but with an

innate dignity, over the years and decades that followed, he gradually morphed into a revered figure. Cigars shared with huntsmen endeared him to the simple folk. His habit of wearing Bavarian costume—leather shorts, Loden-jackets and the *Gamsbart* hat—also struck a chord with the *Bürgertum*. Luitpold's careful cultivation of popular affections and soft power was complemented with a decidedly restrained role in politics. According to the Bavarian constitution, the regent did not enjoy the full range of monarchical powers and privileges and was even more dependent on working with the ministerial establishment than a king would have been. But for reasons which were probably connected to the shadow the events of 1886 were casting over his regency Luitpold kept an unusually low political profile and allowed the "oligarchy of national-liberal ministers" to continue. This carried with it the risk of monarchical power degenerating to a mock function, restricted to propping up a ministerial elite that did not enjoy parliamentary legitimation.[15]

For the politically ambitious Prince Ludwig this development was painful. What made it worse was his father's practice of keeping, the son "systematically away from any governmental business", as the Prussian diplomat Count Pückler described it.[16] In public, the prince professed a principled and profound loyalty to Luitpold's authority as regent and father. "In a monarchical state there is always only one who is the master and one who has to decide, and he, who is as close to him as possible, has to be a subject just as much as the lowest labourer", he declared in 1886.[17] But this was certainly not the whole story. Over the following decades—as Luitpold's longevity was proving a source of growing frustration for anyone looking to change the status quo—Prince Ludwig was periodically associated with plans to end the regency and assume the crown. Rumours that the Luitpoldine branch of the Wittelsbach dynasty were scheming to win the throne dated back a long way. As early as the spring of 1871 the grand duke of Baden recorded in his diary that Ludwig II believed in a Jesuitical plot whereby his own abdication was being engineered with a view to enthrone "Prince Luitpold's eldest son". In the course of the 1880s, amid mounting concerns about King Ludwig's sanity and with the incapacity of his brother, Prince Otto, established beyond doubt, the notion of an intra-dynastic change to Prince Luitpold, Prince Ludwig or even Ludwig's son Rupprecht was being discussed more widely.[18] The dramatic events of 1886, which culminated in Ludwig II's mysterious death by drowning in Lake Starnberg, greatly complicated such a transition

though. Faced with the most lurid accusations, the new regent stubbornly resisted any moves to end the regency and assume the royal position.

Insiders argued that his son took a very different view. In January 1896, when the regency was about to complete its first decade, Count Monts, the Prussian envoy to Bavaria commented on rumours circulating in the press that Luitpold was planning to ascend the throne as king. The diplomat gathered that this story had been put about by Prince Ludwig, who calculated that his father would sooner abdicate than take this step. The way would then be free for the son. According to the diplomat, the prince was motivated by financial consideration as well as by a desire to give his life a "proper purpose" and change the course of Bavarian politics. Monts was sure that the Bavarian Centre Party was also involved in this scheme, but he did not rate Ludwig's chances very highly. Luitpold was not only relishing his carefree version of ruling the country, he also knew that his branch of the House of Wittelsbach was still not enjoying a great deal of popularity, especially amongst the "low, fervently Catholic people of the mountainous region" who continued to blame them for the "tragic end of Ludwig II". Fearful of incurring extra costs and losing their posts, both the parliament and the liberal ministry would oppose such a move as well.[19] When the topic resurfaced in the summer of 1896, the Social Democrat *Münchner Post* warned that ending the regency would cost the taxpayer an extra 1.5 million. Monts reported again that—according to governmental sources—it was Prince Ludwig, who functioned as "the actual director of the movement, but was keeping his person deftly concealed in the background".[20] The Prussian envoy returned to the topic the following year. By then "Prince Ludwig, who was secretly pulling the threads", had allegedly added another twist to the plan: "the current ruler [i.e. Prince Luitpold] was to be saddled the odium of the dethroning [of King Otto], which is deeply unpopular amongst the simple people, while the bed is to be prepared in advance for his exalted successor". With neither the ministers nor the regent being prepared to comply with Ludwig's wishes, though, all this was likely to generate was disgruntlement on the part of the prince.[21]

For all his obvious dislike of Prince Ludwig, Monts had to admit in the same despatch that there were some concerns about the damage caused by such a long regency. Bavaria's reputation in Germany had to suffer, he reported as the views of some liberals, "if he who wears the crown is incapable". The longer the reign of the wretched King Otto lasted, the more

this became a matter of public debate. Not even an official governmental declaration to parliament in 1897 stating that the regent was "thoroughly disinclined" towards any change in the regency and "wanted no change to the status quo"[22] put an end to it. In June 1904 Anton Dyroff, a Munich-based law professor, published a brochure on the termination of the regency. This was a topic, he claimed, which "does not only play a role in the private conversations of the most diverse strata of the people", but has been raised "in public assemblies, in journals and the press and in parliament". Looking ahead to 1905/1906 and the planned centenary celebration of Bavaria's elevation to a kingdom, Dyroff described "ending the regency during the lifetime of an insane king" as an aim that "countless patriotic Bavarians, truly devoted to the monarchy" would want to see achieved before that great anniversary.[23] The publication received a fair amount of attention in the press with the national-liberal *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung* urging caution about pressing an issue against the wishes of the "venerable regent". According to Monts's successor, Friedrich von Pourtalés, it was—once again—widely believed that Prince Ludwig was connected to this new initiative. Moreover, Minister Baron von Podewils-Dürniz had argued that "the deposition of the incapacitated king would deliver a harsh blow to the principle of divinely ordained rule". Protecting this principle, Podewils argued, was of grave political importance.[24]

This reasoning, however, was not uncontroversial. For some critics, the very opposite was the case. In 1907 the influential Bavarian writer and journalist Ludwig Thoma published an article entitled "A Sick King" in which he powerfully argued that the status quo was inflicting damage on the monarchy. "The attempt to have a maniac count as the representative of the highest authority […] leads to instances of ridiculousness, which are incompatible with the solid seriousness of state action", he declared. "What is a sentence, passed in the name of a mentally ill man? Or the oath sworn by a public servant who knows, that he must never obey that king?" Thoma wondered whether under "these circumstances accrued respect would not get lost" and insisted that any "dignified attitude had to rise up against locating all the rights of state power within an incurable man for whom they are not even shadowy concepts". Five years later, the *Zweibrücker Zeitung* offered a similarly cogent analysis of the "pretence, which governs in the name of a maniac" and concluded that "a system of power that revolves around a weightless central body, can do without it altogether".[25]

When this article was published, Prince Luitpold had finally died at the ripe old age of 91 and Prince Ludwig, at 68 hardly a youngster himself, had succeeded his father. The issue of his status had not gone away, though, for the main talking point, the Württemberg envoy reported to the government in Stuttgart, was now "the question whether Prince Ludwig would take over the reins of government as regent or as king". It was widely desired that he should proclaim himself king, the diplomat observed and had no doubt that the Bavarian parliament—with its Centre Party majority—would endorse such a formal breach of the constitution. Both the government, led by the Centre Party minister Georg von Hertling, and the press were pushing for a quick end to the regency as a necessary step. The *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* declared on the day after Luitpold's death that "only the king […] was responsible to no-one but God and his conscience" and obliged "not to rule for himself, but for the sake of the state". Notwithstanding this fair wind, it took almost another full year of procedural wrangling and patient negotiation with various parliamentary factions and Kaiser Wilhelm II until a constitutional amendment was passed in November 1913. Stung by the Kaiser's taunt that a king "by the grace of parliament and the Centre Party" was unthinkable, the regent and his ministers engaged in some last-minute legal legerdemain to salvage a semblance of monarchical legitimacy and divine ordination against too much parliamentary influence.[26]

The proclamation of the accession of King Ludwig III on 5 November 1913—giving Bavaria a second king alongside King Otto, who only died in 1916—thus left a bad taste in the mouths on both sides of the political divide. The Social Democrat *Münchner Post* decried the self-emasculation of the Bavarian parliament which had implicitly agreed the termination of the regency and the elevation of King Ludwig III, as these had been effected previously and without its sanction. Munich's famous satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, however, told a different story. The cartoon adorning its front page on 17 November 1913 was entitled "By the grace of God" and showed two coronations: Maximilian I Josef, the first king of Bavaria, kneeling to receive his crown from Napoleon in 1806 and King Ludwig III being handed his by the Centre Party Minister-President Georg von Hertling in 1913 (Fig. 2.1).[27] The tortuous process of the accession of this royal heir, who had never been a crown prince, thus ended up shining an unflattering light on both the monarchical principle and the parliament as well as producing the strange anomaly of a monarchy with two concurrent kings.

Fig. 2.1 "By the Grace of God" (17 November 1913)—Munich's famous satirical magazine *Simplicissimus* clearly did not see a great deal of divine intervention in either coronation.

Compared to the Bavarian case, the situation of Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg was one of relative simplicity. What united Wilhelm and Ludwig was the fact that they were not heirs-apparent to their respective thrones and therefore did not benefit from the constitutional or legal provisions made for the material support of crown princes. The house law of the Wittelsbach dynasty (*Königliches Familien-Statut*) of 5 August 1819 laid down that the stipend of the crown prince would be decided in each case and defrayed by the state.[28] After the ruinous financial excesses of Ludwig II's unbridled building programmes, it came as a great relief to the shattered finances of the Bavarian monarchy that King Otto was in no position to spend, that the prince-regent chose to live very frugally

and that there was no crown prince entitled to receive payment from the civil list. But Prince Ludwig—a father of eleven surviving children—clearly chafed under the yoke of a tight budget. Time and again his initiatives for ending the regency were associated with his need for more money.

In the kingdom of Württemberg, the upkeep of the crown prince was even mentioned in article 106 of the constitution. The details of this entitlement were laid down with great precision in the Royal House Law (*Königliches Hausgesetz*) of 1828: the crown prince was due furnished accommodation and an annual stipend of 30,000 *Gulden*, rising to 60,000 *Gulden* after his marriage (with an additional 8000 *Gulden* of "pin money" [*Nadelgeld*] payable to his wife).[29] Prince Wilhelm, heir-presumptive to the Württemberg crown, was not, however, the king's eldest son and thus failed to meet the house law's definition of a crown prince. In fact, with Wilhelm's father and King Karl of Württemberg having been first cousins, the heir to the throne was the closest agnate, but only quite distantly related to his childless predecessor. This meant that providing Wilhelm with the material support deemed necessary for his role as heir to the throne required a lengthy process involving instances of public scrutiny. The question of suitable housing for the prince in the Württemberg capital was only resolved in 1875. Finance Minister Andreas von Renner had reported to the king that the Kronprinzen-Palais in Stuttgart was vacant, but that Wilhelm had no legal entitlement to be accommodated in a state building. He could only be housed there "by an act of highest grace [*höchster Gnade*] of Your Royal Majesty" and only as long as the building was not needed for any other purpose. King Karl was happy to oblige.[30]

The issue was to re-emerge two years later, though, after Prince Wilhelm's marriage to Marie von Waldeck-Pyrmont. A ministerial paper dated 13 February 1877 and accompanying a draft bill concerning "The Apanage of His Royal Highness the Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg" pointed out that the Royal House Law provided for the crown prince's budget to be increased upon his marriage. This was the case "undoubtedly with respect to the public position of the crown prince as the royal prince closest to the throne, which imposes certain duties on him that require a greater expenditure". In the absence of a crown prince these duties fell upon Prince Wilhelm, the paper continued and suggested raising his allowance to 100,000 Mark, which was "after all, still substantially below the subvention to which a crown prince would be entitled according to the House Law". King Karl was happy to endorse this and the unanimous support the measure received in the Württemberg parliament

reflected, according to the Saxon envoy Oswald von Fabrice, "in the most unmistakable manner its faithful adherence to the indigenous dynasty". The proximity of the vote to the prince's recent marriage and the couple's enthusiastic reception in Stuttgart, a connection that did not escape Fabrice, had certainly helped to ease this vote through the Württemberg chambers.[31]

This mechanism would also have helped the smooth passage of a law in March 1886 that provided Wilhelm, whose first wife had died in 1882, with a one-off payment of 33,000 Mark to assist with the costs of his second marriage and the setting up of his new household.[32] Only three years later, Wilhelm's finances were back on the parliamentary agenda and now the first ripples of dissent were beginning to appear. In February 1889, the Prussian envoy Ludwig Count Wesdehlen reported that plans were being made to increase the stipend paid to Prince Wilhelm, "who does not bear the title crown prince", by some 13,000 Mark to match the legal entitlement for a crown prince and also to grant his wife Charlotte the "pin money" of 8000. There was no real difference between Wilhelm's position and that of a crown prince, and though it remained publicly unspoken, Wesdehlen observed, there was another strong reason for this pay rise: the prince now had to fulfil most royal duties for the absentee king. This did not stop the *Beobachter*, an organ of the Demokratische Württembergische Volkspartei, from opposing this move. The newspaper criticised that the proposed measure lacked a proper justification and pointed out that in 1877 Wilhelm had already been granted a much more generous settlement than the sum to which he was entitled. The people would not understand such a governmental gift, the *Beobachter* insisted. But this was still very much a minority opinion. On 15 June 1889, the bill securing Wilhelm an extra 13,122 Mark and allotting Charlotte "pin money" worth 13,714 Mark and 29 pennies passed the Württemberg parliament. A single No-vote was cast by the Centre Party deputy Adolf Gröber, while another declared opponent, the democrat Conrad Haußmann, turned up late and missed the vote.[33] With Wilhelm and his wife having finally secured financial parity with the legal provision for a crown prince and crown princess, the issue of his finances did not arise again in the remaining two years before his accession to the throne.

That steps to increase public funds for the royal family did not always go as smoothly as in the case of Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg was demonstrated by the experience of Saxony. The extraordinary meeting of the Saxon Landtag in July 1902, that marked the accession of King Georg,

only had one substantial item of business: as set out in article 22 of the Saxon constitution of 1831 it had to approve a royal decree concerning the civil list for the new king. Opening the debate, the conservative deputy Hugo Gottfried Opitz resorted to some emotional blackmail by reminding the chamber that this issue was not primarily about finances, but was rather "a question of the tender relations which connect the people with their ruler in good monarchical states". But the mood among the deputies was clearly one of unease. The national-liberal deputy Otto Schill anticipated that the measure would not "meet with particular sympathy amongst the wider population" and his liberal colleague Alfred Gräfe admitted that he had not studied the decree "with a light heart either". Despite these misgivings, the measure was approved unanimously, which was made easier by the fact that a carefully targeted recent change in the electoral law had purged the chamber of all Social Democrat deputies. The king's civil list thus went up from 3 million Mark to 3.55 million Mark and the apanage for the crown prince rose by 100,000 Mark to reach a total of 300,000 Mark.[34]

This was a Pyrrhic victory, though, since the effect of this decision on the reputation of the new king was toxic and lasting. A year later the weekly the *Die Grenzboten* still felt that the civil list hike had caused "terribly bad blood" and not even Georg's obituaries two years later were free of references to this ill-advised step. The liberal *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* called the decision "amid Saxony's extraordinarily difficult economic and financial circumstances a fateful error" of the kind that was likely to damage "the ground on which the delicate flower of the people's love can grow". In fact, the message concerning the inadvisability of further increases rang out so loud and clear in the wake of 1902 that upon his own accession two years later, King Friedrich August III would not ask for a single penny more.[35]

For Crown Prince Friedrich August, though, the vote in 1902 had already been the third time that the Saxon parliament had been asked to increase his income. Like Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg, Friedrich August had not been a crown prince for most of his life. Until the death of the Saxon King Albert in 1902, he, as the eldest son of Albert's younger brother Georg, had merely been the heir-presumptive. This meant that he did not benefit from the provisions made for the crown prince in the Saxon House law of 1838, which laid down an annual sum of 30,000 *Thaler* for an unmarried crown prince, rising to 60,000 after he had contracted an "equal" (*ebenbürtig*) marriage.[36] By the time Friedrich August

was coming up to his 21st birthday in 1886, it was clear that his royal uncle would remain childless and the Saxon Ministry of the Royal House proposed that a sufficient sum should be added to the 1885/1886 budget "in consideration of His Royal Highness's position as presumptive future heir to the throne and the duties that arise therefrom".[37] In December 1885 and January 1886, in line with the governmental proposal, both chambers of the Saxon parliament approved an apanage of 60,000 Mark for Friedrich August. Led by August Bebel, the four Social Democrat deputies in the second chamber demonstratively abstained and Baron von Friesen, who reported on the measure in the first chamber, made a point of linking the approval to the prince's forthcoming contribution to the work of the chamber.[38]

Faced with Friedrich August's forthcoming nuptials in 1891, the sum allocated five years before no longer seemed adequate. The Ministry of the Royal House referred to the general rise in prices, the cost of the wedding and Friedrich August's duties as "presumptive future heir to the throne" and applied for a healthy uplift to an annual apanage of 200,000 Mark.[39] As was often case with such increases, parliament deliberated on them against the background of joyous wedding celebrations and amid a wave of goodwill for the young groom and his beautiful bride. This was very much the furrow ploughed by the conservative deputy Richard von Oehlschlägel when he referred to this item during the second chamber's debate on the government's financial proposals on 18 November 1891. Having pointed out that this was the very day when the royal family had left for Vienna to bring back the Archduchess Luise, "the high bride of our highly revered Prince Friedrich August" the deputy regretted that—much though his party had wished to do this—the parliamentary timetable made it impossible to grant "as a wedding gift of the people to His Royal Highness the approval of the apanage".[40]

Subsequent exchanges in the chamber would show, however, that the issue had become political. "Where might the Saxon government have been thrifty?" the Social Democrat *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* asked mischievously on 27 November 1891, and answered its own question: "not with regard to the civil list of the king and the heir to the throne". Four days later the leading conservative deputy Paul Mehnert attacked the Social Democrat press for their alleged denigration of the festivities surrounding the prince's marriage and for having contrasted the "large apanage for the Saxon prince" with the paltry sum of 5000 Mark that the newlyweds had given to the poor. Ultimately, the passage of the measure was not in doubt.

When the vote was taken in the second chamber on 18 December, only the votes of the eleven Social Democrat (SPD) deputies were cast in opposition to the measure. On 14 January 1892, in an act of spotless loyalty, the first chamber approved the measure unanimously.[41] The ground had nevertheless been prepared for the fierce reaction that would ensue when, ten years later, the crown would request yet another substantial increase in the public funds to be paid to the new king and his successor.

The experiences of Ludwig, Wilhelm and Friedrich August illustrate that the constellation whereby the heirs to the throne were not, strictly speaking, crown princes opened up the monarchies involved to political and public embarrassment. With the dynastic ideal of a smooth father–son succession having been codified in legal texts such as constitutions and house laws, any deviations from that norm made the royal families vulnerable to the rough-and-tumble of public political debate, to scrutiny by political actors and the press and to uncomfortable questions about the use of and entitlement to public funds. Moreover, concerns about perceived incompatibilities between the entitlement to the crown by descent and the capacity of its wearer to fulfil the associated functions highlighted another source of fragility for the monarchical system.

"The Religious Contrast Which Divides Royal House and People": Heirs and Confessional Tensions

On 20 October 1889 Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg left his mansion "Marienwahl" in Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart together with his daughter Pauline to attend the Sunday service at the local church. As they were passing through the gate a man stepped forward and fired a shot at the open carriage. The bullet went wide and the would-be assassin was immediately apprehended by the palace guard, but the attempt on the prince's life caused great upset across the kingdom. It eventually emerged that the gunman, one Gotthold Martin Müller, was insane and had acted for wholly irrational reasons. When news of the assassination attempt first broke, though, the deed was widely reported to have been politically motived. Prince Wilhelm personally interrogated the man in prison and later informed Count Wesdehlen, the Prussian envoy, that, according to the gunman's calm statement, "he had wanted to prevent another Protestant king from coming to the throne". Wilhelm was concerned that this crime could reinvigorate inter-confessional strife and Wesdehlen

feared that the whole affair might confirm the prince's belief that he was "particularly unpopular amongst the Catholics". The telegram Wilhelm sent to Bismarck on the same day reflected very much the same attitude: "God has protected me and my daughter wonderfully against a deed which appears to have been brought forth by blind religious fanaticism." The article that appeared in the Prussian government's *Neueste Mittheilungen* the following day gave this version of events an almost official stamp. It reported that during questioning the perpetrator had stated that "it was time for a Catholic to ascend the throne of Württemberg". By way of explanation the paper added that Prince Wilhelm only had one daughter and that, should he die, the Catholic branch of the Württemberg family would be next in line to the throne.[42]

It was this dynastic background that gave the confessional interpretation of the assassination attempt a ring of truth. It continued to resonate even though it emerged very quickly that the would-be assassin was not a Catholic and clearly mentally deranged. Prince Wilhelm was indeed the last Protestant agnate in the Württemberg dynasty. If he died without leaving behind a male heir, the succession would devolve to his distant cousin Duke Philipp of Württemberg, who, as the son of a French princess, had been brought up in the Catholic faith and had thus become the head of the Roman Catholic cadet branch of the Württemberg dynasty. Little wonder, then, that in the overwhelmingly Protestant kingdom of Württemberg the birth of Prince Wilhelm's son Ulrich in August 1880 was welcomed enthusiastically. "Almighty, gracious God", was the prayer that rang out in the country's Protestant churches after Ulrich's birth: "We praise and thank thee for giving the royal Prince Wilhelm von Württemberg and his spouse the Princess Marie a son to delight their exalted relatives and our entire country." The news of the death of the infant less than half a year later thus came as a profound shock. "Just as the birth of this little prince five months ago moved all of Württemberg into a state of ecstasy", the Prussian envoy observed, "so his unexpected and sudden demise is followed by a true consternation. Württemberg tied its hopes for the future to his existence."[43]

Wilhelm's decision to re-marry in 1886, four years after the death of his first wife, was also connected to this issue. According to the Bavarian envoy Carl von Tauffkirchen, King Karl was yearning for the day of the prince's second marriage and "thus the prospect of securing the succession within the Protestant line". Minister-President Hermann von Mittnacht, Tauffkirchen reported, even intended to advise that the king write to Prince

Wilhelm to inform him of the "wishes of the country in this respect". If nothing else this would at least dispel rumours that the king was favouring a Catholic succession. The fairly loveless marriage to Charlotte von Schaumburg-Lippe, which Prince Wilhelm eventually entered after a great deal of encouragement, did not produce the longed-for heir, though—a fact that did not go unnoticed. In an article on the Württemberg royal family the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* noted in October 1888 that "from his second marriage [Wilhelm] had also remained without a male heir so that the succession of the Catholic branch of the dynasty, which has remained rather alien to a country with a strictly protestant majority, is becoming more likely". The Prussian envoy to Munich deemed this article sufficiently inflammatory to send a copy to Bismarck.[44]

That the shot fired at the prince by the deranged Müller a year later would be viewed through a confessional prism is therefore hardly surprising. Even detached observers like the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* considered this "sad case […] an earnest warning against the one-sidedness of confessional intolerance". The *Beobachter* hoped for inter-confessional peace and warned against any anti-Catholic agitation, but the tension was clearly palpable. Count Wesdehlen reported to Berlin that Catholic circles were now exploiting the event which they described as a "disgusting Protestant intrigue", but the Protestant side also joined the fray. "A senior official, devoted Catholic, has told me", Tauffkirchen informed the government in Munich, "that upon his appearance at the Stuttgart Gentlemen's Club an embarrassed silence spread amongst his best and oldest acquaintances". In a letter to Wilhelm's mother, the consistory of Württemberg's Protestant Church struck a markedly partisan note: it felt great pain "that such a deed could have been attempted against the all-revered and beloved royal prince, who, God willing, would one day be called upon to be a strong protector and patron of his Protestant Church". All of this led the perceptive Tauffkirchen to conclude that the transition to a Catholic monarch would bring with it considerable difficulties: "not because any discrimination of Protestants is to be feared, but because it would be much harder for a Catholic king than for a Protestant one to maintain the parity of treatment hitherto granted to the Catholics and hence maintain religious freedom".[45]

He had shrugged off the assassination attempt at the time, but Prince Wilhelm's attitude towards Catholicism remained fraught. "It is most peculiar and striking how my Protestant family was suddenly robbed of its male offspring", he told the Prussian envoy Philipp Count Eulenburg

in January 1891. "I do not want to believe that anything untoward happened", he continued, "but I cannot forget that one year before my boy's death I received a warning letter from Rome from an old university friend, an artist, saying he knew how the Jesuits 'had a lively interest in me'". And even though Wilhelm claimed that he did not link any of this to the assassination attempt, Eulenburg concluded that the prince would never lose his suspicions against the Catholic Church.[46]

In Saxony the confessional divide between the dynasty and the population was much starker than in Württemberg. Here the Wettin dynasty's notoriously devout Catholicism set the ruling family apart from the almost entirely Protestant population. During the reign of King Albert of Saxony from 1873 to 1902, when the struggle between political Catholicism and anti-Catholic liberalism reached its peak in Germany, this potential source of friction was successfully managed. This was achieved not least as a result of what the Prussian envoy called "King Albert's high-hearted attitude which is above any kind of confessional narrow-mindedness". He predicted that confessional "sensitivities would be calmed as long as this noble monarch was on the Saxon throne".[47]

There was a distinct change of mood, however, after the accession of King Albert's younger brother Georg, whose commitment to Catholicism had been known for some time to be much more rigid and demonstrative. The Prussian envoy in Dresden noted as early as 1891, that there was some disappointment amongst the Protestant population at the choice of the Catholic Archduchess Luise of Tuscany, a member of the Habsburg dynasty, as the future wife of Prince Georg's son, Prince Friedrich August. "Given the strict Catholic commitment of Prince Georg and his exalted family", Count Dönhoff explained, "the Protestant population had vainly indulged in the hope that the prince's choice might have fallen on a Protestant Princess and would thus have softened the religious contrast which divides royal house and people in Saxony". Two years later the diplomat warned that in religious matters Prince Georg and his family had to be approached with the greatest care. There was a risk that "the branch of the Saxon royal house that will one day be called upon the throne could be disquieted and offended by indiscreet demonstrations and utterances concerning confessional matters". After Georg's death, the *Dresdener Rundschau* bitterly recalled that, "even as crown prince, when passing on business through a Protestant place which had a Catholic chapel, he would demonstratively drive out to this chapel to pray there".[48]

It was in the context of Crown Princess Luise's elopement and the ensuing scandal, though, that the confessional issue really came to the fore. When the government-controlled *Leipziger Zeitung* insisted in January 1903 that there was nothing that would "justify even a semblance of the belief that King Georg was less aware than his predecessor on the throne of the duties that arose from his position amidst an almost purely Protestant-Lutheran country", this sounded rather like protesting too much. By then the Saxon court was already caught up in a maelstrom of anti-clerical invective. "We are facing […] an incredible crisis of our entire Saxon public life, a terrible shattering of the mutual confidence between the Catholic dynasty and the predominantly Protestant population", the *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* had warned three days earlier. The paper quoted from other publications which called the Dresden court a "stronghold of Catholic piety" and an "Ultramontane jewel" kept as a bulwark by the Roman Curia and clearly at odds with the "enlightened and industrious, liberal and Protestant citizenry" surrounding it. Crown Princess Luise, the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* reported, was seen as the "victim of a clerical intrigue" because of her free thinking.[49] Try as hard as they might, the governmental papers failed to quell widespread rumours that a clerical-Jesuitical court party had established itself. Wilhelm von Hohenthal, Saxony's envoy to Prussia, deeply regretted "that a large part of the Saxon Press, led by the *Dresdner Zeitung* and the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, had used the flight of the crown princess, to engage in the dreariest fashion in a confessional witch-hunt. The sniffing-out of Jesuits, which comes to the fore at this point, is so completely silly that one would be tempted to laugh, were the occasion not such an excessively sad one."[50]

This confessional witch-hunt did not stop at pillorying the unpopular Georg, the "king of the hypocrites" (*König der Mucker*), but inevitably turned on his son, Crown Prince Friedrich August, the very husband Crown Princess Luise had left. "The smear campaign started by unbelieving elements against the Catholic court is most deplorable", the Bavarian envoy Friedrich von Niethammer observed in March 1903 and pointed out that "the person of the crown prince served as a particular target for these attacks". The focus on Friedrich August was not only natural, it was actively stoked by his estranged wife, who from her temporary exile in Switzerland gave breathtakingly indiscreet interviews. "He is very pious", she told *Die Zeit*. "Science and the arts, music, theatre, literature, these are dangerous areas for him. Having been brought up by priests he always regarded my

preference for these things as a dangerous and sinful inclination." Having thus painted her husband as a bigoted philistine, Luise added that the Saxon court was characterised by exaggerated Catholicism, that in a house where the Jesuits ruled, laughter had been forbidden, while her own brand of Catholicism was shot through with "very free-thinking ideas".[51]

Regardless of the truth of these statements about her own religious attitudes, Luise's characterisation of her husband as a deeply religious man was certainly correct. In this regard the crown prince had been shaped by his pious parents and it is telling that a quotation from his mother, Princess Maria Anna, featured in several of the contemporary lives of the later king: "I consider religion as the basis of every education, and it is my central endeavour to bring up the children according to God's will." As a result, the otherwise easy-going Friedrich August remained committed to an unusually intense form of Catholicism, which, in his case, involved the practice of going to confession and then attending mass every day.[52]

In the heated atmosphere of the years preceding Friedrich August's accession in 1904, all this meant that confessional issues had to be treated with delicacy. In May 1903, the Catholic *Sächsische Volkszeitung* wondered how "King Georg and the crown prince had sinned against Protestantism" to deserve the accusations now made against them. Rather, it would not be a surprise if the dynasty were beginning to lose faith in "Protestant loyalty to the king". Clearly alarmed by the ferocity of the crisis, Friedrich August worked hard to regain the trust of the Saxon population, and confessional politics played a part in this. In the winter of 1903/1904, the crown prince made plans to have his sons educated at a special "Princes' School" alongside both Catholic and Protestant boys "from good families". The direction of travel—or at least of the necessary gestures—appeared beyond doubt. "Never has the path ahead been clearer for a Saxon king", the *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* declared upon Friedrich August's accession in October 1904: It was "the path that leads directly to the people" and important steps in this direction were his recent affirmation that Saxony's Lutheran Church would be under his protection and the awareness of the duty that arises from standing at the head of a predominantly Protestant people.[53]

Prince Ludwig of Bavaria was no less committed a Roman Catholic than Friedrich August of Saxony, but his situation was different from that of the Wettin prince in that Bavaria was a strongly Catholic country. The significant territorial expansion of the kingdom at the beginning of the nineteenth century had, however, added a substantial Protestant

minority to the overwhelmingly Catholic regions of the "Old Bavarian" core. Census figures indicate that in the course of the nineteenth century the share of Lutheran or Reformed Protestants amongst the Bavarian population remained constantly at just under 30%. In these areas—above all Franconia, Swabia and the Rhenish Palatinate—popular attitudes to the Catholic Wittelsbach dynasty were of a different quality and, in some respects, more distanced. Notwithstanding the Wittelsbachs' emphatic Catholicism, the kings of Bavaria acted as *Summus Episcopus* for the Protestant Church in the kingdom.[54]

There were other factors that rendered the religious dimension of Bavarian public life highly political. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s the *Kulturkampf* made the relationship between the Catholic Church and the state a fiercely contested issue. Backed by the crown, the liberal ministries robustly championed the rights of the state against the claims of the church—often against the Catholic majority in the lower chamber of the Bavarian parliament.[55] Moreover, the Catholic Bayerische Patriotenpartei—renamed Bayerische Zentrumspartei in 1887—soon emerged as a stalwart opponent not just of attacks on the church, but of any attempt to diminish Bavaria's autonomy within the German Reich.[56] Prince Ludwig's closeness to this party and its ecclesiastical and political aims was a matter of public record and, as will be discussed later, exasperated the opponents of Bavarian particularism.[57] In the 1871 Reichstag elections the prince even stood—unsuccessfully—for the Munich II constituency and was widely perceived to be acting on behalf of the Patriot Party.[58] He was, as the *Augsburger Postzeitung* put it in an article marking Ludwig's 50th birthday in 1895, "a true son of the church, through his life a role model for every Christian".[59]

In light of all this it is surprising that it took until 1910 for Prince Ludwig's confessional stance—as opposed to his wider political views—to trigger a fierce controversy. "It earned the prince a veritable hailstorm of scorn and derision", the weekly *Raphael* observed after the event, "and for at least a fortnight the prince had to run the gauntlet through the barbed wire of the anti-Catholic and anti-Christian press in Germany and Europe". What had happened? On 28 August 1910 Ludwig visited the town of Altötting where he gave a couple of impromptu addresses in which he reflected on his religious beliefs. After a delay of almost a fortnight, the words he had spoken to a small circle of listeners were being exploited by political parties in favour and opposed to the prince. How shaken Ludwig was by the unexpected turmoil is reflected in a plaintive

note in his own hand that has survived amongst his papers: "The precise wording of my speeches I do not know myself. But that I know, that I did not want to offend believers of others faiths, whom I mentioned only very briefly. I will not have the right to talk about my Catholic faith openly and freely in front of the world taken away from me."[60]

Ludwig had travelled to Altötting, the centre of Marian devotion in Upper Bavaria, to attend the laying of the foundation stone for the new church of St Anna. Both at the construction site and after the subsequent lunch the prince responded to short addresses by the mayor of Altötting and the bishop of Passau.[61] In the lively press coverage that ensued, these two speeches were conflated into one—often referred to as the prince's "confession" (*Glaubensbekenntnis*). Ludwig was quoted as saying "I thank dear God that I descend from Catholic parents and that I have been brought up in the Catholic religion. I have always stood up for our Catholic religion, because I am convinced that it is the only true and original [*wahre und echte*] religion. […] It is wrong to assume that we Catholics must not respect the convictions of those with a different belief [*Andersgläubiger*]. Because of this we demand too that our convictions are shown tolerance."[62]

The fact that the prince's utterances were first brought to the attention of a wider public by the press of the Catholic Centre Party—and after a delay of several days—suggests that there may have been a connection to speeches given by Kaiser Wilhelm II at the same time. Addressing audiences in East Prussia on 25 and 29 August 1910, the Kaiser, who had characterised himself as "an instrument of the Lord", had also struck a religious note. "My blessed grandfather and I have described Ourselves as working under the highest protection and according to the highest order of Our Lord and God", Wilhelm II added, and he expected the same of every honest Christian, "whoever it may be".[63]

Such claims of divine inspiration by an emphatically Protestant emperor would have stuck in the craw of political Catholicism. That Prince Ludwig should have made "a confession of true, innermost Catholic faith in majestic words", as the *Lindauer Volkszeitung* gushed on 6 September, must have seemed too tempting an opportunity for a rejoinder to miss. "May this confession made by the prince resonate in Catholic hearts everywhere and inspire them to emulate it", the paper hoped. The Catholic *Sächsische Volkszeitung* also praised Ludwig's "gorgeous words", attacked the "mendacity of the smears" against Catholicism and rejoiced that its adherents were now beginning to profess "the greatness and magnificence

of the religion". In the same article the paper took a swipe at the notion of a "protestant imperial idea" (*protestantisches Kaisertum*) based on the observation that the emperor was a Protestant. The *Germania*, the Centre Party's premier national paper, also linked the Altötting speeches to the emperor: "Just like Kaiser Wilhelm's commitment to a Christian *Weltanschauung*, so will Prince Ludwig's Catholic confession meet with the joyful agreement of every true Catholic."[64]

Ludwig did not enjoy these reactions, the Prussian envoy in Munich informed the German chancellor, but was embarrassed by the clerical papers' exploitation of his speech.[65] Given the ferocity of the criticism levelled against the heir to the Bavarian throne, this reaction was hardly surprising. The liberal *Pfälzische Presse* from Kaiserslautern in the Rhenish Palatinate lectured the prince that "public declarations from such prominent positions must carry the risk of provoking the opposition of large sections of the population, which must feel offended". Non-Catholics could not but consider this a denigration and Ludwig must not be surprised that they defend themselves against it. Worst of all, the prince "has forgotten that he is heir to the throne in a country that is not at all purely Catholic". The Regensburg-based liberal *Bayerischer Volksbote* chose even fiercer language. "Protestants will have to make the loquacious heir to the throne understand, that—as his future subjects—they absolutely resent being called heretics in not so many words. […] These are not the words of a man called upon to rule over a confessionally mixed country. One could forgive an eager young chaplain for using language like this, but a future king must not forget himself to this extent." Some of the leading national papers adopted a less strident, but equally damaging line. "If one draws the final consequence from the confession", the left-liberal *Vossische Zeitung* explained, "then one cannot accept the equality of other religions, for then one would have to accept that truth and error were of equal value". That the prince should make such a claim, "while a not insignificant part of the Bavarian people and the majority of the German nation belong to religious communities other than the Catholic one" was incomprehensible.[66]

Not all the non-Catholic papers laid into Prince Ludwig in this way. Prussia's conservative *Neue Preußische Zeitung* and the liberal *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* chose a relatively moderate editorial line. Surprisingly, there was even a conciliatory response from the *Münchner Post*, which reassured Ludwig that "Social Democracy has no cause to begrudge the prince his religious fidelity". After all, the speech was given at a religious occasion

Fig. 2.2 Entitled "Königsberg and Altötting" this cartoon in the *Simplicissimus* (26 September 1910) gently lampoons Prince Ludwig as holding a lantern for a flock of Catholic priests in an attempt to balance the "Northern Light" shone by the Kaiser.

and showed nothing more than that the heir to the Bavarian throne was a very pious Catholic.[67] Notwithstanding these soothing words, Ludwig appeared to have been stung by the strength of the feeling against his stance. Basing its information on a direct communication from a "highly placed personage close to the prince" the *Tägliche Rundschau* painted a picture of an embarrassed prince keen to calm the waves. The paper's correspondent had learned from the circle around Ludwig that he did not have "the remotest intention of belittling or offending or even affronting

those of a different belief". "Believe me", the prince's anonymous friend told the reporter, "no-one is more tolerant or thinks in a more tolerant way than Prince Ludwig. When the effect of his speech was reported to him, he shook his head and said: 'This I certainly never intended!'."[68]

Expressing regret and emphasising one's profound commitment to tolerance were steps in the right direction. It could be argued, though, that a politically ambitious heir to the throne, whose father was only five months short of his 90th birthday, would have to do more to repair the reputational damage caused by the Altötting speech. The accusations that he was unfit for his predestined monarchical office must have seemed particularly damaging. In view of this, the article—coincidentally?—published a month later in the leading Catholic weekly *Allgemeine Rundschau* makes for very interesting reading. Entitled "A Modern Prince in the Best Sense of the Word", it reflected—of all things—on the "Prince Ludwig of Bavaria's recent speeches". Keen to portray the 65-year-old Wittelsbach as a thoroughly modern man, the article refers to his speeches on topics as varied as agricultural improvement, canal construction and technical innovation as well as assessment and examination techniques at university level. The religious dimension and Altötting were conspicuous by their absence. The closest the article got to the heavens was when the *Allgemeine Rundschau* reminded its readers that Ludwig had recently joined Count Zeppelin on board the airship "Parseval VI" for a tour high above Munich. This, the paper observed, was "an expression of this progressive spirit".[69]

As has already been suggested by the consideration of the succession of heirs who were not crown princes, exploring confessional tensions also points to the phenomenon of monarchical growing pains. As these institutions were morphing into structures that could survive in and contribute to nineteenth-century states and societies, old traditions and attachments—such as a dynasty's long-standing religious commitment—could develop a double-edged quality. Religious attachments continued to emphasise cherished continuities and common aspects of tribal identity. Yet, in a more varied, more secular age which increasingly considered religion, though important, to be a private issue, tensions came to the fore. These existed between a royal heir's private religious commitments and how they were publicly perceived on the one hand, and his role as an impartial future monarch on the other. Where these tensions could not be managed satisfactorily, a crisis could easily develop. As Prince Ludwig found out, for a future monarch talking about one's personal religious beliefs was not such a private matter.

"Our Happy Domestic Home—Which Gives such a Good Example": The Challenges of a Compulsory Happy-Ever-After

Since time immemorial, hereditary monarchy has been all about family business. Protecting and continuing the hallowed blood line which justified the exercise of sovereign power had been at the centre of monarchical history for centuries. This had involved intricate rules governing royal marriages and a sometimes desperate quest for legitimate heirs. But something had changed by the nineteenth century, and this transformation made family life a far more challenging task for Europe's dynasties. While the inability to produce the requisite "heir and spare" continued to be seen as a problem and inflexible rules on equality of status (*Ebenbürtigkeit*) remained in place, greatly restricting the available supply of nubile partners, there were now additional hurdles to clear. Against the background of a changed culture of power, which had to respond to wider audiences and affected the royal individuals as well, a process unfolded which Daniel Schönpflug has described as a "dissociation of dynasty". This meant that "alongside the dynasty as a 'state family', that continued to represent the body politic, there emerged a 'private family' that was composed of individual personalities and connected by emotional bonds".[70]

If the members of this seemingly "private" family succeeded in living up to acknowledged standards of exemplary behaviour, then this could pay a handsome political dividend. "The articles in the papers, too, are most kind and gratifying", Queen Victoria wrote to her uncle Leopold in 1844; "they say that *no* Sovereign was *more* loved than I am (I am bold enough to say), and *that*, from our *happy domestic home*—which gives such a good example".[71] As Vernon Bogdanor has observed for the Victorian case, with "public opinion now being the motive force of government, there was a fundamental change in the character of monarchy. The means by which the sovereign could exert influence came to change." Once the crown had achieved the position of a "striking exemplar of the domestic virtues", though, this could deliver considerable rewards. Recognised by the public as a "moral force", the monarchy could enhance its authority. For, if completed successfully, the change would make the monarch appear as the head of both the state and the nation.[72]

The only way to achieve this was for monarchical systems to engage fully in modern forms of mass communication. Yet this meant that they inevitably found themselves at the mercy of the media. Queen Victoria

and Prince Albert may have succeeded in generating and utilising a "civic publicness", but the "logic of the mass media" would leave others mired in a series of scandals. "A prince's palace will always be more or less a glass house", is how Berlin's *National-Zeitung* summarised the new reality when commenting on a royal wedding anniversary in 1883. How those inside the palaces reacted to and sought to manipulate the public gaze, how well (or ineptly) they coped with and utilised what Heinz Dollinger described as the increasingly inescapable "publicity of their existence" emerged as crucial.[73] Remaining at "the head of our morality", as Walter Bagehot put it in his famous reflections on the British monarchy, was anything but effortless and carried with it significant risks. For while the highly visible "staged idyll" of a virtuous royal family life could function as a sophisticated "legitimating strategy", failure in this endeavour now entailed the danger of a powerful de-legitimising effect.[74]

In this regard, the three heirs to the throne considered here effectively covered the whole range of possibilities: Prince Ludwig and his wife Marie Therese lived a married life of widely celebrated, awe-inspiring domestic perfection, whereas Prince Friedrich August and Luise plunged the Wettin dynasty into the matrimonial scandal of the age. The matrimonial history of Prince Wilhelm—with its tragedies and sobering twists—occupied an instructive middle position.

In February 1918 Munich witnessed the "last great celebration of the Bavarian monarchy"—the golden wedding anniversary of King Ludwig III and his wife Marie Therese. Beginning on 16 February the festivities lasted for four days. Events culminated on Wednesday, 20 February, with a procession through the streets of Munich, a church service, a luncheon served in the "Green Gallery" of the Residenz and a performance in the Royal Court and National Theatre. No royal couple in the history of Bavaria had celebrated a golden anniversary before, and even though the First World War clearly cast a shadow over the proceedings, this was an occasion for monarchical self-representation that simply could not be missed.[75]

It was a carefully cultivated matter of public record that the marriage of Ludwig and Marie Therese was an exemplary union, characterised by mutual affection, loyalty, a joint commitment to Catholic piety, thrifty domesticity and a fecundity that would stretch the princely budget—as well as the parents' ability to think of suitable names—to its outer limits. Between 1869 and 1891, Marie Therese gave birth to four boys and nine daughters, of whom all but two reached adulthood. The couple's happy

married and domestic life was a recurring theme in the public presentation of the prince. On the occasion of Ludwig and Marie Therese's silver anniversary in 1893, a choir of 800 singers serenaded the couple and messages of congratulation poured in from all over Bavaria. The *Münchner Tageblatt* reminded its readers that Ludwig and Marie Therese's was "a union, whose conclusion was only dictated by the heart, politics and raison d'état remained silent. Such a marriage had to be happy and indeed, who would not envy the high couple, who are giving us an example of a truly Christian, originally German family."[76]

The rich seam of the prince's exemplary marriage continued to be mined. It featured prominently in 1895 and 1905, when Ludwig celebrated his 50th and 60th birthdays. Papers such as the *Pfälzische Presse*, the *Münchner Stadtanzeiger*, the *Augsburger Postzeitung* or the *Allgemeine Zeitung* all praised in near-identical terms the "happiest family life imaginable", his "truly happy and edifying family life", the "exquisite family life that serves as an example for the middle classes" or his "paragon-like family life". Unsurprisingly, it was the *Bayerischer Kurier*, the paper of the Bavarian Centre Party, that found the warmest words for Ludwig's domestic arrangements, "on which the blessing of heaven has rested for more than 25 years, which appears enchanted by the peculiar magic of true German domesticity and which is praised far and wide as an example for every German house, for every German hearth".[77]

That there were, of course, some flies in the ointment of Prince Ludwig's domestic perfection, goes without saying. The Prussian envoy Count Pückler reported in 1893 that more and more insiders were commenting on the souring relationship between Prince Ludwig and Prince Luitpold, with the father begrudging the son his high public profile. The relationship between Ludwig and his oldest son, Prince Rupprecht, was also fraught. Rupprecht remembered his father as irascible, stern, easily offended and controlling. Sometimes, the conflicts between father and son became so heated that even Princess Marie Therese commented on her husband's difficult character.[78] These minor blemishes did no damage, though, to the shining image of marital perfection and family bliss with which Prince Ludwig could adorn the prospect of his future rule. The standard set by Ludwig and Marie Therese made the public private lives of Wilhelm of Württemberg and Friedrich August of Saxony appear even more problematic.

Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg married Princess Marie of Waldeck and Pyrmont in February 1877. Their marriage, though short and darkened

by moments of great sadness, appears to have been a happy one. Given its prehistory on the prince's side, this must have come as something of a pleasant surprise. For it was only in September 1875 that Wilhelm, had, after years of agony, finally abandoned all hope of a future with Marie Bartling, the daughter of a Göttingen professor. He had fallen in love with her in 1868 during his university studies. In December 1874 he had still spoken to his mother, Katharina, about marrying Marie, but she had warned him about "the large number of such [unequal] unions, which have occurred in our family and have, it must be said, largely taken an unhappy course". Princess Katharina also spoke of the shame of the wife and the children who would not bear the father's name. While Wilhelm responded that he could only conceive of a marriage that was worthy of a true faithful love, he agreed to give the matter another year's consideration. In September 1875, however, he wrote to his friend Detlev von Plato in words of great despondency to inform him of the end of his dreams. "Now the fight is over, I am defeated and finished with the world, for I have nothing more to expect". His mother was doing her best to redirect his attention, he explained. Only recently he had been introduced to the beautiful Princess of Anhalt, but all of this would be to no avail. "Though I have no hope any more of my wishes being fulfilled, I would consider any other marriage—for now at least—as a breach of trust."[79]

The prince changed his mind relatively quickly though. Six months later he admitted to Plato that he was now considering marriage as a way to alleviate his situation in Stuttgart, which he "could not put up with for any length of time" and to deal with the "pressing feeling of being absolutely unemployed which is a non-starter for a man of my age". Wilhelm's lack of activity was noticed by others as well. A year earlier the Bavarian envoy Tauffkirchen had already commented on the prince's intentions to "inform himself more fully than heretofore about the domestic affairs of the country". He added wryly that "all loyal Württembergers would greet this decision with great joy". More than a year on, the situation had not really changed. Tauffkirchen reported that King Karl was still concerned about Wilhelm's reluctance to engage with the institutions and personalities in Württemberg and added that the heir to the throne was living a rather secluded life.[80]

Seen against this background of a latent dissatisfaction with the prince's performance, Wilhelm's sudden decision in late 1876 to marry the nineteen-year-old Marie of Waldeck-Pyrmont clearly made sense. It brought about a dramatic change of mood. When they entered the

Württemberg capital in February 1877 the young couple received an enthusiastic welcome. "The people, having come together in a festive spirit, the happy, cordial expressions on all the faces, the joyous calls in all the streets", the *Staats-Anzeiger für Württemberg* observed, "show that the feeling of inner connectedness, which links the people of Württemberg and especially the population of Stuttgart with its royal house, has made the occasion a day of celebration for Stuttgart".[81]

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."[82]

Wilhelm and Marie's happiness was not to last, however. 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 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 was delivered of 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."[83]

True to his word, the prince—although he withdrew as much as he could from the public and from the military duties he had never enjoyed—remained committed to his role as father 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 carriage also arrived this year so that they would receive their "carefully chosen presents from the hands of the little princess [Pauline]".[84]

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". 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 was told that, before passing away, Marie had offered "her deeply dejected husband words of refreshing consolation". There was 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".[85]

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 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".[86]

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 previously put his beliefs in this regard on record and emphatically declared himself an opponent of merely dynastic marriages. His statement illustrates how Schönpflug's notion of the "dissociation of dynasty" had been assimilated and led the prince publicly to demand a marriage that would deliver on both counts: for the "state family" and the "private family". "I have never lost sight of what I owe to my position as prince and to my country", he had 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 expect even 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."[87] Yet the reality behind the beautiful façade and the soaring rhetoric was less edifying. Wilhelm had clearly done what his monarchical position required of him and keeping up the appearance of a happy married life with a woman he did not love soon proved hard work.

"Yet again banned from my matrimonial bed for this night", he admitted to Plato less than six months after his wedding. "Fine with me, then I will get some sleep, but these are wonderful circumstances. And this comedy I have to perform in front of the world, always cracking coquettish jokes, often I feel like crawling up the walls. At all events our guests left today with the impression of a tenderly loving married couple, and that is the main thing." Matters had not really improved by 1887. "Seen from the outside all is going swimmingly, i.e. we often show ourselves together in the theatre, drive and go for walks together, if we feel like it, but, but! Alas, my old chum, you do not know what it looks like in my heart […] If only I had never in my life met her. She would have a happy life with another man, and I would at least have wandered my own path quietly and—with time—even contentedly."[88]

Sad though it may seem, even these bleak comments were too optimistic in that the couple's best efforts to perform as loving spouses did not prove fully convincing. By June 1886, the Prussian envoy picked

up on rumours that the prince was having an affair with the wife of his friend and chamberlain Detlef von Plato and that the princess was very unhappy. To counter this story, Wilhelm and Charlotte actively engaged in public damage limitation: "They showed themselves publicly in town and went shopping together." The king and queen were also consulted, along with other individuals capable "of influencing public opinion". Wilhelm made a point of seeing a local priest and the newspapers were also doing their bit to dispel the rumours. Count Wesdehlen could not but criticise the prince for foolishly having "intimate contact" with a woman of dubious reputation. As correspondence between Wilhelm and both the former Minister-President Karl von Varnbüler and his successor Hermann von Mittnacht shows, the levers of the government were used in an attempt to bury this "maleficent talk". A military chaplain was tasked to "strike down these calumnies" and disciplinary action was urged for those suspected of having written anonymous articles against the prince.[89]

Wilhelm and Charlotte never achieved a particularly warm partnership and private tensions remained. The relationship between Prince Wilhelm and King Karl was cool, the Prussian diplomat Philipp zu Eulenburg reported in 1891 and added maliciously: "almost as cool as that between Prince Wilhelm and his current spouse". Moreover, though the couple were young when they married—he was 38 years old and she had just turned 21—their union would remain childless. Over time, Wilhelm and Charlotte's dogged commitment to presenting the image of a good marriage won the day. Though Charlotte never achieved the level of popularity that Wilhelm eventually came to enjoy, the couple successfully kept up appearances. In April 1911, the whole country celebrated the silver wedding anniversary of the king and queen. A Zeppelin flew high above Stuttgart and showered the royal palace with flowers and gifts of money made to mark the occasion added up to a charitable donation of more than half a million Mark (Fig. 2.3).[90]

No amount of rose petals thrown from a fleet of airships would have been enough to cover up the profound damage that the Saxon marriage scandal had inflicted on the Wettin dynasty. For some observers, the events that unfolded after Crown Princess Luise's elopement in December 1902 posed existential questions. "If princely women so forget themselves, so scorn everything that usually—even in times of adversity—counts as decent, noble, Christian", the diarist Baroness Hildegard von Spitzemberg noted, "then they take away their own right of existence".[91]

Fig. 2.3 To honour King Wilhelm of Württemberg and his second wife Charlotte on the day of their silver wedding anniversary, 8 April 1911 was declared a "day of flowers".

These comments reflected the degree of astonishment caused by Luise's actions. Eleven years after her wedding to the heir to the Saxon throne, the 33-year-old pregnant Habsburg princess absconded while visiting her ailing father in Salzburg. Having crossed the border into republican Switzerland, she was reunited with André Giron, a young moustachioed Belgian who had, until recently, been employed as her children's French tutor. Luise showed herself in public with her lover as they promenaded along the lakeside in Geneva and liberally dished out the dirt about court

life in Dresden in interviews to the world's press. Very quickly she turned into veritable bugbear for the Saxon royal family.[92]

The strictly legal side of the scandal was complex, but dealt with very promptly. A special court, convened by King Georg in accordance with the stipulations of the family statute (*Hausgesetz*) of the Wettin dynasty, swiftly found Luise guilty of several acts of adultery. The marriage was formally dissolved on 11 February 1903. This was a purely civil process, though, which had no bearing on the sacrament of marriage. Fervent Catholic that he was, the unfortunate Friedrich August thus spent the rest of his life in a state of matrimonial limbo and unable to re-marry. Luise renounced all her rights and privileges as a former member of the royal family, but received a generous annual allowance. She was banned from ever returning to Saxony and denied access to her children. Arrangements were even made for her yet-to-be-born child to be handed over to her former family in due course—discreetly avoiding the obvious questions about the girl's paternity (Fig. 2.4).

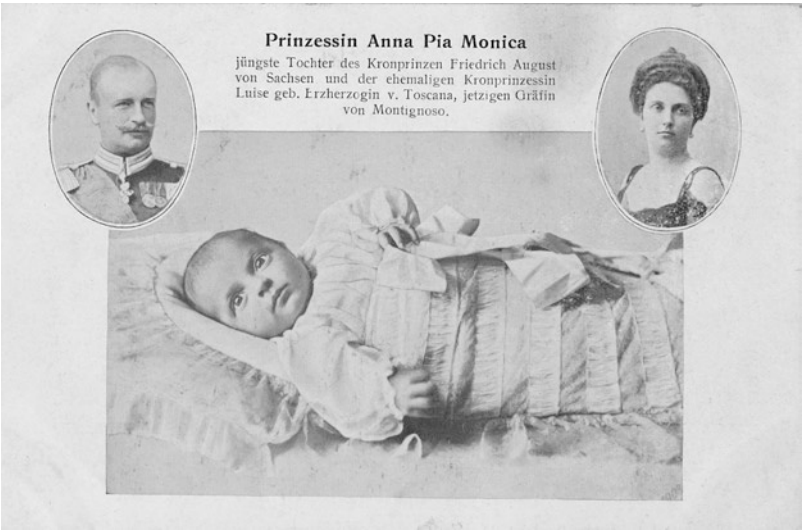

Fig. 2.4 The scandal could hardly have been more public or more intimate. This postcard marked the birth of Princess Anna Pia Monica in May 1903—some four months after her mother, the Saxon crown princess, had eloped with her lover. The obvious question whether Crown Prince Friedrich August (depicted on the left) really was the father, was discreetly avoided.

Even though these legal headaches attracted some unwelcome public attention to the curious special legal codes according to which ruling houses could arrange their affairs,[93] they were a mere trifle compared to the public relations nightmare that was unfolding. For the future queen to run off with a lounge lizard and wash her dirty linen in public was bad enough. The government-friendly papers tried their best to contain the damage. First, they studiously ignored the story everyone was talking about and then they heaped all the blame on the allegedly hysterical and immoral Luise, an individual King Georg eventually condemned as a "deeply fallen woman".[94] But to make matters worse, the crown princess immediately became the poster-girl for anyone who wanted to stick the knife into the Saxon government. The furore thus seized on existing political problems—like the disenfranchisement of large parts of the Saxon population through the electoral reform law of 1896—and had far-reaching political consequences, such as the Saxon Social Democrats' triumph in the Reichstag election of June 1903.[95]

At its heart the affair was characterised by a specifically royal dimension and so the danger it brought with it was greatest for the Wettin monarchy and the monarchical principle more broadly. For a number of reasons, the Prussian envoy reported in December 1902, "the mood of the large part of the public is in favour of the impulsive princess and inclined to assume a position opposed to the court, which is to be regretted from the point of view of the dynastic interest". A few days later, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* noted that the situation was now such that an advertisement in the *Dresdner Nachrichten*, calling on German mothers and women to sign a petition for the return of the "beloved" crown princess, was signed by a professor's wife, who also gave her address.[96] With the fair wind of public opinion behind them and armed to the teeth with numerous ghastly details about Luise's life at the Dresden court, liberals, democrats and socialists laid into the Saxon dynasty. The crown princess's story was a gift that just kept giving: a wronged and mesmerising woman, a doting mother cruelly cast aside by bitter and powerful figures at the court. Soon "Our Luise", the people's princess, was born, a figure that could fatally undermine the position monarchy claimed to occupy at the "head of our morality".

One way in which this happened was the claim that dynasties were culturally and structurally inimical to the highly praised virtues of an exemplary family life. In the case of Crown Princess Luise this was done by identifying her with admirable human and maternal qualities. Her flight

from and rejection by the court thus emerged as evidence of the incompatibility of the concepts of a regal "state family" and a virtuous "private family". "We all loved her cordially, this spirited, beautiful, charming, exalted woman, whose keen and unlimited charity was well known amongst the Dresden public", the *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* enthused as early as Christmas Eve 1902. A few weeks later, after Luise's request to rush to the bedside of her sick son Friedrich Christian had been turned down, the radical *Dresdener Rundschau* adorned its front page with a facsimile of a letter the crown princess had written to a "simple, humble woman". Thanking this "Good, Dear Woman" for her support, Luise affirmed the "infinite tenderness and love" she felt for her "5 little ones". She would never leave them or "my Saxons, my people, to whom I am attached with the innermost love". The "dear, simple people" of Saxony, she wrote, would not have to wait for her in vain. In its editorial, the *Rundschau* contrasted this "document of human greatness" with the goings-on at the palace, where "courtly ritual, the great lie, and bony, ice-grey torpor are the almighty rulers—today as much as in the dark ages".[97]

A booklet entitled "The Truth about the Flight of the Crown Princess of Saxony. By an Insider", rushed out within weeks of the event, offered a little more context. It described the estrangement between the Saxon people and their monarch that had gathered pace since the accession, in 1902, of the strictly Catholic and distant King Georg. The king's children had failed to compensate for their father's lack of warmth, with Crown Prince Friedrich August caring only for hunting and the military. Luise, however, represented the only exception. Described as a little ray of sunshine, only the crown princess was popular with the people—and it was this, the anonymous author explained, which made her many enemies at court.[98]

The cult of "Our Luise" grew and proved lasting. Soon, it spilled over into different media. Poems such as "And forgive us our trespasses", which celebrated Luise's "loving, motherly heart" or songs such as the "*Luisalied*" with its more or less tuneful celebration of "the pearl of Saxony" did their bit to keep the flame burning. But perhaps the most eye-catching aspect of the campaign was the use of visual images—mainly picture postcards—which soon flooded the country. They depicted the former crown princess surrounded by her former family or as "Saxony's Dream". And the buzz showed no sign of abating. In September 1904, the *Dresdener Rundschau* still opened with a photograph of "Our Luise as an Angel"—complete with wings!—and a year later the same weekly lavishly celebrated her 35th birthday.[99]

To make matters worse for the Wettin dynasty, the dividing line that separated a loving, vivacious, generous, motherly and affectionate woman from a court full of uncaring, haughty, rigid and lifeless relics was portrayed as the result of an essential dynastic practice. This made the scandal and moral turmoil that followed a symptom of the "unnaturalness" of the institution, as the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* put it. "As you know, princesses are married off almost without being asked", the same paper quoted Luise as saying "I was 21 years old; they told me about the lustre of a crown; my parents urged me; so I agreed, much against my inclination. My husband and I are complete opposites. He is a rough military man, a stranger to sensitivity." The crown princess also complained about being barred from educating her children. On the same day, the *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* published a fuller version of Luise's interview that pushed the same message even harder: "A woman like me has to love her husband. For someone with my nature this is simply vital. Otherwise everything would appear deceitful, untenable and pointless. But we, we princesses, we are ordered into a marriage, we are to be without feeling, without life, without a will. Truly, we are not to be envied." The situation of her marriage, according to Luise, was even more unnatural than that, for her husband, rather than act as the head of his own family, was "weak and powerless himself; and in him obedience had been implanted so deeply, that he could not even hold his own against the court officials".[100]

Monarchy was thus portrayed as an environment intrinsically hostile to something as highly praised as a true, loving marriage, headed by the father and with parents dedicated to the education of the children. It made women—and men—the victims of what the anonymous pamphleteer called "a conventional princely marriage".[101] The scandal thus revealed, it was argued, that the monarchical system was apt to produce deleterious results and that its representatives were at least as fallible as anyone else. This realisation justified the public gaze into the ostensibly only personal matters of the dynasties, because, as the *Wiener Arbeiterzeitung* argued, "as long as the peoples are the private affairs of the kings, one has to talk about the private affairs of the court". And this was even more the case since "the dynastic idea all too often rests on notions that arise from the assumption of the special qualities of the rulers".[102]

The reactions to the Wettin marriage scandal demonstrated that these "special qualities" were no longer simply believed to exist. As part of the bargain between ruler and ruled they had to be demonstrated to exist. "Cool, political consideration alone indicates", the *Dresdner Zeitung*

declared in January 1903, "that descent and constitution not only grant the princely families great rights and privileges, but also impose serious duties towards the state and the people, whose representatives they are through the constitution". Unlike normal people they do not have to struggle for their daily bread, but in return they have to be exemplary in their conduct and in their sense of duty. As long as they keep to their side of the bargain, the people will patiently accept their prerogatives. If they fail, then "the peoples will consider themselves equally dispensed from their commitments vis-à-vis the princes".[103]

The political opponents of the Social Democrats and radicals were incandescent about what they saw as the shameless political exploitation of the issue. The conservative *Dresdner Nachrichten* deplored the "excessively impudent, frivolous and revolting manner in which the Social Democrats were exploiting the marriage drama at the Saxon court" in order to foment an "anti-monarchical smear campaign". This attempt to accuse the critics of the monarchy of cutting off the "root of the current order by undermining and destroying, with diabolical calculation, the sanctity of family life, this very basis of human society" fell flat though. Even the *Sächsische Volkszeitung*, a Catholic paper, could not but observe that "morality is damaged more significantly, the higher the source of the grievance is placed. And since such a grievance carries with it an increased risk of causing the simple people to do the same, such a bad example must be chastised so much more sharply and unforgivingly." The Social Democrats made a similar argument and so the scandal caused by Luise created some strange bedfellows. "This revolting decomposition of marriage and family", the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* agreed, "can be found in the very circles of bourgeois society, which are most called upon and most enabled to do so on account of their social position to maintain marriage and family in all of its patriarchal glory".[104]

The consequences of all of this for the Saxon monarchy were considerable. King Georg—soon lampooned as "Georg the Grisly" (*Georg der Greuliche*) for his less than winsome ways—was held responsible not only for the bleakness and bigotry of the court which had driven Luise away, but also for what was perceived as a rigid, unforgiving and cruel handling of the affair. The public letter he issued in March 1903 made a particularly unfavourable impression. "Believe the word of your king whom you have never known to be untruthful", he had pleaded with "My people", "that the infinitely painful matter, that has befallen us, is caused only by the unbridled passion of a woman who had quietly fallen very low for a

long time". They did not believe him. Even Minister-President Georg von Metzsch had to admit to the Prussian envoy that the appeal had not had "the expected effect" and that disaffection had spread even to the "higher classes". In the little time he had left, the ailing king never succeeded in connecting with his subjects. Looking back on Georg's short reign, the *Dresdner Rundschau* put it harshly but fairly: "He was denied the most precious things a monarch can have—the love, the trust and the attachment of the people."[105]

Nor did his son's prospects look much rosier. Friedrich August's reputation had been severely damaged. His wife had publicly called him rough, uncultured, cowed by the court, a religious bigot and interested in nothing but hunting and the military. Luise had even complained about the crudeness of his sexual behaviour. Within days of the news of the crown princess's flight breaking, *Die Zeit* speculated openly about plans to remove Friedrich August from the succession "in the dynastic interest". The *Leipziger Volkszeitung* picked up on these rumours. It repeated the observation that Friedrich August had been severely compromised, since a "blemish would always adhere to the person of the crown prince", but expected that he would not face the consequences. Rather, the paper predicted acidly, he would "follow his father in a glorious reign", with the "sun of divine grace" shining upon his head. Commenting from across the Austrian border, the Social Democrat *Volkswacht* chose not to wield the foil of irony but use the sledgehammer of personal abuse instead. If it were known that the crown prince was a "drunkard and a horny skirt chaser", the paper declared, then the people would understand who was really the guilty party in this drama.[106]

To make matters worse, Friedrich August hardly seemed to be the kind of man who could master the difficult task he was now facing. Even well-disposed observers like the Prussian envoy Dönhoff or Minister-President Metzsch did not rate his talents highly and the path ahead was clearly very steep. To get a sense of the mood of the people, all the crown prince had to do was to go for a walk in Dresden—as was his common practice. For unlike before, when people in the streets welcomed him cordially and warmly, the Prussian envoy reported in February 1903, Friedrich August was now rarely greeted at all and had to suffer catcalls from a curious throng following him. Some deranged individuals even went as far as sending anonymous threats to court representatives such as the lawyer Emil Körner, who had acted for the crown prince and was now threatened with dynamite attacks if he continued to bother "the woman who now belongs to the people".[107]

In their attempt to address this challenge the Wettins pursued a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, the force of the monarchical state was employed to suppress the "Cult of Luise". In Saxony several successful cases of *Lèse-Majesté* were brought. Beyond the borders of the kingdom, however, the power of the Saxon authorities was clearly limited. In April 1905, a trial in Stuttgart against the editors of the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus* ended in an embarrassing defeat. Even at home the legal course did not always run smoothly. Attempts by the police to stop the sale of postcards with images of Luise—an act, it was claimed, which demonstrated "crass tactlessness against the sensitivities of his Majesty the King"—eventually led to a successful class action by postcard sellers against the government. To howls of derision from the opposition press the postcards went back on sale. Crown Prince Friedrich August had clearly backed this kind of response. In October 1903, General Friedrich von Criegern, the prince's chamberlain, informed the Dresden police that Friedrich August had not given permission for photographs showing him and his children together with his ex-wife to be disseminated and he now expressly forbade their reproduction. The courtier also informed the police that he had come across a few prints of the infamous Luise-as-angel photograph in the palace. With the crown prince's permission, he had destroyed them immediately. Nor did the repressive approach stop in 1904, when Friedrich August succeeded to the throne.[108]

But, as it turned out, there was more than one string to the crown prince's bow. Martina Fetting has argued that the public debate triggered by the Luise scandal contained the "features of an ideal image of kingship" that stood in stark contrast to the stern rigour associated with King Georg. Sympathetic, maternal, human and approachable Luise matched this ideal much more. Surprisingly, it was this which provided an opportunity for the crown prince to reassert himself and secure the future of the Saxon monarchy. In February 1903, the Prussian envoy had been anything but sanguine about Friedrich August's ability to seize it. It would take "a long time and an unusual deftness, which sadly he does not possess", for him to regain "the affection of the masses", Count Dönhoff predicted.[109]

But the crown prince would prove the sceptics wrong and successfully fought for his popularity. Taking on Luise at her own game, he threw himself into the role of loving father of a large brood, subjecting himself—and his many children—to a ceaseless public routine of tender family relations and general affability. Outings to the surrounding countryside demonstrated to the people that the children were flourishing and polite and that

their father cared deeply for them. The aim was clear, Dönhoff diagnosed: "to remove, through a folksy, plain and friendly manner, the alienation which had since the sad events turned a large part of the population away from him". His children would later remember the close attentions of the "omnipresent father", who insisted on a daily and unbending pursuit of the royal family's charm offensive, with mixed feelings (Fig. 2.5). But the plan bore fruit. Slowly, but surely Friedrich August clawed his way back into the affections of "his" Saxons. He was helped, unwittingly, by Luise, whose re-marriage (in 1907 to a much younger Italian musician) and second divorce served to undermine what was left of her popular appeal.[110]

Fig. 2.5 After Luise's elopement Friedrich August reprised solo a role he had already performed successfully in the happier times depicted here: Saxony's crown princely couple surrounded by their children.

The welcome Friedrich August received from the press upon his accession in the autumn of 1904 marked a first milestone. The politically non-affiliated *Dresdner Anzeiger* praised the new king for coping with Luise's desertion of her family and noted how he had "dedicated himself, as a tender father, with re-doubled love and faithful care" to his motherless children. "For years, residents of Dresden and [of the summer retreat of] Wachwitz, have had the opportunity of greeting Prince Friedrich August and his jolly band of children on their many outings." The liberal *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* also commended the new king for the "great love, with which he cares for his children" and the gregariousness (*Leutseligkeit*) he showed towards everyone—all of which had helped him to win the hearts of the Saxon people.[111] Two brief hagiographical lives of Saxony's monarch, published within months of his accession, struck the same note. Friedrich August was devoted to his children, Richard Stecher observed, and after the calamity of 1902 it was "from their joyful chatter, from their sparkling eyes that happiness again shone at him". A second pamphlet confirmed that the king "visits the nursery frequently and happily; he supervises not only the training of the mind, but also ensures well-planned physical exercises".[112]

After only two—admittedly torrid—years of marriage crisis, the king of Saxony had largely succeeded in re-establishing the status quo ante Luise's scandalous flight from the Dresden court. Though there were still deep-rooted political problems to resolve—such as the toxic issue of electoral reform—the monarchy had clearly turned a corner in terms of crisis management. Friedrich August delivered the hoped-for generational change at the top which was denied in 1902, when the 70-year-old Georg succeeded his older brother rather than passing on the crown to his son. This certainly helped him to make a fresh start. But the unexpected resourcefulness Friedrich August showed as an "emotion politician" (*Gefühlspolitiker*)[113] was also important. As the loving, devoted single father of half a dozen children, Friedrich August could show the world his "happy domestic home" and thus take up a place close to the "head of our morality".

In different, more or less fraught and more or less sincere ways the three future kings of Saxony, Württemberg and Bavaria eventually presented their audiences with images of domestic probity. All three heirs appear to have been acutely aware of the importance of this message and put considerable effort into building, rebuilding and disseminating it. That both Wilhelm and Friedrich August employed the narrative of the single—widowed or deserted—father deeply committed to his paternal duties speaks to a certain amount of flexibility of the ideal that was to be presented. It

was clear, though, that a standard of publicly acknowledged virtuousness had to be achieved and seen to be achieved. Both the fierceness of the vilification when this was not the case and the readiness of the princes concerned to submit themselves to the required regimen reflect that. It is also worth noting that in Wilhelm's and Friedrich August's cases huge tensions were generated by the survival of old dynastic patterns, revealed by the impossibility of Marie Bartling as a spouse for Wilhelm and the gamut of problems surrounding Luise's "dynastic marriage". So, while all three heirs remained firmly embedded in dynastic tradition, they had to live in a modern environment characterised by media interest, moral expectations and public judgement and they had to do so successfully. Royal heirs in imperial Germany had to understand: princes in glass houses should not throw tantrums.

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This investigation of a selection of challenges and tensions faced by three future monarchs demonstrates that in the constitutional monarchies of Imperial Germany the expectation of a successful future reign and of monarchical continuity was no longer a simple matter of their heirs' birth right. In fact, aspects closely related to their dynastic descent—their place within a succession process that had become part of the legal-constitutional state, their confessional identity as well as their marriages and family lives—now posed questions and created uncertainties, rather than providing stability and predictability. Against a dynamic political, social and cultural background these traditional issues could easily create tensions. In order to ease the path towards a smooth transition to the next generation of monarchical rule, these had to be resolved in line with contemporary expectations. More than others, successful royal heirs had to keep a wary eye on and cultivate "the ground on which the delicate flower of the people's love can grow". Keen to prevent challenges like those addressed above from escalating into existential crises, royal heirs had to communicate successfully with their audiences, respond to feedback and adjust. By doing so they showed that their monarchies were—at least in part—learning institutions.

Notes

1. Mergen, 2005, pp. 265–279.
2. *Bilder*, 1889, p. 3.
3. *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (27 December 1902).

4. *Die Zeit* (Vienna, 24 January 1903), in AA, R3264; Dönhoff to Bülow, Nr 19, 1 February 1903 (AA, R3264).
5. For a recent introduction see: Bjork, 2015 (with references to the seminal work by, amongst others, M. L. Anderson, O. Blaschke, M. Gross, Th. Mergel, Th. Nipperdey and H. W. Smith).
6. *Dresdner Nachrichten* (6 July 1902).
7. *Verfassungsurkunde für das Königreich Bayern*, 1818 (http://www.documentarchiv.de/nzjh/verfbayern.html, accessed 16 March 2016).
8. *Münchner Tageblatt* (28 June 1886).
9. Werther to Rottenberg, 2 July 1886; Bismarck's reply, 10 July 1866 (AA, R2795); Werther to Bismarck, 8 and 11 November 1886; Bismarck's reply, 25 November 1886 (AA, R2796).
10. *Münchner Tageblatt* (28 June 1886, BayHStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv, Presseausschnittsammlung, vol. IV).
11. Beckenbauer, 1987, pp. 46–120; März, 2014, pp. 33–69.
12. Pückler to Caprivi, Nr 40, 26 February 1893 (AA, R2800).
13. Österreich, 1887.
14. März, 2014, pp. 52–53; Schneider, 1975, pp. 388–389; on the not entirely spontaneous construction of the Ludwig myth and the damage the events of 1886 caused the monarchical idea in Bavaria see Blessing, 1982, pp. 176–177.
15. Ursel, 1974, p. 141; Möckl, 1972, pp. 168–169; Weigand, 2001, pp. 359–375.
16. Pückler to Caprivi, Nr 40, 26 February 1893 (AA, R2800).
17. März, 2014, p. 65.
18. Häfner, 2008, pp. 227–228; März, 2014, pp. 49–50.
19. Monts to Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Nr 20, 28 January 1896 (AA, R2802). As crown prince, Ludwig would have received an annual apanage of 400,000 Mark; as things stood he only received an annual allowance of 150,000; see: Weiß, 2007, pp. 25, 34.
20. *Münchner Post* (17 July 1896); Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 81, 2 August 1896 (AA, R2816).
21. Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 108, 25 October 1997 (AA, R2804).
22. *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Abgeordneten des bayerischen Landtags* 1897/98, Sten Ber., Bd. 9, 552.
23. Dyroff, 1904, pp. 1, 2.
24. *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung* (12 June 1904); Pourtalés to Bülow, Nr 58, 25 June 1904 (AA, R2809).
25. Thoma, 1968, p. 451; *Zweibrücker Zeitung* (26 December 1912), quoted in: Ursel, 1974, p. 153.
26. Moser von Filseck to Weizsäcker, Nr 442, 12 December 1912 (HStA Stuttgart, E50/05, Bü 236); *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (13 December 1912); März, 2013, pp. 22–42.
27. März, 2014, pp. 69–75; *Simplicissimus*, 18/34 (17 November 1913).

28. Schulze, 1862, p. 341.
29. *Verfassungsurkunde für das Königreich Württemberg* (1819)—http://www.documentarchiv.de/nzjh/verfwberg.html (accessed 17 March 2016); Schulze, 1883, p. 513.
30. Renner to Karl I, copy, 29 May 1875 (HStA Stuttgart, E55, Bü 427).
31. *Entwurf eines Gesetzes betreffend die Apanage Seiner Königlichen Hoheit des Prinzen Wilhelm von Württemberg*, 13 February 1877 (HStA Stuttgart, E55, Bü 427); for the background to this law (incl. comments by Renner, Hermann von Mittnacht and the king) see HStA Stuttgart, E130a, Bü 15; Fabrice, Nr 22, 24 February 1877 (HStA Dresden, 10717, Nr 3397).
32. *Verhandlungen der Württembergischen Kammer der Standesherren*, 61st session, 5 March 1886, 924 (http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/sammlungen/sammlungsliste/werksansicht/?no_cache=1&tx_dlf[id]=3499&tx_dlf[page]=937, accessed 18 March 2016); see also HStA Stuttgart, G327, Bü 6.
33. Wesdehlen to Bismarck, 16 February 1889, 15 June 1889 (with quotes from the *Beobachter*), 3 July 1889 (AA, R3409); on the background to the "Law concerning the Apanage of His Royal Highness the Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg" see also HStA Stuttgart, G327, Bü 6 and E130, Bü 15; *Verhandlungen der württembergischen Kammer der Abgeordneten*, 48th session, 15 June 1889, 954–955 (http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/sammlungen/sammlungsliste/werksansicht/?no_cache=1&tx_dlf[id]=5246&tx_dlf[page]=443, accessed 18 March 2016).
34. *Verfassungsurkunde für das Königreich Sachsen* (1831)—http://www.documentarchiv.de/nzjh/verfsachsen.html, accessed 18 March 2016); *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des außerordentlichen Landtags*, II. Kammer, 2nd session, 5 July 1902, 5–11 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/11504/49/, accessed 18 March 2016).
35. *Die Grenzboten* 62/27 (2 July 1903), 52; *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (16 October 1904); for the passing of King Friedrich August's civil list in December 1904 see: *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen der außerordentlichen Landtags,* I. Kammer, 3rd session, 6 December 1904, 11 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028356Z/43, accessed 25 March 2016).
36. Schulze, 1883, p. 255; according to art. 22 a further one-off payment of 25,000/50,000 Thaler was due to assist the crown prince in establishing his household.
37. Ministerium des Königlichen Hauses to Gesamt-Ministerium, 18 July 1885 (HStA Dresden, 10697, Nr F22825).
38. *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des Landtags*, II. Kammer, 20th session, 15 December 1885, 219–220 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028428Z/231, accessed 21 March 2016) and I. Kammer, 11th session, 7 January 1886, 83 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028429Z/125, accessed 21 March 2016).

39. Ministerium des königlichen Hauses to Gesamt-Ministerium, 24 July 1891 (HStA Dresden, 10697, F22828).
40. *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des Landtags*, II. Kammer, 3rd session, 18 November 1891, 21–22 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028419Z/35, accessed 20 March 2016).
41. *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (27 November 1891); *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des Landtags*, II. Kammer, 10th session, 1 December 1891, 153–154 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028419Z/167, accessed 20 March 2016), 20th session, 18 December 1891, 290 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028419Z/304, accessed 20 March 2016), I. Kammer, 12th session, 14 January 1892, 90–91 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/11564/142/, accessed 18 March 2016).
42. For a detailed archival file on the assassination attempt see HStA Stuttgart, E14, Bü 92; Wesdehlen to Bismarck, 21 October 1889 (AA, R3409); Wilhelm to Bismarck, telegram, 21 October 1889 (GStA PK, 3. HA, MdA I, Nr 8919); *Neueste Mittheilungen* (22 October 1889, http://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/amtspresse/ansicht/issue/11614109/904/3/, accessed 19 March 2016).
43. *Schwäbische Kronik* (3 August 1880); Dönhoff to Bismarck, Nr 63 (AA, R3361).
44. Tauffkirchen to Ludwig II, Nr 9, 12 January 1886 (Bay. HStA, MA91221); *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (23 October 1888); see Rantzau to Bismarck, Nr 109, 23 October 1888 (AA, R3396).
45. *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (22 October 1889); *Der Beobachter* (22 October 1889); Wesdehlen to Bismarck, 23 October 1889 (AA, R3409); Tauffkirchen to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 October 1889 (Bay. HStA, MA91225); Oberkirchenbehörde to Princess Katharina, 22 October 1889 (Archiv Altshausen, G299, Bü 7).
46. Röhl, 1976, p. 623.
47. Dönhoff to Caprivi, Nr 203, 18 December 1893 (AA, R3256).
48. Dönhoff to Caprivi, Nr 94, 24 June 1891 (AA, R3254); Dönhoff to Caprivi, Nr 203, 18 December 1893 (AA, R3256); *Dresdener Rundschau* (13/43, 22 October 1904), 2.
49. *Leipziger Zeitung* (12 January 1903); *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (9 January 1903).
50. Hohenthal to Metzsch, Nr 24, 10 January 1903 (HStA Dresden, 10717, Nr 9347); for a discussion of the confessional dimension of the Luise-scandal see: Fetting, 2013, pp. 270–274.
51. *Die Volkswacht* (26 March 1902); Niethammer to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nr 21, 13 March 1903 (Bay. HStA, MA2870); *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* [reprinting the interview from *Die Zeit*] (3 January 1903).
52. The quotation was cited in: Stecher, 1905, p. 7; Schindler, 1906/1916, p. 12; Bang, 1915, p. 5; Eggert and Kubatzki, 2007, p. 162.

53. *Sächsische Volkszeitung* (19 May 1903); Fetting, 2013, 286–287; *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (28 October 1904).
54. Haerig, 2016; Boettcher, 2016.
55. Albrecht, 2003, pp. 318–438; Möckl, 1972, pp. 228–348; Körner, 1977; Hartmannsgruber, 1991.
56. Amann, 2013.
57. Körner, 2014, pp. 157–170.
58. Amann, 2013, p. 137; according to a note by Ludwig himself, however, he was willing to be elected, but not to be presented as the "candidate of any party" (Bay. HStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv, NL König Ludwig III., Nr 305).
59. *Augsburger Postzeitung* (6 January 1895).
60. *Raphael. Illustrierte Zeitschrift für die reifere Jugend und das Volk* (2 November 1910, Bay. HStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv, Presseausschnittsammlung, vol. XXIX); Notiz aus der Hand Ludwigs (Bay. HStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv, NL König Ludwig III., Nr 315).
61. See the detailed account by the *Inn-Zeitung*, quoted in *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (9 September 1910).
62. *Schulthess Europäischer Geschichtskalender*, 4 September 1910 (Munich, 1910), 343.
63. Wilhelm II's speeches in Königsberg and at the Marienburg, 25 and 29 August 1910, in: Obst, 2011, pp. 316, 318.
64. *Lindauer Volkszeitung* (6 September 1910); *Sächsische Volkszeitung* (7 September 1910); *Germania*, quoted in Schulthess (1910), 343.
65. Schlözer to Bethmann-Hollweg, Nr 47, 7 September 1910 (AA, R2811).
66. *Pfälzische Presse* (7 September 1910); *Bayerischer Volksbote* (Regensburg) quoted in *Augsburger Post-Zeitung* (10 September 1910); *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin), quoted in *Neue Preußische Zeitung* (6 September 1910).
67. *Neue Preußische Zeitung* (6 September 1910); *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (9 September 1910); *Münchner Post* (7 September 1910).
68. *Tägliche Rundschau* (7 September 1910).
69. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, Nr 42 (15 October 1910), 738.
70. Schönpflug, 2015, pp. 54–55.
71. Victoria to Leopold, 29 October 1844, in: Benson and Esher, 1908, 27.
72. Bogdanor, 1995, pp. 27, 36–37.
73. Plunkett, 2003; Kohlrausch, 2005; *National-Zeitung* (25 January 1883); Dollinger, 1985, pp. 336–337.
74. Bagehot, 1964, p. 96; Urbach, 2015, pp. 23–33.
75. Löw, 2014, pp. 53–66.
76. Staatsarchiv Munich, Pol. Dir, Nr 3980; *Münchner Tageblatt* (17 February 1893).
77. *Pfälzische Presse* (7 January 1895); *Münchner Stadt-Anzeiger* (7 January 1895); *Augsburger Post-Zeitung/Unterhaltungsbeilage* (8 January 1895); *Allgemeine Zeitung* (7 January 1905); *Bayerischer Kurier* (7 January 1895).

78. Pückler to Caprivi, Nr 40, 26 February 1893 (AA, R2800); Weiß, 2007, p. 37.
79. Wilhelm to Detlef von Plato, 27 December 1874, 13 September 1875 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato). All quotations from or references to Wilhelm's letters to Plato in this study are based on transcripts kindly made available to me by Dr Albrecht Ernst (Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart); according to the preface in *Im Lichte*, 2015, p. 6, the original letters will eventually be deposited in the Stuttgart Hauptstaatsarchiv/Beständegruppe Q (= Nachlässe).
80. Wilhelm to Plato, 10 February 1876 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato); Tauffkirchen to Ludwig II, Nr 22, 1 February 1875 (Bay. HStA, MA3035); Tauffkirchen to Ludwig II, Nr 3, 9 May 1876 (Bay. HStA, MA3036).
81. *Staats-Anzeiger für Württemberg* (24 February 1877).
82. *Schwäbische Kronik* (30 July 1880); *Neues Tagblatt* (3 August 1880).
83. Dönhoff to Bismarck, Nr 63, 28 December 1880 (AA, R3361); Wilhelm to Plato, 22 April 1881, 4 June 1882 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato).
84. *Schwäbische Kronik* (29 December 1882).
85. *Dem Gedächtniß*, 1883; Tauffkirchen to Ludwig II, Nr 39, 26 March 1883 (Bay. HStA, MA3043).
86. Tauffkirchen to Ludwig II, Nr 9, 12 January 1886 (Bay. HStA, MA91221); *Schwäbische Kronik* (9 April 1886); address by Theophil von Hack (Stadtarchiv Stutggart, 2024, NL Hack,Nr 84).
87. Schweizer, 1891, pp. 27–28.
88. Wilhelm to Plato, 10 July 1886, 9 February 1887 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato).
89. Wesdehlen to Bismarck, Nr 43, 28 June 1886, Nr 44, 2 July 1886 (AA, R3395); Wilhelm to Varnbüler, 28 June 1886, Anna Varnbüler to her father, 28 June 1886 (HStA Stuttgart, NL Varnbüler, P10, Bü 568); Wilhelm to Mittnacht, 13 June 1887 (HStA Stuttgart, NL Mittnacht, Q1/51, 5).
90. Eulenburg to Marschall von Bieberstein, 9 January 1891, in: Röhl, 1976, p. 623; Sauer, 1994, p. 107; *Im Lichte* 2015, p. 46.
91. Vierhaus, 1960, p. 424 (27 December 1902).
92. For the Luise scandal see: Fetting, 2013, pp. 243–303 and Bestenreiner, 1999.
93. "Das Ausnahmerecht der Fürstenhäuser", *Vossische Zeitung* (30 December 1902).
94. *Dresdner Journal* (17 March 1903).
95. Lässig, 1996; Retallack, 2004, pp. 13–24; Retallack, 1990, pp. 271–312; Fetting, 2013, pp. 280–281.
96. Dönhoff to Bülow, Nr 226, secret, 27 December 1902 (AA, R3263); *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (12 January 1903).
97. *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (24 December 1902); *Dresdener Rundschau* (14 February 1903), 1–2.
98. *Die Wahrheit*, 1903, pp. 1–2.

99. *Dresdener Rundschau* (14 February 1902), 3; HStA Dresden, 10789 (Pol. Präs.), Nr 25 ("Luisa-Lied), Nr27 (postcards); *Dresdener Rundschau* (17 September 1904), 1–3, (2 September 1905), 1–2.
100. *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (27 December 1902, 3 January 1903); *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (3 January 1903).
101. *Die Wahrheit* (1903), 8.
102. *Wiener Arbeiterzeitung* (30 December 1903), quoted in: Fetting (2013), 264.
103. *Dresdner Zeitung* (8 January 1903).
104. *Dresdner Nachrichten* (18 January 1903); *Sächsische Volkszeitung* (28 December 1902).
105. *Dresdner Journal* (17 March 1903); Dönhoff to Bülow, Nr 69, 16 May 1903 (AA, R3265); *Dresdner Rundschau* (22 October 1904), 1.
106. *Die Zeit* (Vienna, 24 January 1903, AA, R3264); *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (26 January 1903); *Die Volkswacht* (Mährisch-Schöneberg, 26 March 1903, HStA Dresden, 10717, Nr 9347).
107. *Die Zeit* (Vienna, 24 January 1903, AA, R3264); *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (26 January 1903); Fetting, 2013, pp. 247–248; Dönhoff to Bülow, Nr. 33, secret, 19 February 1903 (AA, R3264); for threats to Emil Körner see: HStA Dresden, 10789, Nr 25.
108. Criegern to Dresden police, 7 October 1903 (HStA Dresden, 10789, Nr 27); undated note by Criegern concerning Luise's photograph (HStAS Dresden, 10789, Nr 25); on the successful class action (August 1905) see HStA Dresden, 10789, Nr 30 and the article "Eine neue vernichtende Niederlage der Polizei" in *Dresdner Rundschau* (26 August 1905).
109. Fetting, 2013, p. 279; Dönhoff to Bülow, Nr 19, 1 February 1903 (AA, R3264).
110. Dönhoff to Bülow, 27 October 1940 (AA, R3225), quoted in: Fetting, 2013, pp. 285–286; Eggert and Kubatzki, 2007, p. 153. After a few restless years spent in Italy, England and Mallorca, Luise settled in Belgium in 1912 after her second divorce. It was there, in her flat in Ixelles, a suburb of Brussels, that she died, penniless, in March 1947.
111. *Dresdner Anzeiger* (16 October 1904); *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (16 October 1904).
112. Stecher, 1905, pp. 22–23; *König Friedrich August*, 1905, p. 27.
113. Frevert, 2012.

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CHAPTER 3

"The Love of the People … Needs to be Acquired"

Competence and the Paths of Monarchical Persuasion

Public reactions to monarchical failures—like the Wettin marriage scandal or Prince Ludwig's ill-judged Altötting speech—were more than just moments of sound and fury. They signified something of fundamental importance. In the Wilhelmine Reich, the position Germany's crowned rulers enjoyed vis-à-vis their people was no longer steadfastly based on the notion of a divine gift nor could it simply be derived from a royal blood line. It had turned into an achievement. "It has often been said that the loyalty of the Saxon people to its indigenous ruling house is so unshakeable that not even Augustus the Strong had been able to destroy it", the *Dresdner Rundschau* observed in October 1904, when welcoming King Friedrich August III to the throne that his scandalous ancestor had occupied two centuries before him. "There is a profound truth in this claim; the people are loyal, but we live in a different time from that of Augustus the Strong's rule", the newspaper continued: "The love of the people cannot be inherited any more, it needs to be acquired."[1]

Acting as a beacon of virtuous morality was only one strand of the task of earning popular respect. Another narrative emerged that was arguably even more important: that of demonstrating competence within the proper sphere of monarchical activity. While most constitutional rulers of the period appear to have accepted the need to give at least the

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impression of competence, few were as explicit about this requirement as Ernst Ludwig, the last grand duke of Hessen. "Now the prince has to provide proof that he can govern the country", he wrote in 1907, for through his work a prince needs to demonstrate that he is "as entitled to his position as any other human being is in their place".[2]

"The Very Paragon of a Constitutional King": Monarchical Constitutionalism and the Functionalised Heir

By the time the grand duke made this statement the scope of a prince's activity and the criteria according to which monarchical government was judged as successful or deficient had been shaped for almost a century by a process of constitutional transformation. Monarchical constitutionalism emerged as a necessary response to the challenges generated by the French Revolution and its aftermath. Its essence consisted of constraining through (usually codified) constitutional law the power a monarch could wield and sharing its exercise with elected parliaments.[3] In 1814 King Louis XVIII, whose dynasty had recently been restored to the throne of France, combined his own claim to monarchical sovereignty with France's need for a constitution by granting the *Chartre*. This step marked a seminal moment at the beginning of what Volker Sellin has called the "Century of Restorations". For Sellin, the *Charte* initiated a recurring pattern of instances of monarchical restoration in the shape of acts of constitutional concessions. This process was to become a hallmark of the age. Restoration, as understood by Sellin, constituted "a policy of reform by which the legitimacy of divine-right monarchy was provided with new and additional foundations".[4] As opposed to revolutionary rupture, *Restaurationspolitik* had the advantage of preserving a continuity based on the "Monarchical Principle", the notion that the monarch formally retained all the power of the state while the rights of political participation were extended to and shared with ever wider circles.[5]

Monarchical constitutionalism quickly established itself as a "European constitutional type" that was adopted in almost all the continent's constitutional states. Though they did so in a staggered and uneven fashion, almost all of Germany's princely states that emerged from the Napoleonic Wars followed this pattern of monarchical constitutionalism. With the exception of the two Mecklenburg grand duchies, all the German monarchies that would eventually become part of the German Reich—from

the duchy of Nassau in 1814 to the kingdom of Prussia in 1848/1850—eventually complied with the rule prescribed in article 13 of the Federal Act of 1815 and introduced constitutions.[6] Just like in France, the granting of constitutions across the German lands served "the consolidation of divinely ordained monarchical legitimacy" and revolved around the monarchical principle. Invented for the French *Chartre* of 1814, this notion found a classic expression in the Bavarian constitution of 1818, which stated that the "king is the head of the state, unites within himself all the rights of the power of the state and exercises them within the rules laid down in the current constitutional document granted by him. His person is sacred and inviolable."[7] In Saxony, where a constitution was granted in 1831, the role of the king was defined in near-identical terms. Even the Württemberg constitution of 1819, which resulted not from a unilateral monarchical decree, but from a mutual agreement reached by the crown and the estates, described the status of the king fully in line with the standards of the monarchical principle.[8] Notwithstanding a number of changes in areas such as franchise or the membership of parliamentary chambers, these constitutional arrangements lasted—essentially unchanged—until Germany's sudden and complete de-monarchification at the end of the First World War.

According to the seminal work of Martin Kirsch, a central explanation for this success lay in the process of the "functionalization" of the monarch. As long as the bearer of the crown was effective—functioning, variably, as a source of national integration, as a political mediator or as a bulwark against further political change—the monarchical system would be underpinned by a new mixture of legitimating principles. This process, whereby the monarch turned into "a functionary of the body politic and his role defined by this task" had a momentous effect on the monarchs' duties.[9] As old ligatures between rulers and ruled—such as a profound and widespread belief in the divine ordination of kingship—weakened, monarchical rule needed to be justified in different ways. Amid this "legitimacy crisis of the European monarchies",[10] the claim that the crown should continue to dispose in some fashion of the formidable powers of the modern state as well as the payment of civil lists to support courtly life now needed to be justified afresh. It was central to this task of legitimation that the monarchy was associated with effective government which could stand up to parliamentary and public scrutiny. "At this present stage of history", as Markus Prutsch has summarised the contemporary attitude, "only rule that guaranteed the happiness and peace of its subjects would be legitimate".[11]

In the course of the nineteenth century, monarchical rule broadly succeeded in delivering on its side of this bargain. Recent studies have drawn attention to the significant problem-solving capacity offered by this political model. Based on a comparative analysis of the monarchical constitutionalism in Württemberg and Bavaria, Matthias Stickler has pointed to a capacity of the model to allow and accommodate "remarkable transfers of power from the crown to parliaments and governments". Dieter Langewiesche provides a similar appraisal: he has emphasised the monarchs' record of achieving, essentially through the granting of constitutions, an orderly completion of the necessary reform processes begun by the revolutions of the late eighteenth century.[12] Success and competence thus played a crucial role. "A king's rule was not accepted as God-given", Kirsch concludes, "but was increasingly judged according to the success with which he fulfilled his function in state and nation". This criterion became so important that monarchy had to pass a quasi-democratic test, the liberal politician and writer Friedrich Naumann claimed in 1912; "The king himself cannot wish to be a minority-king for any length of time. Monarchs need majorities", he wrote. "They live on being deemed necessary. Once this belief has gone, even the most ancient hereditary legitimacy will be of no help."[13]

By the time the last kings of Württemberg, Saxony and Bavaria were anticipating their accessions to the thrones of their little realms, an additional qualification appears to have been added to the requirement that royal government had to be perceived as successful and the monarch as necessary. For even though the constitutional texts, in which the respective rights of monarch, parliament and people had been enshrined, had remained essentially unchanged, the way in which a prince could operate had not. The extent to which it was deemed acceptable for the power of the crown to be wielded by the monarch himself and irrespective of the views of the majority was no longer the same. In the first half of the nineteenth century even constitutional rulers—like King Ludwig I of Bavaria and King Wilhelm I of Württemberg—still pursued a fairly robust style of leadership based on effectively pre-constitutional claims of royal authority. While these were already controversial at the time, such notions and approaches appeared wholly outdated and unworkable for the generation of their grandsons. King Ludwig II's increasingly deluded insistence on an "epigonic absolutism",[14] for instance, certainly played a significant part in bringing on the dramatic end of his reign in 1886.

David D'Avray has observed that "sermons in memory of [medieval] princes 'represent' political realities of their time" and "give instruction

about virtue in this life".[15] If this still held true in Imperial Germany, then Wilhelm, Friedrich August and Ludwig received fairly unequivocal guidance from their predecessors' obituaries. For a Württemberg, Saxon or Bavarian ruler to succeed now, he needed to be perceived as a constitutional king. In the memorial speech he delivered at Tübingen University in October 1891, the historian Bernhard von Kugler praised the late King Karl of Württemberg as "the very paragon of a constitutional king". The obituary that was to be read out in all the country's churches similarly emphasised the "unblemished atmosphere of trust between the government and the chambers of parliament" during the late king's reign. The official *Staats-Anzeiger* chose to express its praise for Karl in a similar vein. "He faithfully adhered to the constitution, this firm bond that has always united Württemberg's prince and people", it recalled and added that "throughout his reign the king was connected with the representation of the people by a relationship of undisturbed harmony".[16] The obituaries for the venerable Prince-Regent Luitpold told the same story. For the national-liberal *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung* the unobtrusive ruler had been the very "ideal of a modern regent" and even the Social-Democrat *Münchner Post* praised the late prince's careful approach. He had fulfilled his task "with deftness and reticence. Without excited speeches, without offending or upsetting the people, without forceful intervention in political matters." In his assessment of the press reaction to Luitpold's death, the Prussian envoy noticed praise for the late prince's conscientious adherence to his constitutional position as regent, for the fact that his deep piety was free from any confessional intolerance and for his family life.[17]

When a monarch appeared to have failed in this regard, though, even the decorous restraint that is usually observed at the graveside would not protect him from the kind of criticism that would guide his successor. At the end of King Georg of Saxony's short and unhappy rule, the usual chorus of loyal piety was thus marred by several notes of harsh criticism. The *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, the *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* and the *Dresdener Rundschau* reminded their readers of the late monarch's shortcomings. Reference was made to the increase in the king's civil list, his failure to deal sensitively and impartially with the confessional divide separating his house and the majority of his people and the king's rigidly conservative attitude. Particular importance was attached to the introduction of the restrictive and reactionary electoral law of 1896. The *Leipziger Volkszeitung* recalled that Georg had played a part when "the general,

equal electoral law was murdered" and the *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* also linked the late king to the reform measure that "had made a very large part of the population consider the *Landtag* no more as a representation of the people that was legitimate or composed in the desired fashion". The paper concluded that "historical truth forbids it to call King Georg's reign a happy or successful one".[18]

The process of the functionalisation of the monarch within a constitutional system where the exercise of the royal power was gradually shared with ever wider circles—ministerial elites, parliaments, electorates and publics—thus ended up delivering a prescriptive specification of the monarchical office. Unless holders of the office were deemed capable of delivering the desired outcomes and did so in a manner perceived as aligned with good constitutional practice, they had failed in their function and then "even the most ancient hereditary legitimacy" would be of no help. The functionalised heir was both successor to and predecessor of the functionalised monarch. It was his (or, rarely, her) task to ensure, through projecting his own competence, the continuation of successful monarchical government in the future and to stabilise the status quo by communicating the certainty of this prospect to the relevant audiences.

Though individual members of Europe's royal families may have resented the dialogue with the public into which they had been forced in the course of the nineteenth century, hardly any of them refused to acknowledge the consequences that arose from the "publicity of their existence". Few would act on this imperative as openly as Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, the heir to the Prussian throne, who would personally intervene to ensure that journalists were given good places during official functions. "If they do not write about it", he explained to some court officials, "then the whole world will know nothing about what is going on here".[19] But when the last kings of Württemberg, Saxony and Bavaria were anticipating their accessions to the throne, all three of them actively engaged with the public so as to project the right message about themselves and about the future of the monarchical systems that they embodied.

We have seen how the introvert and private Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg resorted to a politics of emotion after the death of his first wife: shaping his own public persona as a grieving widower and devoted single father while creating a positive memory of his late wife from which he could derive a degree of popularity. Both his decision to re-marry in 1886 and the lengths to which he subsequently went to generate a

false public image of a happy union underline Wilhelm's readiness to tell the correct story. Ahead of his accession in 1891 the Württemberg prince helped the writer Karl Biesendahl compose a short hagiographical account of the new king of Württemberg. Crown Prince Friedrich August of Saxony proved his determination to engage in public relations under even more trying circumstances. He braved catcalls when going for walks through the streets of Dresden and imposed a tireless regimen of public displays and carefully staged affability on himself and on his children. For Wilhelm and Friedrich August, there was a darker flipside to these overt public relations strategies. Both of them also quietly employed the power of the state to silence negative stories about themselves.[20]

The successor to the Bavarian throne took the task of selling his political persona to the public even more seriously than either Wilhelm or Friedrich August. Most obviously, Prince Ludwig did so as a prolific public speaker with views on all manner of political, economic, technical, scientific and cultural topics. In 1894, just ahead of the prince's 50th birthday, Josef Martin Forster published a laudatory biographical sketch of the heir to the Bavarian throne with an appendix containing a selection of 23 of his most important speeches. Three years later, Forster published a second edition of his booklet with an additional twelve speeches. As the somewhat shady owners of the Danizza-Verlag publishing company were to find out in 1909, Prince Ludwig took a very close interest in how his image was projected. During a police raid of their premises in the autumn of 1909 both the manuscript and the set type of the book "Prince Ludwig of Bavaria as an Orator" were impounded. Basing his claim on infringement of copyright because his permission had not been obtained Ludwig had stepped in to prevent the publication of this wholly celebratory collection of his public speeches. The prince had apparently resented the association of his name with the less than respectable businessmen behind the venture—several of whom had police records—and the fact that the volume had been marketed in a grubby and tactless manner. When it came to shaping his image, Ludwig preferred to co-operate with impeccable establishment figures like the court historian Hans Reidelbach, who published a biographical paean of praise on the occasion of the prince's 60th birthday in 1905, or the celebrated Count Zeppelin, who allowed him to shine as an aviator five years later.[21]

The changes wrought by the general adoption of monarchical constitutionalism thus left heirs to the throne—in Württemberg, Saxony and Bavaria as well as in other monarchical systems—facing a set of tasks not

of their own making. They had to communicate a reassuring message to the relevant audiences: that they would, when the day of their accession came, exercise the duties associated with their exalted position in a competent and proper manner—mindful of the expectations that were projected onto them and within well-understood limits of constitutional propriety. As a sign of the heirs' earnest commitment to this future role they had to present evidence of their diligent preparation and education. Beyond that they had to confirm the promise of their careful training through the performance of dutiful and efficacious service to state and people.

"Educated with the People and for the People": Fashioning and Displaying the Thoroughly Prepared Heir

If a widely quoted comment King Umberto I of Italy allegedly once made to his son is anything to go by, monarchical rule did not require a great deal of preparation: "Remember, to be a king all you need to know is how to sign your name, read a newspaper and mount a horse." If Prince Vittorio Emanuele actually did receive this piece of paternal advice, his father's tongue had probably been firmly lodged in the royal cheek, for many contemporary monarchists voiced very different opinions. The former Italian Prime Minister Marco Minghetti, for instance, offered a sombre warning for Umberto's son. There had "maybe never been a more difficult time for men born to sit on the throne", Minghetti wrote to the mother of the sixteen-year-old in 1885; "we must deal with getting rid of a jealous and resentful democracy, of friends of the mediocre and the vulgar, and must ensure dynastic superiority". As a result, a rigorous educational regimen was put in place for the heir to the Italian crown. The same line of argument shaped the education of the later King Edward VII of Britain. Seeing in him "the future 'executive governor of the state' […] whose task it would be to save Europe from 'the danger inherent in a democratic age'", David Cannadine has observed, his parents found it "necessary to make him 'the most perfect man'". And so a "uniquely arduous" programme of instruction was imposed on young Prince Bertie. The language used to explain the educational challenge ahead of the future Kaiser Wilhelm II was, if anything, even more daunting. "It has to be presented as a general ideal that the prince should be equipped with the entire intellectual achievement [*Bildung*] of his age and thus enabled to help grasp and solve

its most demanding problems", Wilhelm's former tutor Georg Hinzpeter retrospectively summarised his objectives. The outcome should be "to render him capable of the highest function of his future vocation: making the final decision in the most important questions".[22]

Contemporary critics were only too happy to prick the balloon of the highfalutin rhetoric spun around the princes' near-superhuman educational ambitions. "Princely children are told that they are especially chosen, that they count for more than other human beings", the *Dresdener Rundschau* complained in 1903: "No exhortation, no disciplining punishment is handed out to princely children […] The path towards perfection is preordained for princely children. […] Occasionally you read in fawning papers that princes experience the same instruction at grammar schools and universities as the other students. […] Anyone who has happened to know a princely fellow-student will know for certain that for the prince university largely happened in the fencing hall, in the bar of his exclusive fraternity and only occasionally in the lecture room." Princely education was also raised in an exchange between the author Thomas Mann and an anonymous German prince recorded in the columns of the cultural journal *Der Kunstwart* in 1910. In response to the lampooning of monarchy in Mann's 1909 novel *Königliche Hoheit*, the prince took issue with the novelist's account of Prince Klaus Heinrich of Grimmburg's inadequate and artificial education. "In our materialist age no prince from a small federal state could afford the luxury of non-worldly Rococo dreams", the reviewer claimed and observed that "the princes of all princely houses, the large ones and the small ones, are now—almost without exception—sent to grammar schools or join the cadet corps". There, the natural rough and tumble of boys' behaviour would teach the princes a valuable lesson about the real world. In his vigorous reply, Mann insisted that his account was based on plenty of evidence and careful observation. One would have to be a prince, he snapped, to believe that "schoolboys cannot be courtiers" and defended his characterisation of Klaus Heinrich's university experience as a "representative sham life [*repräsentatives Scheinleben*]".[23]

Against the developing background of constitutional monarchism and the projected role of the monarch within the system, the issue of educating and training heirs to the throne for their future functions as sovereigns had thus become a more public and more political issue. In one of the few specific studies in the topic, Yvonne Wagner explores how the Prussian monarchy in the second half of the nineteenth century reacted "to the growing importance of qualifications in a society that was increasingly ordered in

line with achievement rather than descent". Within that context, Wagner argues, the targeted preparation of the future regent for governmental business became one of the central objectives of princely education. Those in charge of raising the future Prussian kings and German emperors took account of the transition from an absolutist monarchy to a constitutional one in the course of the nineteenth century and reformed princely education accordingly. The next two generations of heirs were thus sent to university, Prince Wilhelm even to a public grammar school, and the centre of gravity shifted from aristocratic educational ideals to more bourgeois ones. The aim was to achieve a more holistic educational ideal that was, at least partially, informed by neo-humanist ideas. In practice, this meant that public educational institutions played a bigger role; there was more contact with a greater variety of people; the importance of civilian tutors rose vis-à-vis that of military instructors; and the message sent out was that princes were subjected to the same rules and standards that applied to their non-royal peers.[24]

As a result of the widespread adoption of this kind of approach to princely education a strangely contradictory notion developed: future rulers should be educated like other mortals; but it was through this essentially egalitarian and meritocratic process that their inherent superiority would be signalled afresh. A lengthy article on "princely education" in a multi-volume pedagogical encyclopaedia illustrates this: "Fear of god, love of humans and moral purity, justice and fairness, courage and a noble mind, strength and endurance, habitual methodical work, clarity and acuity of judgement, knowledge of the people and their vocations—all of these are qualities that a bourgeois education also strives for and that make up the content of a general education. A prince requires the same qualities: but he needs them to a higher degree." In his lengthy memorandum on the education of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Georg Hinzpeter made the same point even more starkly: "Such an immersion of the future sovereign into normal school life would not mean a debasement of the monarchy, but—on the contrary—emphasise its privileged position even more, if the prince, starting the race from the same point as the others, proved capable of overtaking everyone."[25] Given the openly recognised political dimension of the topic, it is not surprising that the education of monarchs-to-be entered the public sphere as a prominent strand in the narrative of monarchical persuasion.

When Wilhelm II ascended the Württemberg throne in 1891, published opinion seemed agreed that his education and training had ensured that

he was ready for the task ahead. "His Majesty the king is taking over the government and the direction of the affairs of state well prepared", the liberal *Schwäbische Merkur* declared. The Catholic *Deutsches Volksblatt* chose a near-identical formulation: "Prince Wilhelm is ascending the throne of Württemberg well-prepared in military matters and in the other branches of the government." The liberal-democrat *Ulmer Schnellpost* professed a "deep confidence, that our king's wisdom would mightily further the people of the country".[26]

The educational journey that had taken the new monarch to this point had started in 1854, when the Protestant theologian Karl Günther was appointed as tutor for the six-year-old prince. Following Wilhelm's tenth birthday in 1858 it was decided that he should be educated alongside a carefully selected group of boys of his age. This decision echoed the similar practice that had been followed successfully during the childhood of King Karl of Württemberg. Prince Wilhelm, an only child after the death of his infant brother in 1850, was thus taught alongside a future doctor, engineer, judge, forestry official and writer—as well as together with sons from prominent aristocratic families. Much emphasis was put on common sport, leisure time and holiday activities and the prince's companionship with these boys—who were often referred to as the "prince's lads" (*Prinzenbuben*) in Stuttgart and did not have to address Wilhelm as "Royal Highness"—was widely known. In addition to the standard curriculum, Wilhelm was also taught some crafts and so a workshop for bookbinding and joinery was set up for him.[27]

These progressive educational arrangements were not only fun for the boy, they also made for good monarchical copy. A hagiographical life of the prince which appeared within weeks of his accession in 1891 referred to these early days when "the little prince learned to get on with others and rub along with them". This was but one of several examples of "how a prince was brought up, who was destined one day to be the first in the state and a king". As a consequence, "this beautiful trait was implanted into the prince's soul and tended, which is still today a striking part of King Wilhelm II's personality: respect for every estate and every profession, for every human, as far as he deserves it and as far as he fulfils his position in life, be it small or great, in a competent manner [*tüchtiger Weise*]".[28]

In October 1865 King Karl of Württemberg resorted to a little gesture to ensure his successor would have a smooth transition from his schoolboy days to university. He announced to the chancellor of Tübingen University that he would present the institution with the gift of a bust of himself and

of the queen to mark the 25th anniversary of his own enrolment as a student. In his accompanying note to Chancellor von Gessler the king combined his fond memories of his own student days with the conviction that "his nephew, His Royal Highness the Prince Wilhelm, who was about to join the university, would receive the same cordial reception that His Majesty had enjoyed".[29]

The heir to the throne arrived at Tübingen a few days later and took up lodgings in the house of the law professor Robert Römer, the son of a well-known liberal politician. Wilhelm studied a broad range of topics—from law and history to geology, technology and mathematics. He had to leave Tübingen in the summer of 1866 to join the Württemberg forces in the war against Prussia, but resumed his studies in the autumn of 1866. Interestingly, Wilhelm did not return to his Württemberg Alma Mater, but enrolled at the University of Göttingen. Located in the former kingdom of Hanover, a country that had been formally annexed by Prussia only days before Wilhelm arrived there, Göttingen was a surprising choice. According to Karl Biesendahl, whose publication was produced in co-operation with the prince, this decision had been Wilhelm's own and was motivated by a desire to broaden his horizons. As before, he studied a variety of subjects, but he also joined a student fraternity, the Corps Bremensia, and became an active member of this student fraternity. After four semesters, the prince returned to Tübingen for the winter semester of 1868/1869, where he became a member of the Corps Suevia and completed his studies by focusing on specific aspects of the Württemberg legal system.[30]

At this point, Biesendahl declared, Wilhelm had "comprehensively prepared himself for his future vocation as regent and statesman and had not neglected anything that could be beneficial for it". While it is true that the prince spent the following years concentrating on other things—his military training, marriage and fatherhood—he certainly did not feel himself that he had acquired the necessary wherewithal for his royal duties. In July 1882, still very much in the wake of his wife's death some two months before, Wilhelm informed King Karl that he "only wanted to learn, to close the gaps in my knowledge of the fields of administration and the law through studying". This would help him cope with his loss and "one day make him a useful member of human society". Karl did not object and so Wilhelm invited his school friend Friedrich von Schmidlin, now a judge at Heilbronn, to become his tutor. Between December 1882 and May 1883 the two men met for daily tutorials and practical exercises. As a letter Wilhelm sent to his close confidant Detlef von Plato in January

1884 shows, the prince had certainly grasped the legal dimension of his job, even though he had not learned to enjoy deputising for the king: "All the malcontents of the country appear to have picked me out as the victim for their long lost causes by delighting me with daily piles of paperwork, which would give bliss—or, rather, chagrin—to the most seasoned lawyer. These people think me a proper little miracle-worker, placed above the law, and reckon I only have to tell Judge X or court Y that litigant Z should immediately win the case he lost years ago. Since I believe, though, that it is right and proper that people receive an answer, albeit an unfailingly predictable one, I poke around these vile papers and laboriously scrape together all the remainders of my legal knowledge."[31]

The good sense demonstrated by Prince Wilhelm in this letter stands in marked contrast to private verdicts on the educational and intellectual and educational achievements of Prince Friedrich August of Saxony. These were anything but flattering. In a somewhat ill-tempered rant about the general state of German royalty, which Baroness Spitzemberg scribbled into her diary in 1897, she called the Saxon "rough" and "uneducated". Five years later the Prussian envoy rated his "intellectual gifts not considerable".[32] These candid—and, arguably, slightly unfair—assessments stood in marked contrast, though, to what was officially and publicly known about the heir to the Saxon throne. As was common practice by that time, his education became a matter of public record. Having spent his early years being educated by his mother and a governess, Friedrich August's elementary education started in 1872, when he was seven years old. His solitary studies were directed by Heinrich Schmidt, a teacher from a Dresden *Hauptschule* and included arithmetic, German, history, religious education, English and French alongside unsuccessful attempts at musical instruction. Two years later, Friedrich August embarked upon a grammar school curriculum which focused on classics, but also included physics, geography, German, history, mathematics and religious education.[33]

In March 1883, after the prescribed duration of nine years of instruction, Saxony's official newspapers—the *Dresdner Journal* and the *Leipziger Zeitung*—gave a detailed account of how successfully and correctly the prince had completed his grammar school studies. In the presence of the king, his own parents, the education minister and a further senior school official the seventeen-year-old prince was subjected to a final set of exams. "Senior teacher Dr. Jacob examined in Latin and Greek language and literature; Major Fischer in mathematics and Dr. Fritzen in History. His Royal Highness Prince Friedrich August", the papers reported with

undisguised glee, "answered the questions derived from all of these examination areas with such comprehensive knowledge and executed the tasks set with such surety of expression and command of the correct form that there could be no doubt as to his having achieved the full entitlement for academic study being the overall result of this examination". The Bavarian envoy, Freiherr von Gasser, confirmed that King Albert, Prince Georg and the other gentlemen present had been "extraordinarily satisfied" with the result.[34]

In the spring of 1884, following a year-long intermission, during which Friedrich August attended to his military duties, the young prince matriculated at Strasbourg University for a two-semester course in law, politics and history. A year later—and as the first member of the Wettin dynasty to do so, he matriculated at the University of Leipzig in Saxony—another example of the prince willingly complying with a standard legal requirement that laid down that Saxons had to complete their studies at their own *Landesuniversität*. The prince had intended to travel the 600 kilometres from Strasbourg to Leipzig on horseback, a dashing plan specifically approved by his father, but inclement weather caused this venture to be abandoned at the halfway point. Friedrich August spent a further year studying, and his formal departure from Leipzig, which coincided with his 21st birthday, was marked with grand and public celebrations. The government-run *Dresdner Journal* used this opportunity to drive home the message of a prince who was dedicated to educational improvement and supremely well qualified. Entering adult life, the paper opined, "brings with it more mature understanding, more serious duties, stricter work for every mortal, regardless of whether he be middle class or of princely stock". For Friedrich August this would not come as a shock though, since it had been one of the greatest assurances for the country's patriotic optimism that "the entire education of him, who now stands before us as a young man, fully possessed of the strength of his ancestors, has been—from his earliest boyhood to his university studies and his activities as an officer—a single continuous bridge on which heart and mind could travel […] to the willing, self-denying practical competence [*Werktüchtigkeit*] of real life".[35]

The internal view, while still fairly positive, was not quite as gushing. When Friedrich August finished his university studies, his father Georg asked the prince's governor, Lieutenant-General von Tschirschky, for a frank and honest appraisal of his son's character and development. According to the Prussian envoy, the officer believed that Friedrich

August was quick to understand, had an excellent memory and was intelligent. However, the overly strict upbringing by his late mother had made him insecure and lacking in independence, an issue which needed to be addressed now. For this purpose, a programme of educational tourism was envisaged.[36]

Only a few weeks later, Friedrich August travelled to Vienna, where he was received by Emperor Franz Josef, and then on to Budapest, Belgrade and the Tatra mountains. After only a brief stop in Dresden, he went on to Britain, where he visited London and the Isle of Wight, as well as the Hebrides and the Scottish Highlands—inspecting the German naval ports of Wilhelmshaven and Kiel on his return journey to Saxony. In 1889, Prince Friedrich August embarked on an even more extensive seven-month journey that took him to Italy, Spain, Morocco, Malta, Egypt, the Holy Land (with a formal entry to Jerusalem and the collection of water from the River Jordan), Turkey, Greece and the Balkans. The trip was anything but low key. In Romania, for instance, Friedrich August was given a grand public reception.[37]

As had been the case with Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg, the Saxon heir rounded off his civilian training by getting a taste of public administration. Rather than undergoing private tuition, though, Friedrich August attended public trials and completed administrative internships with local and regional government bodies such as the Kreishauptmannschaft Dresden and the Amtshauptmannschaft Dresden-Altstadt. As was common practice, he also deputised for his elderly predecessors by representing them at international events which involved the exertions of long travel. In 1894 Friedrich August attended the funeral of Tsar Alexander III on behalf of King Albert, and three years later he travelled to London to convey his uncle's warm wishes to Queen Victoria on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee.[38]

Friedrich August was in his mid-twenties, when he completed the civilian dimension of his formal education and moved on to set up his own family by marrying Luise of Tuscany in 1891. Thirteen years later, aged 39, he would succeed his father as king of Saxony. Born twenty years before Friedrich August, Prince Ludwig of Bavaria had to cope with a wait for the Wittelsbach throne that required a significantly larger measure of patience. This meant that there was plenty of opportunity for contemporaries to form an opinion of his fitness for the task ahead of him. It seems that time had worked in Ludwig's favour. By January 1913 half a century had passed since he had enrolled as a student at the University of Munich.

To honour the man who had succeeded his father as Bavaria's regent a few weeks earlier the university senate marked the anniversary by issuing an address. The text observed that few princes before him in history had been as well prepared for the task of governing as Ludwig. Commenting on this statement, the journalist Otto von Schaching agreed whole-heartedly: "Indeed there have been and are few crowned heads who could compete with the current Bavarian king with regard to the wealth and thoroughness of his knowledge. In some fields, for instance in economics and agriculture, he enjoys the reputation of a veritable authority, and Munich's Technical College could not have chosen a more deserving recipient than Prince Ludwig, when they awarded him an honorary doctorate on 10 January 1901."[39]

By the time King Ludwig III ascended the throne in 1913, he had thus carved out for himself a public reputation for scholarly and intellectual accomplishment. It had been in the making for the best part of two decades and was testament to a very successful exercise in royal communication. After all, Prince Ludwig's formal education had been completed well before the time when concerns about the mental health of his cousins, the later Kings Ludwig II and Otto, raised the prospect of his own path to the throne. The public persona of Prince Ludwig as an almost uniquely well-educated future leader, as a man characterised, in the words of the *Münchner Tageblatt*, by the "twofold nobility of knowledge and high birth", was thus a product of the period after the death of King Ludwig II in 1886.[40] While the prince's erudition and achievements emerged as dominant themes in the effusive press attention lavished on him in 1895, as he turned 50, the occasion of his 40th birthday ten years earlier had passed almost without a mention. It was the prospect of succession that threw the issue of his competence into sharp public relief.

This is not to suggest that Ludwig's intellectual and educational attainment were insubstantial or merely a public relations stunt. After having endured a rigorous and frugal regimen of private tuition, the seventeen-year-old prince matriculated at Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in the winter semester of 1862/1863. Unlike his grandfather, who had received professors at his residence, or his father, whose lectures had taken place in the professors' houses, Ludwig attended university courses like any other student. He proved very dedicated and had a wide range of interests. In addition to law, history and administrative studies he also attended lectures on agriculture, economics, forestry and chemistry. Much keener to study than to spend time with the colours, Prince Ludwig continued

at university until 1865 and enrolled for further classes after 1866/1867. From this he moved on seamlessly to another area of expertise: agriculture. In December 1868 he became honorary president of the general committee of the Bavarian Agricultural Association (Landwirtschaftlicher Verein in Bayern). This marked the beginning of a lifelong relationship, providing Ludwig with regular public events at which to give speeches and demonstrate his commitment to farming and his expertise in the field. The prince's authority in this area grew as a result of his ownership and management of a large model farm, the estate of Leutstetten near Lake Starnberg outside Munich. Ludwig purchased it in 1875, when he was 30 years old. He continued to expand and improve it until it became one of Bavaria's largest and leading agricultural estates, using modern agrochemical and veterinary technologies.[41]

Beyond the narrowly agricultural, Ludwig developed lasting interests and expertise in related areas such as infrastructure (especially the improving and building of inland waterways), economic development and the politics of technological progress. The prince pursued these agendas through a variety of public fora, including the upper chamber of the Bavarian parliament. Most strikingly, though, Ludwig played an increasingly prominent public role. More than any other dynastic figure of the period—barring the famously loquacious Kaiser Wilhelm—the Bavarian prince became a prolific public speaker, crisscrossing the country to advertise causes close to his heart—including, one would assume, his own reputation. These dozens of public speeches did not simply reach the audiences present, but would usually be reported, often verbatim, in newspapers or even published in celebratory anthologies like the ones edited by Josef Forster.[42]

All of this shaped the public image of the heir to the Bavarian throne and came to the fore when Ludwig was in the limelight. Even articles on his silver wedding anniversary in 1893 reminded readers of the "philosophical, juridical and administrative lectures" he attended as a young man and the successful management of his estates through which he "acts as an inspiration for wider circles". On the occasion of the prince's 50th birthday two years later, the *Augsburger Postzeitung* praised him as a man "equipped for his high vocation like hardly a second prince in Europe" on account of his "theoretical knowledge and practical experience in every area of the state". The same paper added two days later that his "excellent traits and indefatigable industriousness had made him the pride of his teachers and a shining example for everyone who keenly strives forward to

acquire the necessary knowledge for their future vital trade [*Lebensberuf*]". The *Münchner Stadtanzeiger* provided a long list of the fields in which Ludwig had been trained: philosophy, history, jurisprudence, financial sciences, agriculture, forestry, economics, chemistry, technology and machine engineering.[43]

When the prince turned 60 in 1905 his record looked, if anything, even better. In 1901—29 years after Munich University had granted Ludwig his first honorary doctorate—the city's Technische Hochschule decided to decorate the prince with another one. In doing so they celebrated him as "the keen supporter of technical work, the far-sighted fighter for the development of canals, the insightful and experienced agriculturist, the watchful protector of the economic weal of the people". The celebratory prose published in 1905 carefully reminded contemporaries of the prince's many accomplishments including, as the *Allgemeine Rundschau* put it, "extensive knowledge in jurisprudence and economics, in history and geography, especially though in agriculture and forestry, in technology and engineering, which he has expanded and deepened through continuous further study". Rather more remarkable than this praise from a prominent Catholic magazine, though, is the grudging but substantial tribute Ludwig received from the *Münchner Post*, a Social Democrat paper. It called him the brightest prince in Germany. Moreover, "he undoubtedly has general interests, possesses a not insignificant knowledge of economics and knows how to represent his views".[44]

Interestingly, the messages sent out by Prince Ludwig about princely education did not merely concern his own role. By the time he assumed a more prominent position he was already old enough for his eldest son and future successor, Prince Rupprecht, to confirm the narrative of dynastic competence and progressive meritocracy. A biographical sketch of Prince Ludwig published in 1894 carefully detailed the educational history of his 25-year-old son Rupprecht. His early schooling had been "strict and comprised all the areas of elementary and later grammar school curricula". Rupprecht had passed his school leaving exams in 1886 with success and proceeded to study at the universities of Munich and Berlin. A similar work, published ten years later with Ludwig's co-operation went into further detail. "How careful and comprehensive the education and training is which the high parents [Ludwig and Therese] provide for their children, may be gleaned from the educational path of their eldest son, Prince Rupprecht, who divine providence has called to ascend the Bavarian throne one day", Hans Reidelbach explained. "Correctly assessing the

risks of an isolated education for a future ruler, the high parents decided that their first-born should come in touch with the life of the people as early as possible and be educated with the people and for the people. And so Prince Rupprecht joined the sixth year of the *Maximiliansgymnasium* in 1882 after having been successfully and regularly examined by the then headmaster Linsmayer in all the relevant subjects. Here, in line with the express wishes of the high parents, the noble grammar school boy was treated just like any other student. […] Just like any other student he subjected himself so the school leavers' exam [*Absolutorialprüfung*] in 1886 and passed it with good grades."[45]

The direction of travel was similar for the next generation of Saxony's royalty. In 1904, at Friedrich August's behest, the "Princes' School" opened at Dresden's Taschenberg-Palais, where the sons of the last king of Saxony were taught alongside students from the city's middle class and according to the official rule book of state grammar schools.[46] The task of communicating the reassuring tale of educational probity, meritocratic normality and careful preparation for the task ahead thus devolved onto the next link in the dynastic chain, from father to son, from one heir to the next.

"Bound by the Serious Duty of Preparing Yourself for Your Future Destiny": Heirs as Soldiers and Parliamentarians

In some cases—for instance when the early death of King Maximilian II of Bavaria in 1864 suddenly brought his eighteen-year-old son Ludwig to the throne—royal heirs had barely completed their education when they acceded. More often, though, there were many years, sometimes even decades, in the adult life of future monarchs when they were in the public gaze and had to keep demonstrating their ability to perform the functions of a successful constitutional ruler. As was the case for many designated successors to European thrones, the three heirs analysed here had to prove their mettle, above all, in two broad spheres of public service: the military and the institutions of the constitutional state.

In 1866 both Prince Ludwig of Bavaria and Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg narrowly cheated death on the battlefield. The German War of that year pitted Prussian troops against those of Austria and her German allies—including the kingdoms of Bavaria and Württemberg. While the decisive campaign was being fought in Bohemia, there were also several

skirmishes along the Main, Tauber and Saale rivers in northern Bavaria and Württemberg. Serving with the 3rd Württemberg cavalry regiment, the eighteen-year-old Prince Wilhelm was riding towards Tauberbischofsheim on 24 July 1866, when a Prussian shell killed Captain Hoffmeister, who was riding alongside the prince. The very next day, Prince Ludwig was shot in the leg during the skirmish at Helmstadt in Lower Franconia while commanding troops on the front line. His bravery earned him an immediate promotion to captain and decoration with the Knight's Cross 1st Class of the new Bavarian order of military merit. Since the surgeons failed to remove the bullet from Ludwig's left thigh, though, he was left with a lifelong limp.[47]

It would have been a particularly cruel ironic twist if either of these two princes had come to more harm during these instances of pointless bloodshed, since neither Ludwig nor Wilhelm had any real affinity for soldiering. Immediately after his promotion Ludwig requested leave from his military duties so that he could return to his university studies. As for Ludwig's opposite number in Württemberg, the diplomat Alfred von Kiderlen was concerned about Prince Wilhelm's "unfortunate anti-military […] tendencies".[48] Notwithstanding clear evidence to the contrary, the heirs to the thrones of Württemberg and Bavaria—along with the more military-minded Prince Friedrich August of Saxony—were publicly presented as successful and hearty soldiers, whose dedication to the military was beyond doubt. In this respect the fashioning of these princes was fully in line with the practice of all of monarchical Europe in the nineteenth-century.

There is an ancient link between monarchs and martial prowess. Ever since Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Henry V or, more recently, Frederick the Great, there have been claims about a strong connection between princely rule and military strength. The latter could be expressed through courage on the battlefield or glorious generalship. For centuries monarchs have not simply needed to be great soldiers, they have also had to be perceived as such. This makes the "Staging of the Heroic Monarchy" a topic that dates back at least as far as the sixteenth century. The arrival of constitutional monarchism in the early nineteenth century did not slow down or end the process of the "militarisation of monarchy". On the contrary, with the armed forces emerging as an area where even constitutionally constrained monarchs often continued to exercise largely untrammelled executive power, the military became a preferred field for royal activity. This was not only done in order to maintain the crown's grip

on a significant instrument of power, effective both abroad and at home, but also with a view to boosting monarchical popularity. This was possible because the nineteenth century witnessed what Johannes Paulmann has called a general "appreciation of things military [*Aufwertung des Militärischen*]": to protect their interests, states invested more heavily in their military defences; heroic deeds on the battlefield were celebrated and remembered as great national feats; the standing of soldiers—and especially of officers—rose as military science came to be regarded as a sophisticated and modern branch of knowledge.[49]

This process provided monarchical figures—traditionally and now constitutionally at the helm of the armed forces—with a great opportunity, even though the professionalisation of the business of war meant that the military monarchy was, as Heinz Dollinger put it, being "thinned out into an ideal-representative role". Monarchs no longer served as their own main generals. In parallel to their withdrawal from the actual running of the government, they were generally no longer practically involved with military decision-making or leadership. Yet opportunities for martial public relations grew at the same time. On the one hand, royals could buy into the widespread phenomenon of "folkloric militarism" with its colourful uniforms, impressive parades, toy soldiers and the "sis-boom-bah of martial music". Militarised monarchs could bask in the commemorated glory of great national deeds. In Imperial Germany, for instance, the reciprocal celebration of army and dynasty connected both of them to the victory over France and the foundation of the Reich in 1870/1871 while regularly refreshing those memories. The addition of military anniversaries to the dynasties' growing repertoire of publicly celebrated jubilees served further to reinforce this trend.[50]

As was the case with regard to princely education, the military sphere also offered a public stage on which to display meritocracy and approachability. In an age where conscription had become the norm and was revered as a high patriotic duty, royal military service demonstrated the dynasty's dedication to the nation and was used to justify claims of a veritable "People's Monarchy" (*Volkskönigtum*). Moreover, with military careers gaining a reputation as rigorous and professional, having a royal son prove himself as a capable soldier was not only patriotic and decorative, it also spoke of the competence of the future ruler and the dynasty more broadly. In a further echo of the question of princely education, the princes' usually meteoric rise through the ranks did not exclusively generate admiration. Pouring scorn on the princes' astonishing military careers,

the ever-acerbic *Dresdener Rundschau* pointed out that those "who can make it to lieutenant aged ten, can naturally rise to general by the age of 25". The future kings of Württemberg, Saxony and Bavaria unsurprisingly took part in this multi-dimensional game of military service, prowess and display.[51]

Following his brief but eventful military interlude in 1866 Wilhelm of Württemberg returned to his university studies. Thereafter another kind of education awaited him. In November 1868 King Karl wrote a personal letter to King Wilhelm of Prussia to inform him that Prince Wilhelm's student days were about to come to an end and that it was the wish of both the king and of the prince's father that the young man should "undergo Prussian military training" and thus be sent to Potsdam. "I very much count on the successful development of my nephew's spirit", the king added to his request. King Wilhelm was only too happy to oblige and ordered that, upon his arrival in April 1869, the Württemberg prince would initially be attached to the 1st regiment of the foot guards. A year later he was transferred to the Prussian guard hussar regiment and started moving up the ranks very swiftly. Having played a fairly inactive role attached to the Prussian headquarters during the Franco-Prussian War he was promoted to captain (*Rittmeister*) in April 1871 and to major in 1873. The following year Wilhelm became the commanding officer of the regiment. Upon leaving the hussars in 1875, he was promoted to a Prussian colonelcy and was also appointed a colonel in the Württemberg army in the same year. Two years later the prince took over the command of the 27th Württemberg cavalry brigade.[52]

Yet this glittering list of rapid military advancements with which the *Schwäbische Merkur* introduced the new king of Württemberg in 1891 tells only half the story. Wilhelm enjoyed some of the social aspects of military life and was a keen horseman, but the prince never overcame a fundamental resentment towards his duties as a soldier. "One should not think it possible", he wrote to his friend Plato from Potsdam in 1869, "that a reasonable person should have to spend his day having to teach a bunch of unfortunates how to walk and carry a rifle". Even though he preferred serving with the cavalry, Wilhelm's attitude was still rather jaundiced when he wrote to Plato three years later: "Do not imagine my life to be all that rosy, for getting up at five o'clock every other day to dedicate yourself to the service of the fatherland amidst darkness and fog is not exactly sweet. Then follow for four or five hours the suffering and concerns that the herd I am in charge of give me; wondrously enough I may come across as a

fire-breathing tyrant and avenging angel of death—at least I would often like to laugh when this is compared to my otherwise peaceful nature."[53]

These two letters were separated by the Franco-Prussian War. While having little to do and not engaging in any combat, Prince Wilhelm witnessed some of the horrors of war. He was appalled. After seeing the battlefield at Wörth he found "no words that would even remotely describe how terrible the devastation which the excellent firearms of both sides have wrought. […] War is horrible." In October he commented on the loss of several hundred men after a French attack outside Paris: "what is the saddest thing, many from the Guard Landwehr militia units, that means older men, mostly fathers".[54]

In line with these sceptical views on soldierly life, Wilhelm was not exactly chomping at the bit to engage with his military duties in Württemberg after he quit the Prussian service in 1875. In fact, it took a long time and significant pressure for him to agree to take over the cavalry brigade. The Bavarian envoy reported about plans to confer the command on him as early as December 1876. By April 1877 the Prussian envoy informed Berlin that there had been delays because of Wilhelm's "evasive attitude", which had exasperated King Karl. In May, according to Count Tauffkirchen's report to Munich, the matter had finally been resolved after King Karl had personally urged his successor to do his duty. When Wilhelm had responded that he was now prepared to make this sacrifice for the king, Karl had reportedly snapped back that the prince "was making this sacrifice, if it is one, primarily to the country and to his position within it". Even after this exchange things did not progress rapidly, though. "In a few days I will have to gird myself with the brigade-sword", Wilhelm sighed in a letter to Plato in October 1877; "I fear it will be a wholly false bit of show—*beatus ille, qui procul* [happy is he, who is out of business]". There had been a further delay, the Bavarian envoy explained another month later, because of the prince's wish to stay with his pregnant wife. Eventually Wilhelm could not stave off the matter any longer and assumed the command of the brigade whose headquarters had been moved from Ulm to Stuttgart for his convenience. It is important to note, though, that in this position he succeeded in gaining a great deal of popularity amongst his troops because of his affable and approachable style.[55]

Neither this nor his promotion to major-general in 1879 sufficed to change Wilhelm's mind. "I will not get rid of the brigade any time soon", he complained to Plato in January 1881, "but perhaps it will work at the end of the year". His wish was to be fulfilled, though under the most

tragic of circumstances. Reeling from the death of his wife Marie, who had passed away in April 1882 after having been delivered of a stillborn child, Wilhelm petitioned the king in July 1882 to be relieved of his command and discharged from the army. Against the advice of his adjutant-general, who had argued that the prince should return to his duties after a long holiday, King Karl agreed to relieve the prince of his command, but refused to discharge him from the military altogether. "You are bound by the serious duty of preparing yourself for your future destiny—in your interest and for the weal of our homeland, the beautiful country of Württemberg", the king admonished his successor. The prince's military career thus continued formally, though without any active duty on his part. He was promoted to lieutenant-general in 1883 and *General der Kavallerie* in 1888 to mark his 40th birthday. But it was clear to all insiders that this was merely a façade. When, in 1890, the command of the XIII (Royal Württemberg) Corps of the German army fell vacant, appointing Wilhelm to this politically sensitive post was clearly out of the question. "The princely candidature", Reich chancellor Caprivi observed, "has, in my opinion, to be abandoned for military as well as other reasons". For the general public, however, Wilhelm's military credentials were good enough to create the right impression: "He is known as shrewd, plain, manly and friendly", the *Berliner Tageblatt* reported the mood in the country upon King Wilhelm's accession in 1891, "and with these qualities he will be welcomed to the throne, which a noble man has now left, with hope".[56]

Welcoming the new king of Saxony fifteen year later was similarly agreeable for the Catholic *Sächsische Volkszeitung* in October 1904. It was also a fairly straightforward task: "A soldier faithful to his duty [*pflichttreuer Soldat*] with a plain, religious attitude and a loyally loving father: that is our new lord." Upon Friedrich August's accession, other papers also chose to emphasise his military credentials. A special edition of the official *Dresdner Journal* quoted from the new king's address to his troops, where he had declared that "ever since my earliest youth the army has been my whole love". The *Dresdner Nachrichten* reminded its readers of the glory days after the German victory over France, when the six-year-old Prince Friedrich August had witnessed the return of the victorious Saxon troops. Whether or not it was as a result of this great moment is not clear, but the *Leipziger Zeitung* reported that the new king had "from his first youth dedicated his special interest to the military estate".[57]

The military-minded boy prince had a great army career ahead of him. In 1902 Friedrich August would succeed *General der Infanterie* Max von

Hausen as the commanding officer of the XII (1st Royal Saxon) German army corps and thus achieve the third highest general officer rank at the young age of 37. Moreover, reportedly, he had combined his meteoric rise through the ranks with an enviable reputation for affability. "You had to listen to the 'tall lads' talk about their prince in their camp of an evening to get a sense of how much all of them liked him", is how a brochure about the new king, published in 1905, described the attitude of the soldiers serving under Friedrich August's command. The king really was in "heart and soul a soldier". Even his estranged wife, who knew him well and spoke about his weaknesses with breathtaking candour, confirmed that he "loved the military".[58]

In that positive attitude—and in the fact that, unlike them, he never experienced any fighting at first hand—Friedrich August differed from his counterparts in Württemberg and Bavaria. For the benefit of the Saxon audience the prince's love was carefully staged and communicated. The presence of the six-year-old on a gallery at Dresden's Neumarkt in July 1871 when his father and his uncle led the Saxon troops into the capital was only the first in a series of public events. Having been enlisted as a lieutenant in the 1st regiment of grenadiers at the age of twelve, Prince Friedrich August first stood in line during a parade at thirteen to mark the silver wedding anniversary of King Albert and Queen Carola in June 1878. Four years later, in September 1882, the prince took part in a parade and manoeuvres held on Saxon soil in the presence of the German Emperor Wilhelm I. At this occasion the heir to the Saxon throne was decorated with the order of the Black Eagle, the highest Prussian honour. In July of the following year, Friedrich August became the first Saxon prince to take his soldier's oath (*Fahneneid*) publicly. Further ceremonial occasions were to follow. In July 1898, for instance, Friedrich August represented the royal family at the celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the Königlich Sächsischen Militärvereinsbundes (Royal Saxon League of Military Associations).[59]

While Friedrich August the soldier was thus on show, he advanced rapidly through the ranks. This was rendered even more impressive by the claim—blithely reasserted in a 1906 life of the late King Georg of Saxony—that there was "a strict rule for the royal house that princes are not be given any preferential treatment during their military service". In spite of this he was promoted to first lieutenant in 1883, to captain 1887 and major in 1889 after service with infantry, cavalry and artillery units. Having moved from lieutenant-colonel to major-general between 1891

and 1894 he also served as inspector of the college for non-commissioned officers at Marienberg and of the school for soldiers' children in Struppen. In 1898 Lieutenant-General Prince Friedrich August assumed command of the 23rd infantry division. Upon his father's accession to the throne four years later, Friedrich August was promoted to *General der Infanterie* and reached the pinnacle of his military career as heir.[60]

As an enthusiastic soldier the young prince fitted well into a culture of martial prowess cultivated by the Wettin dynasty in the late nineteenth century. King Albert, who reigned from 1873 to 1902, had been a noted war hero in 1866 and 1870/1871. Associated with the German victories at Gravelotte, Beaumont and Sedan Albert had been the first non-Prussian to be promoted to the rank of field marshal in 1871. Albert's brother Georg had also enjoyed a notable military career which involved commanding a Saxon division during the attack on St Privat in August 1870 and afterwards leading the XII Saxon corps at Sedan and during the siege of Paris. Like his brother before him, Prince Georg eventually achieved the rank of field marshal. The efforts to draw attention to this dimension of the Saxon monarchy peaked in October 1893, when King Albert's 50th anniversary as a soldier was celebrated with great pomp. There were military church services, civic deputations congratulating the king and princely visitors from Bavaria, Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Austria. The festivities culminated when Kaiser Wilhelm II delivered a speech honouring the Saxon king as "the great army leader from that great age" and presented him with a precious copy of the marshal's baton that the Polish king Jan Sobieski had presented to the elector of Saxony after the victory over the Turks in 1683. The day concluded with a torch-lit parade involving thousands of participants, and the whole event proved such a success that King Albert referred to it as his "golden wedding anniversary with the army". Constructing the army as a family in this fashion tied king and soldiers together and was apt to create a feeling of mutual solidarity. By beginning his reign with a public address to the army in which he declared that it had been his "whole love" since his boyhood days, King Friedrich August continued a well-established narrative.[61]

Saxony's Wettins were by no means alone in using jubilees to showcase the martial prowess of their dynasty and thus to illustrate the degree to which militarisation had become a public relations element of the Reich's constitutional monarchies. When Prince Luitpold of Bavaria, the regent of the kingdom since 1886, turned 90 in 1911, his career as a soldier emerged as a central theme in the public celebrations. His

vocation, the official laureation declared, had been the life of a soldier, which he began—like a son of the people—at the bottom from where he rose to the position of the "first soldier of the kingdom". While this was not exactly a realistic account—few "sons of the people" were captains at fourteen and commanded the 1st Bavarian artillery regiment at eighteen—it is true that the younger-born Luitpold had pursued a substantial military career. 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 1870/1871 war against France. Two of Luitpold's sons continued prominently in their father's footsteps: Leopold, who commanded troops in combat in 1866 and 1870/1871, 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. Within weeks of the prince's early death in 1907, Munich's large infantry barracks in the Maxvorstadt was named Prinz-Arnulf-Kaserne in his honour.[62]

The military credentials of the nineteenth-century Wittelsbachs, which dated back to some powerful war myths constructed during the reign of King Ludwig I, were thus firmly and visibly established. This mitigated the fact that Prince Ludwig, Luitpold's eldest son and heir-presumptive to the Bavarian throne, cut a thoroughly unmilitary figure and pursued this part of his public duties with next to no 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, because "it was generally known how little His Royal Highness is inclined to military matters". The voluminous and fulsome press attention Prince Ludwig attracted on the occasions of his 50th and 60th birthdays praised the future king for all sorts of virtues, but remained rather tight-lipped about his military merits. Even though he was not an active soldier, Ludwig had a lively interest in and great affection for the military, Hans Reidelbach's hagiography of 1905 declared somewhat lamely. When welcoming him as the new regent in 1912, the loyal *Augsburger Postzeitung* conceded that Ludwig was rarely seen in uniform. Keen to ensure that this was not misunderstood as a lack of manliness, the paper then described the 67-year-old regent as healthy, broad-shouldered and weather-beaten. Contemporaries were thus quite aware and generally accepting of the

Wittelsbach's civilian preferences. This attitude was also reflected in the sermon Cardinal Faulhaber preached at the king's funeral in 1921: "a uniform does not make a king".[63]

Not that Ludwig had shirked his military duties completely: in 1861, the sixteen-year-old prince was enrolled as a junior lieutenant in the 6th light infantry (*Jäger*) battalion and subsequently transferred to the 2nd infantry regiment, where he was on active—and highly visible!—guard duty on Munich's central Marienplatz square. He continued to combine some soldiering with his university studies and, in 1866, joined troops commanded by his father to fight Prussian forces in Lower Franconia. It was here, near the village of Helmstadt, that he was wounded on 25 July. Hit in the leg Ludwig lay unconscious on the battlefield for a while and was only recognised when he had been carried to the dressing station. Ludwig reacted to this event by "withdrawing from a further military command position and considered himself even more motivated to devote himself to his cherished studies in quiet contemplation", as the *Allgemeine Rundschau* described it in 1905. That the prince never properly returned to active duty—not even during the war of 1870/1871—did not seriously hamper his titular advancement: he was promoted to a colonelcy in 1867, to major-general in 1876 and finally, in 1884, to *General der Infanterie*. While these were obviously merely decorative promotions, the skirmish at Helmstadt went a long way towards compensating for the prince's lack of an active interest in military matters. Twenty-five 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 same paper put an image of the scene on its front page. When the prince turned 50 in 1895, the *Bayerischer Courier* also 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."[64]

In 1909 the memory of Ludwig's wounding was even immortalised in stone. In 1905 Helmstadt's "Warriors' and Veterans' Association" (*Krieger- und Veteranenverein*) had resolved to erect a monument to commemorate the events of 1866. The prince was initially reluctant to attend, the Prussian envoy wryly reported from Munich, but the "loyal Helmstadters were not to be deterred" and so, after Ludwig had eventually accepted the committee's invitation "a rather superfluous unveiling

ceremony took place". On 3 October 1909 thousands of spectators and representatives of more than 60 veterans' associations thronged into the tiny Franconian village. Musical accompaniment was provided by the band of the 9th infantry regiment, the "virgin of honour" Miss Hedwig Weiß welcomed the prince, the military chaplain Reverend Aegidius Johannes Martin gave a speech when the monument was unveiled and there were numerous further ceremonial, musical and culinary items on the agenda to make this Sunday unforgettable. Naturally, the day included a lengthy speech by the prince himself. It should be noted, though, that even for an occasion like this Ludwig appeared not in uniform, but donned a dark suit and bowler hat.[65]

The monument itself was a fairly squat affair built from the region's typical red sandstone, but it featured a powerful message that tied Ludwig into the Wittelsbachs' 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 son and the father.[66]

Ludwig's predominantly civilian and moderately non-military tendencies were thus compensated for in a number of ways. These would have served to reassure those who may have felt uneasy when viewing the widely-noted cartoon published by the *Simplicissimus* magazine in September 1909 just days before the unveiling of the Helmstadt monument. Entitled "*Kaisermanöver*" it depicted an excessively dashing Kaiser Wilhelm II pointing out the "positions of the enemy troops" to a dishevelled-looking, doddery, overweight and bespectacled Prince Ludwig, who could not conceivably look any more out of place than in this military setting (Fig. 3.1). 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.[67] But for supporters of the Bavarian monarchy the cartoon did not make for comfortable viewing either. They would have drawn solace, though, from the fact that Prince Rupprecht, Prince Ludwig's first-born son and the future bearer of the Bavarian crown, was a soldier of the highest order. In 1906 *General der Infanterie* Rupprecht of Bavaria had been appointed to command the I Royal Bavarian army corps. When

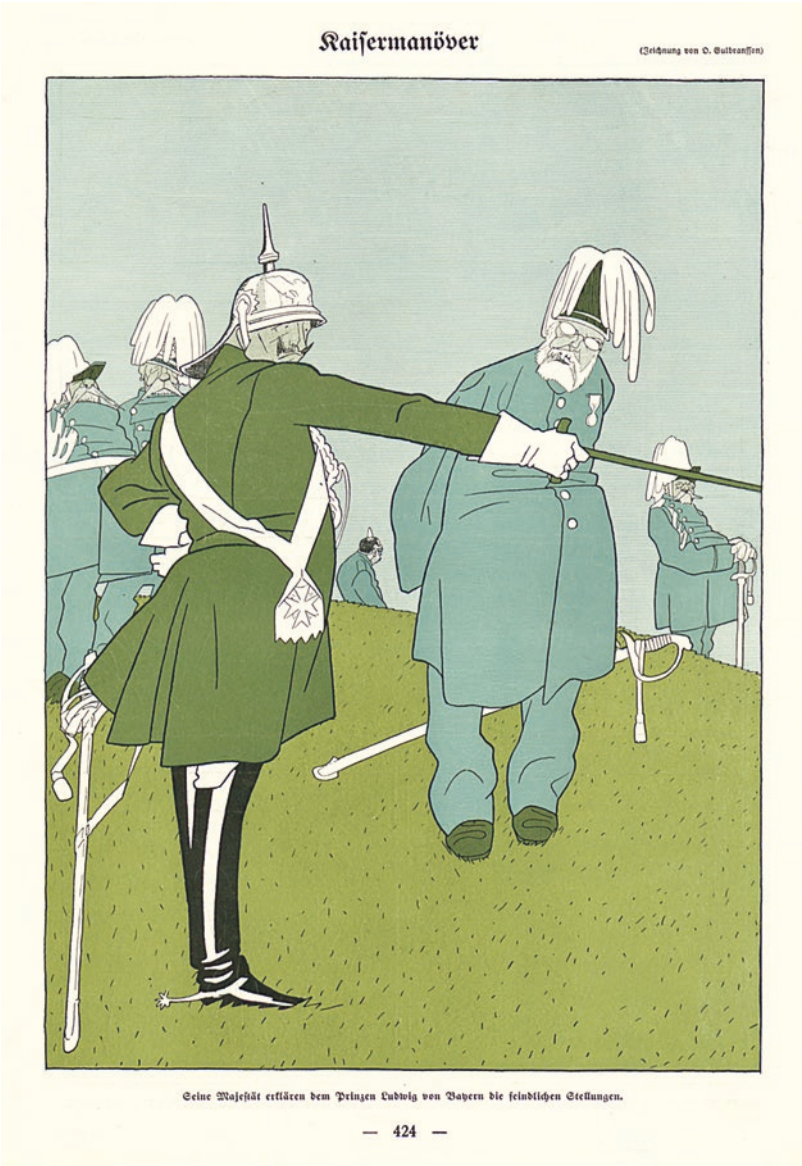

Fig. 3.1 "Imperial Manoeuvres"—*Simplicissimus*'s famous take on Prince Ludwig's less-than-martial appearance.

war broke out in 1914, Rupprecht served as the commander-in-chief of the 6th German army and as the "Victor of Arras and La Bassée" he would emerge from the conflict as one of a small number of clearly capable princely senior officers.[68] Thus it was not only despite of Prince Ludwig the civilian but also because of him as a son, veteran and father that the military dimension of the future of the Bavarian monarchy looked assured during his time as heir to the Wittelsbach throne.

This military dimension of the exercise and representation of royal rule underwent significant changes in the course of the nineteenth century, but it was nevertheless an ancient component of monarchy. As a result of the arrival and adoption of monarchical constitutionalism, however, new forms of monarchical service for the state developed. These had to be mastered alongside the continuing older dynastic responsibilities. For the heirs to the throne these innovations brought with them implicit and non-codified public tasks—such as a degree of publicly displayed moral decorum or at least the semblance of educational achievement—as well as some explicit ones. Perhaps the most significant and most explicit way in which future monarchs were formally integrated into the constitutional state was the membership of royal princes in the upper chambers of parliament. This was a common feature across monarchical Europe and applied to the all the kingdoms within the German Reich.[69] In Bavaria, all adult royal princes were members of the Kammer der Reichs-Räte, in Württemberg they had seats in the Kammer der Standesherrn and in Saxony in the first chamber of the Ständeversammlung. These provisions put pressure on every future king of Bavaria, Württemberg or Saxony to engage first-hand with the parliamentary dimension of the state and the business of law-making. Since parliamentary sessions were marked by a degree of publicity and public scrutiny, their memberships of parliament provided heirs to the throne not only with a task, but also with an opportunity for projecting their image.

Of the three future monarchs considered here, the most assiduous and high-profile parliamentarian was Prince Ludwig of Bavaria. On 23 June 1863, the eighteen-year-old prince swore an oath on the Bavarian constitution and thereupon joined the chamber of the Reichsräte. "He has been a keen and active member ever since", the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* observed in 1892. "He is not only a regular attender of its sessions, he also […] frequently intervenes in its debates and knows how to use his oratorical skills to assert his very independent and thoroughly prepared attitudes and wishes. It goes without saying that the rank of the exalted

speaker adds a special weight to his comments, but even if the prince were simply a deputy from a random constituency, he would still play an important part because of the solidity of his judgement and his thorough expertise." Two years later this fulsome verdict on Ludwig's parliamentary prowess was repeated verbatim in Josef Forster's celebratory volume on the prince's 50th birthday. As was the case apropos the Bavarian heir's educational achievements, his record as a *Reichsrat* became a regular feature of his public persona. On the occasion of his 25th wedding anniversary the *Volks-Zeitung* pointed to the "notable and successful dedication with which the prince completes his parliamentary tasks as a member of the Bavarian chamber of *Reichsräte*". When Ludwig turned 60, the *Augsburger Postzeitung* praised the "prince's outstanding, intensive and uninterrupted participation in public life, his open, firmly principled attitude to every economic or political question, which he documents, above all, in the finance committee of the chamber of the *Reichsräte*". According to Hans Reidelbach, Ludwig was simply the "keenest and most active member" of the Reichsrat.[70]

While there may have been a degree of hyperbole at play here—in Bernhard Löffler's definitive history of the chamber Ludwig is described somewhat more drily as "reasonably engaged"[71]—the prince clearly took his parliamentary rights and duties seriously. In the late 1860s, Prince Ludwig, his brother Leopold and their father Luitpold incurred King Ludwig II's wrath by refusing to obey his order that they abstain from a meeting of the Reichsräte chamber and refrain from speaking against the plans of the government. Three years later, Luitpold and his sons had another falling-out with the king after the Reichsräte had drawn up an address in which it stated that the chamber required the confidence of both the monarch and the people.[72]

Ludwig's career as a parliamentary orator properly began in 1870 when, as Forster put it in 1894, "though he was still rather young […] he gave a masterly speech during the deliberations of the chamber of the *Reichsräte* on the treaties of Versailles".[73] A string of speeches followed: on the construction of a new academy building and on the stained glass industry in 1874, on the purchasing of works of art by the state in 1890, on the running of low-profit railway lines and fire insurance schemes in 1896, on tariffs and charges on flour production and the profitability of mills in 1899 and on constructing a drag-chain for river barges up to the city of Bamberg in 1900.[74] Over the years that followed Ludwig would talk—often at great length—about canals, railways, the University

of Munich, electoral reform, the town of Neumarkt's threatened loss of its garrison, the importation of coal and civil service pay. For a flavour of Prince Ludwig's penchant for technical detail, one should peruse the speech he gave on 15 January 1898, where he explained that the current practice of regulating the central flow of navigable rivers involved the risk that gravel carried by the current might form banks when levels were low, causing the formation of serpentine flows around them which would, in turn, undermine the river bank where it was concave. The current regulating practice, the prince continued, was also detrimental to freshwater fisheries.[75]

This was not exactly riveting stuff. When Ludwig's son Rupprecht joined the chamber in 1887 and took his seat next to his father, the eighteen-year-old found the sessions "rather dull and boring".[76] The assiduous and patently well-informed contribution Ludwig was seen to be making to practical aspects of the economic life of his Bavarian contemporaries nevertheless helped to project an image of the heir that was characterised by competence and dedication.

In Württemberg, the parliamentary equivalent to the Reichsräte did not provide the heir to the throne with as effective a stage as that used by the Bavarian prince. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the upper chamber of the Württemberg parliament, the Kammer der Standesherren, was in poor shape. The decrease in the number of royal princes and of senior aristocrats of the rank of *Standesherren* had led to a dwindling of the membership, which sank to 34 by the mid-1880s. Frequent absences meant that sessions often took place with only between ten and twenty members present. Moreover, since princes never and *Standesherren* rarely took on any of the more arduous tasks, the bulk of the parliamentary work was shouldered by the so-called "worker bees", appointed life members of the chamber. Reform was sorely needed, but constitutional change was slow in coming.[77]

It is hardly surprising that Prince Wilhelm was anything but desperate to join the chamber. In 1875 the Bavarian envoy to Württemberg reported that—upon leaving his Prussian cavalry regiment—the prince was planning to go travelling for about two years and would thereafter join Württemberg's upper chamber.[78] When the prince did eventually take up his seat in person—the royal writ announcing this to the president of the chamber was received in November 1877—he was already 29 years of age, eight years older than the required minimum. In the decade that followed, the heir to the Württemberg throne chose a more relaxed approach

to his parliamentary duties than Prince Ludwig of Bavaria. Between 1877 and 1886 Wilhelm attended 58 of the 138 sessions of the Kammer der Standesherren. An average of fewer than six attendances per year was hardly an onerous chore and his rate dropped from a fairly impressive 32 out of 45 sessions in the 1877–1880 parliament to a meagre thirteen out of 63 in 1883–1886. Moreover, while he did attend and cast his vote, he rarely spoke. Apart from five brief and formulaic votes of thanks for the work of the chairman, his name does not appear on the list of speakers. It is remarkable, though, that Wilhelm did attend the session on 1 June 1882, just after the passing of his wife Marie, and was thus present in person to hear the official announcement of her death. The prince also attended the formal openings of the Landtag in 1877, 1880, 1883, 1886 and 1889. During the 1886 and 1889 openings, he even delivered the speech from the throne on behalf of the absent king.[79]

Though Wilhelm's parliamentary record may not have amounted to much, it was enough to make him appear sufficiently prepared in this important respect. When welcoming him as the new king in 1891, the *Schwäbische Merkur* observed that there had been "several occasions when he used his knowledge [of Württemberg law] as a member of the *Kammer der Standesherren* whose meetings he attended regularly when he was a prince". The liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* pointed to the same experience: "King Wilhelm was himself a member of the parliament and actively participated in its deliberations."[80]

As was the case in Württemberg and Bavaria, a prince's performance of parliamentary duties also attracted praise in Saxony—even for the least winsome of royals. There was little about King Georg of Saxony, the father of Prince Friedrich August that would engender warm feelings amongst his subjects. The short reign of this stern, rigidly Catholic monarch was beset by ill health, political mistakes and scandal to a degree that even his obituaries could not ignore. There was an aspect of his record, though, for which even he was paid a measure of respect: his service as a member of the first chamber of the Saxon parliament. When Prince Georg was admitted in May 1862, speaker Friedrich Ernst von Schönfels praised the contribution made by the princely parliamentarians and explained "how honourable and useful the co-operation of these serene members of the royal house was in every respect". Forty years later, the *Dresdner Journal* reported on the parliamentary occasion, where Prince Georg's parliamentary service, exercised with "rare conscientiousness, with rare loyalty, with self-sacrificial dedication", was publicly recognised. Two years later,

Georg's obituary in the *Leipziger Zeitung* drew attention to his "busy participation" in the work of the parliament. As chairman of the finance committee Georg had made a signal contribution to the passing of the law introducing an income tax, which "he considered the most just and most appropriate for modern circumstances". The *Deutsches Volksblatt* from Vienna called the late king's membership in the first chamber distinguished "by loyalty to duty and respectable, characterful oratory".[81]

Though less drawn to the minutiae of fiscal politics than his father, Prince Friedrich August also proved willing to do his parliamentary duties. Having taken his constitutional oath, the prince joined the chamber on 2 March 1887, but several more years passed until he made an active contribution. In November 1895 Friedrich August was elected to serve as a member of the fourth deputation of the chamber, though he refused to chair it. In January and February 1896, the prince reported on individual petitions that had reached the chamber: a Mr Steinbach disagreed with a judgement handed down by the Grimma court about a house he let and former railwayman Sändig resented not being allowed to run a tuck shop at Chemnitz station. In both cases Friedrich August recommended—successfully—that it was advisable to do nothing about these problems. After this sporadic and rather perfunctory start to his parliamentary career, Friedrich August clearly intensified his commitment once he was crown prince and had to recover from the Luise scandal. Now chairing the chamber's second deputation, which dealt with fiscal matters, Friedrich August made several substantial contributions in the first half of 1904: in January he gave a series of reports on the new budget; in April he justified a supplementary budget item to deal with cavalry units affected by equine disease and reported on the public debt; another set of fiscal reports followed in May. Though this spurt of activity came rather late, it was enough to get noticed. When the semi-official *Leipziger Zeitung* welcomed Friedrich August as the new king five months later, it could claim that "over the last years he had turned his attention to the administration of the state and the parliament, where the crown prince, after the accession of his exalted father, took over his position as chairman of the financial committee of the first chamber".[82]

But this was not the end of the parliamentary story for the heirs to the Saxon throne. On 15 January 1914, Saxony's last royal heir, Crown Prince Georg turned 21. A few days later he took up his seat in the first chamber of the Saxon parliament. The greeting which the speaker of the

first Saxon chamber, Friedrich Count Vitzthum von Eckstädt extended to the prince mixed warmth with a clear message as to what the chamber expected of this heir to the throne: "With our hearts moved by joy we welcome His Royal Highness, our beloved crown prince for the first time amongst our number today", he began and then explained: "We also hope that the parliamentary activity in this chamber and the close contact this will entail with the other high house [i.e. the elected chamber], will contribute their share to preparing your Royal Highness for your exalted future vocation."[83] By 1914, only a few bloody years away from the end of Germany's monarchies, the role that many European heirs to the throne had played in their country's upper chamber for the best part of a century had thus developed into a publicly recognised aspect of preparing the future of the monarchical system within a parliamentary and at least partially democratic setting.

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What had the "functionalised heirs" to the thrones of Württemberg, Saxony and Bavaria achieved in their quest to acquire the love of the people ahead of their accessions? Had they persuaded them that the monarchical role they presaged demonstrated both the state's continuing need for a king and their own ability to meet that need? Had they thereby helped to justify and consolidate the continuation of monarchical constitutionalism? The answers to these questions will establish the success or failure of each of the three heirs. For the performance of the "functionalised heir"—just as for the "functionalised monarch"—was judged "according to the success with which he fulfilled his function in state and nation".[84]

Wilhelm, Friedrich August and Ludwig managed to respond to the general expectation that the future king should be competent and act within his proper sphere. They did so according to their different talents, in line with specific traditions and circumstances and responding to contingencies. This meant that they experienced—and were shown to experience—a process of education and training that was, in principle at least, orientated on publicly acknowledged practices and a modicum of meritocracy. Following on from more or less formalised forms of secondary education, they attended universities (though they never sat examinations), gained direct experience of the workings of the state as administrative interns, parliamentarians or deputies and served as soldiers. As fathers of future monarchs, two of these heirs also made sure that this process was seen to continue: they sent their sons to grammar

schools and universities, enlisted them in elite regiments and watched them take up seats in parliamentary chambers. This familiar father–son continuity was likely to have added to the warmth of the welcome with which the monarchical offerings presented by these three royal heirs were accepted by "their" Württembergers, Saxons and Bavarians.

To be sure, though, all these activities, notwithstanding the explicit emphasis on the monarch's respect for the constitutional settlement in place, were meant to consolidate the status quo rather than advance the development of constitutional monarchism in a democratic or parliamentary direction. That this was rarely aggressively discussed at the time was also, at least in part, a sign of the success of another monarchical narrative that was being communicated.

Notes

1. *Dresdner Rundschau* (22 October 1904), 2; for the light thrown by scandals on the transformation of Emperor Wilhelm II's monarchy see: Kohlrausch, 2005.
2. Franz, 1983, p. 165.
3. On constitutional monarchy/monarchical constitutionalism see: Kirsch, 1999; Kirsch and Schiera, 2001; Schiera, 2012; Arthur Schlegelmilch, 2009; Grotke and Prutsch, 2014; Sellin, 2014a; Lehnert, 2014.
4. Sellin, 2014b, p. 91.
5. Sellin, 2014a, p. 139.
6. Reinhard, 2000, pp. 419–423; Boldt, 1990, pp. 53–167; Boldt, 1975.
7. Sellin, 2011, pp. 55–73 (58); Sellin, 2008, pp. 489–497; *Verfassungsurkunde für das Königreich Bayern*, 1818 (http://www.documentarchiv.de/nzjh/verfbayern.html; accessed 1 April 2016).
8. *Verfassungsurkunde für das Königreich Sachsen, 1831* (http://www.documentarchiv.de/nzjh/verfsachsen.html, accessed 1 April 2016); Verfassungsurkunde für das Königreich Württemberg, 1819 (http://www.documentarchiv.de/nzjh/verfwberg.html, accessed 1 April 2016); on the significant gap between the constitutional text and the political reality in Württemberg see Menziger, 1969, pp. 5–37; more generally see: Böckenförde, 1967.
9. Reinhard, 2000, pp. 122–123.
10. Huch, 2016, p. 3.
11. Prutsch, 2014, p. 76.
12. Stickler, 2015, p. 64; Langewiesche, 2006, pp. 26, 28.
13. Kirsch, 2007, p. 97; Naumann, 1964, p. 443.
14. Grauer, 1960, pp. 427–442; Green, 2001, pp. 68–70; Gollwitzer, 1992, pp. 391–403; Botzenhart, 2004, p. 201.

15. D'Avray, 1994, pp. 6, 222.
16. Kugler, 1891, p. 6; *Staats-Anzeiger für Württemberg* (7 October 1891).
17. Ursel, 1974, pp. 147, 149; Treutler to Bethmann-Hollweg, Nr 256, 14 December 1912 (AA, R2812).
18. *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (15 October 1904); *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (16 October 1904); *Dresdener Rundschau* (22 October 1904), 1–3.
19. Dollinger, 1985, p. 336; Müller, 2011, p. 109.
20. Biesendahl, 1891; on his co-operation with Wilhelm see the preface in: Biesendahl, 1901, p. 7.
21. Forster, 1894; Forster, 1897; on the raid of the Danizza-Verlag see the file in: Bay. HStA, MA94808; Reidelbach, 1905; see also the equally gushing Hans Reidelbach, "Zum 60. Geburtstag Seiner königlichen Hoheit des Prinzen Ludwig von Bayern", *Allgemeine Rundschau* II/1 (1 January 1905), 1–3; for Ludwig's aeronautical adventure in 1910 see *Lindauer Volkszeitung* (30 September 1910).
22. Paxman, 2006, p. 57; Lipparini, 1955, p. 183; I am grateful to M.-C. Marchi for the Minghetti reference; Villa, 2015; Cannadine, 1989, p. 145; *Zusammenstellung der Grundsätze, nach denen die Erziehung S.K.H. des Prinzen Wilhelm von Preußen 1866–77 geleitet worden ist*, by Georg Hinzpeter, 21 November 1891 (GStA PK, 1. HA, Rep 76 I, Sekt. 1, Nr 125).
23. *Dresdener Rundschau* (14 March 1903), 3; "Unsere Fürsten und wir", *Der Kunstwart* 23/13 (April 1910), pp. 2, 4–5.
24. Wagner, 1995, pp. 57, 309–321; see also: Meyer, 2004, pp. 205–240; Gordon and Lawton, 2003, pp. 151–163.
25. Schmid, 1867, p. 357; *Zusammenstellung der Grundsätze, nach denen die Erziehung S.K.H. des Prinzen Wilhelm von Preußen 1866–77 geleitet worden ist*, by Georg Hinzpeter, 21 November 1891 (GStA PK, 1. HA, Rep 76 I, Sekt. 1, Nr 125).
26. *Schwäbischer Merkur*, quoted in *Neue Preußische Zeitung* (7 October 1891); *Deutsches Volksblatt*, quoted in *Germania* (10 October 1891); *Ulmer Schnellpost* (7 October 1891).
27. Sauer, 1994, pp. 17–20, 22; Bacmeister, 1898, pp. 13–14.
28. Schweizer, 1891, pp. 5, 7.
29. August von Egloffstein (chief of the king's cabinet) to Chancellor Theodor von Gessler, 20 October 1865 (Tübingen University Archives, 117/367, 14).
30. Sauer, 1994, pp. 29–39; Biesendahl, 1891, pp. 12–13.
31. Biesendahl, 1891, p. 14; Wilhelm to Karl, copy, 6 July 1882 (HStA Stuttgart, E14, Bü 85); Schneider, 1916, p. 14; Gantter, 1928, p. 111; Wilhelm to Plato, 7 January 1884 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato).
32. Vierhaus, 1960, p. 356 (13 April 1897); Fetting, 2013, p. 247.
33. Kracke, 1964, pp. 31–33; Sturmhoefel, 1908, pp. 783–784.
34. *Dresdner Journal* and *Leipziger Zeitung* (18 March 1883); Gasser to Ludwig II, Nr 11, 24 March 1883 (Bay. HStA, MA2852).

35. Kracke, 1964, p. 37; Dönhoff to Bismarck, Nr 15, 3 March 1885 (AA, R3219); *Dresdner Journal* (25 May 1886).
36. Dönhoff to Bismarck, Nr 46, 14 June 1886 (AA, R3251).
37. Kracke, 1964, pp. 47–58; Sturmhoefel, 1908, pp. 784–787; for Friedrich August's trip to the Orient (1889–1890), see HStA Dresden, 10717, Nr 9295; Bülow to Caprivi, Nr 39, 21 March 1890 (AA, R3253).
38. Schindler, 1906/1916, p. 18; Sturmhoefel, 1908, p. 784; Stecher, 1905, pp. 15–16; *Leipziger Zeitung* (17 October 1904).
39. Otto von Schaching, 1913, pp. 13–14.
40. *Münchner Tageblatt* (1/2 August 1889).
41. Beckenbauer, 1987, pp. 16–32, 80–89; März, 2014, pp. 13–22, 33–36; Forster, 1894, pp. 31.
42. Forster, 1894, 1897.
43. *Volks-Zeitung* (20/21 February 1893); *Augsburger Postzeitung* (6 and 8 January 1895); *Münchner Stadtanzeiger* (7 January 1895).
44. On Ludwig's honorary doctorate in 1901 see the files in the *Historisches Archiv der Technischen Universität München*: HATUM.PA.ED Ludwig, Prinz von Bayern; HATUM.RA C32; *Allgemeine Rundschau* (1 January 1905), 1; *Münchner Post* (8 January 1905).
45. Forster, 1894, pp. 21–22; Reidelbach, 1905, pp. 27–29.
46. Schindler, 1906/1916, p. 35.
47. Embree, 2015, pp. 154–186; *Wilhelm II*, 1891, pp. 10–11; Sauer, 1994, pp. 31–33; Forster, 1894, pp. 15–16.
48. Beckenbauer, 1987, p. 28; Kiderlen (private letter), 20 February 1885 (AA, R3375).
49. Epkenhans, 2010, p. 61; Wrede, 2014, pp. 8–39; Geng, 2013; Paulmann, 2000, pp. 160–164; Mergen, 2005, pp. 245–256.
50. Dollinger, 1985, pp. 340–341; Vogel, 2000, pp. 487–488; März, 2013, pp. 85–87; see also: Becker, 2001; Jansen, 2004; Frevert, 2001.
51. Dollinger, 1985, pp. 340–341; *Dresdener Rundschau* 14 March 1903), 3.
52. King Karl to King Wilhelm of Prussia, 12 November 1868, copy (HStA Stuttgart, E14, Bü 85); *Cabinet Ordre* by King Wilhelm, 30 March 1869 (GStA PK, III. HA, I, Nr 4503); Sauer, 1994, pp. 39–54.
53. *Schwäbischer Merkur*, quoted in *Neue Preußische Zeitung* (7 October 1891); Wilhelm to Plato, 16 December 1869 and 17 December 1872 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato).
54. Extracts from Prince Wilhelm's war diary in Dorsch, 1911, pp. 48, 116.
55. Tauffkirchen to Ludwig II, Nr 85, 26 December 1876, Nr 38, 6 May 1877, Nr 95, 14 November (Bay. HStA, MA3036, 3037); Magnus to Bülow, 10 April 1877 (AA, R3358); Wilhelm to Plato, 13 December 1877 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato); Sauer, 1994, p. 61.
56. Wilhelm to Plato, 18 January 1881 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato); Wilhelm to Karl, 6 July 1882, copy; von Spitzenberg to Karl, 7 July 1882; Karl to

Wilhelm, private, 7 July 1882; Karl to Wilhelm, 13 July 1882, draft (HStA Stuttgart, E14, Bü 85); Caprivi to Eulenburg, 22 September 1890, in: Röhl, 1976, p. 571; *Berliner Tageblatt* (6 October 1891).

57. *Sächsische Volkszeitung* (16 October 1904); *Dresdner Journal*—Sonder-Ausgabe (16 October 1904); *Dresdner Nachrichten* (16 October 1904); *Leipziger Zeitung* (17 October 1904).
58. Stecher, 1905, pp. 11–12; *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (3 January 1903).
59. Sturmhoefel, 1908, pp. 781–782; on the anniversary celebrations in 1878 see: Mergen, 2005, pp. 176–204; *Dresdner Anzeiger* (16 October 1904) with reference to Friedrich August's *Fahneneid*; Dönhoff to Hohenlohe, Nr 100, 15 July 1898 (AA, R3225).
60. Pfau, 1906, p. 12; Sturmhoefel, 1908, p. 782.
61. Neitzel, 2004, pp. 279–305; Mergen, 2005, pp. 247–253; Sturmhoefel, 1908, p. 782.
62. Mergen, 2005, pp. 242–246; Weigand, 2001, pp. 362–363; Bay. HStA MKr 8906.
63. März, 2013, pp. 83–84, 86; Rantzau to Caprivi, Nr 24, 13 March 1891 (AA, R2789); Reidelbach, 1905, pp. 80–81; *Augsburger Post-Zeitung* (13 December 1912); Körner, 2001, pp. 379–380.
64. Forster, 1894, p. 12, 16; März, 2014, p. 24; *Allgemeine Rundschau* (1 January 1905), 1; *Neue Freie Volkszeitung* (2 August 1891, 25 June 1896); *Bayerischer Courier* (7 January 1895, 7 January 1905).
65. Hindenburg to Bethmann-Hollweg, Nr 31, 5 October 1909 (AA, R2730); *Bayerischer Kurier* (5 October 1909); for a fascinating photograph of Prince Ludwig greeting the crowd at Helmstadt from the rostrum next to the monument, see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3._Oktober_1909_-_Denkmalenth%C3%BCllung_in_Helmstadt_durch_Prinz_Ludwig_von_Bayern,_Festrede.jpg.
66. Hamm, 2012, pp. 7–8. I am grateful to Bernd Schätzlein (Helmstadt) for sending me this article and a wealth of scanned and transcribed documents from the Helmstadt *Gemeindearchiv C3240, Karton 2* (email of 23 August 2014).
67. "Kaisermanöver" by Olav Gulbransson, *Simplicissimus* (20 September 1909), 424.
68. Weiß, 2007, pp. 45–49, 96–126.
69. Similar arrangements were in place in Prussia (revised constitution of 1850), Baden (constitution of 1818), the Grand Duchy of Hessen (constitution of 1820), Hanover (constitution of 1840), France (*chartre* of 1814, *chartre* of 1830; *sénatus-consulte* of 25 December 1852), Piedmont/Italy (*Statuto Albertino* of 1848), Austria (*Februarpatent* of 1861) and Spain (constitution of 1876).
70. *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (17 April 1892); Forster, 1894, p. 13; *Volks-Zeitung* (20/21 February 1893); Ausburger Postzeitung (6 January 1905); Reidelbach, *Ludwig*, 16.

71. Löffler, 1996, p. 78.
72. März, 2014, pp. 43–45.
73. Forster, 1894, p. 30 (for the text of that speech, see ibid., pp. 37–42).
74. Forster, 1894, pp. 42–46, 54–58; *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Reichsräte*, XXXII. Landtag, II. Session, Protokoll-Band IV., 26th session, 169–175, Forster, 1897, pp. 103–108; *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Reichsräte*, XXXII. Landtag, III. Session, Protokoll-Band VI, 43rd session, 476–483; *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Reichsräte*, XXXII. Landtag, IV. Session, Protokoll-Band VIII, 61st session, 31 May 1899, 430–432; *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Reichsräte*, XXXIII. Landtag 1899/1904; I. Session, 14th session, 275–276.
75. *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Reichsräte*, XXXII. Landtag, III. Session, Protokoll-Band VI, 43rd session, 476–483.
76. Weiß, 2007, pp. 47, 72–73.
77. Adam, 1919, pp. 170–171.
78. Tauffkirchen to Ludwig II, Nr 22, 1 February 1875 (Bay. HStA, MA3035).
79. Figures based on the *Verhandlungen der Württembergischen Kammer der Standesherren. Protokolle* available online at http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/start/.
80. *Schwäbischer Merkur*, quoted in *Neue Preußische Zeitung* (7 October 1891); *Frankfurter Zeitung* (8 October 1891).
81. *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des außerordentlichen Landtags im Königreiche Sachsen im Jahre 1862* (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028407Z/8; accessed 12 April 2016), 2–3; *Dresdner Journal* (26 May 1902); *Leipziger Zeitung* (15 October 1904); *Deutsches Volksblatt* (19 October 1904).
82. *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des außerordentlichen Landtags im Königreiche Sachsen 1887* (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028441Z/10), 3–4; *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des ordentlichen Landtags im Königreiche Sachsen*, 1. Kammer, 15 November 1895 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028414Z/55), 5; 9 January 1896 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028414Z/141), 91–92; 27 February 1896 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028414Z/355), 305–306; 25 January 1904 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028391Z/191), 131; 7 April 1904 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028391Z/408), 348–349; 12 April 1904 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028391Z/443), 383–405; 10 May 1904 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028391Z/648), 588–592; all of these accessed on 12 April 2016; *Leipziger Zeitung* (17 October 1904).
83. *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des Landtags*, I. Kammer, 10th session, 21 January 1914 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028367Z/190; accessed 11 April 2016), 116.
84. Kirsch, 2007, p. 97.

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CHAPTER 4

"I and My House Feel at One with My People!"

Telling the Tale of a Popular Tribal Monarchy

Having served as the regent of the kingdom for more than 26 years, Prince Luitpold of Bavaria died in December 1912, a few months short of his 92nd birthday. "Everyone had to feel that this old man had become one with land and people, with mountain and forest", the Social Democrat politician Fritz Endres recalled a few years later. He had been "a piece of *Heimat* […] wise, experienced and dutiful, and yet simple and quiet; venerable and yet young of heart; of touching, noble humanity".[1] Attitudes like the one illustrated here are, partly at least, the result of careful cultivation. The close link between dynasties or royal individuals and the sense of self of a more or less imagined community was not a natural or automatic phenomenon. More often than not, monarchies had to be assiduous and resourceful in their efforts to engender such perceived bonds. Notwithstanding their artificiality, though, these ties successfully served to connect dynasties, states and collective identities at national or subnational level. The changes associated with constitutional monarchism—the gradual spreading of political power amongst wider circles while retaining the privileges of the functionalised monarch—were thus not the only strings to the bow of monarchical survival. There was also a whole repertoire of soft power-related activities that could help anchor dynasties emotionally, psychologically and culturally in their respective regions: an active politics of memory (*Geschichtspolitik*), projecting an image of the

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dynasty's dedication to and rootedness in the local population or building a reputation of kindred and affable approachability.

In nineteenth-century Germany the issue of the connections between ruling dynasties and the collective identities of their subjects was marked by an unusual degree of complexity. On the one hand, people's lives were powerfully influenced by what Celia Applegate has called the "German idea of *Heimat*", those "doggedly narrow loyalties" at the "centre of a German moral—and by extension political—discourse about place, belonging, and identity". The concept of *Heimat* and the feelings of "homey tranquillity and happiness" that it evoked actively re-entered the political lexicon as the political edifice of the Holy Roman Empire was crumbling under the pressure exerted by the French Revolutions and its political and military heirs. Connected to this discourse was another important phenomenon: the successful state-building processes that produced a number of powerful monarchical German fatherlands. As a result of this there emerged "strong particularist identities focusing on existing political structures".[2]

As Abigail Green points out in her seminal study of this development, this seems to contradict the growth of an all-German nationalism and the process of nation state formation. In the pre-1848 period there were attacks on Germany's *Kleinstaaterei* ("Small-Statery") from radical liberals like Philipp Jakob Siebenpfeiffer or the economist Friedrich List. While the former railed against "all the princely insignia of division and restraint and oppression", the latter agitated for a "National System of Political Economy" that would overcome a "disorganising particularism". The absorption of a number of smaller German states—such as the kingdom of Hanover or the Electorate of Hessen-Kassel—by Prussia in 1866 was grist to the mill of the most ardent anti-particularists. "The removal of the small crowns is simply an act of historical necessity", Heinrich von Treitschke declared after Prussia's victory. "Even he who has not learned from the past of every European nation that there is no room for *Kleinstaaterei* in mature cultured peoples and that the direction of history points to the compilation of great national masses, will have to open his eyes after the experience of these rich weeks." Following the foundation of the German nation state in 1871, continuing attachments to sub-national units—just like support for supra-national ideologies such as Catholicism or socialism—quickly attracted accusations of a lack of German patriotism or hostility to the Reich. For the somewhat ill-tempered author of the 1892 pamphlet "Against Particularism", for instance, this feature of Germany's political life was nothing less than the poisonous "plant of monopolistic

selfishness, bred and maintained using every means of artificial cultivation". Rather than recognising what Allan Mitchell has called the characteristic "middlingness" of the particularist, whose aim it was to "join in a greater political enterprise and yet to preserve the familiarity of local traditions", a heated contemporary controversy rejected particularism as fundamentally hostile to the common national endeavour.[3]

The relationship between a commitment to a narrower *Heimat* on the one hand and to the wider German nation and specifically to the Reich on the other, was not, however, necessarily wholly antagonistic. An early articulation of German national identity, for which Dieter Langewiesche has coined the name "federative nationalism" (*föderativer Nationalismus*), called for a greater unity among the German nation, but did not wish to forge a nation state that would "gather all German states together, with a clearly delineated outside border and culturally homogenised within". Even when this strand reached a hiatus with the foundation of the Reich, Applegate argues, *Heimat* traditions could still bridge "the gap between national aspirations and provincial reality" and provided Germans with a means "to reconcile a heritage of localized political traditions with the single, transcendent nationality". In Imperial Germany, according to Alon Confino, the narrow loyalty of *Heimat* became the "actual representation of the nation". This notion of a positive relationship between aspects of regional and national identity had already been addressed by Bismarck with specific regard to the role of multiple monarchies. "[T]o become active and effective, German patriotism needed to be communicated through dynastic attachment", the ex-chancellor maintained in his memoirs in the 1890s. The Germans' love of the fatherland, required "a prince, on whom their loyalty can be focused", and if all their dynasties were removed, then the Germans would "fall prey to nations who are more tightly forged together".[4]

The monarchical future of Germany's smaller kingdoms thus had to be charted out not just on the map of constitutional development—whether and how constitutional monarchism should continue essentially unchanged or be transformed into a parliamentary or ultimately republican system—but also on the map of collective identities. As the future sovereigns of Württembergers, Saxons and Bavarians, Prince Wilhelm, Prince Friedrich August and Prince Ludwig had to steer a difficult course: without giving rise to doubts about their wider German patriotism they had to celebrate and consolidate the specific regional, *Heimat*-related, subnational Württemberg, Saxon or Bavarian identity in which their dynastic

position was grounded. In this task they could draw on well-established patterns in the communication of monarchy.

In 1876 King Karl I of Württemberg commissioned the sculptor Paul Müller to create a monument depicting what was probably the most famous scene from the Swabian dynasty's monarchical cult. Unveiled in the Stuttgart palace gardens in 1881 to mark the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the kingdom the granite ensemble shows a bearded bear of a man sleeping, with his head resting on the knee of a young shepherd faithfully watching over his slumbering master. The scene evoked a well-known story made famous by 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 in 1495. While feasting during an imperial assembly, 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.[5]

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. After all, it elevated the unshakable loyalty the Swabians were reported to have shown their princes over the centuries to a matter of particular pride. Judging by the write-up in the Württemberg *State Gazette*, King Karl was pleased with what the sculptor had crafted: "Paul Müller has boldly realised [Duke Eberhard's] princely words", the paper concluded and warmly welcomed this "symbol of the intimate bond uniting the princely house of Württemberg and the people".[6]

This emphasis on the Württembergers' characteristic faithfulness towards their rulers pointed to a new and secular source of state identity. Here the monarchical cult could help to replace Württemberg's previously strong emphasis on Protestantism. This had been rendered problematic by the multi-confessional structure the kingdom acquired as a result of

its territorial expansion at the beginning of the century. The price of growth had been a lack of cohesion. The inhabitants of the newly enlarged state were still missing the common bond of a "higher civic sense", the *Württembergisches Jahrbuch* complained in 1822: "We have old and new Württembergers, Hohenlohers, Ellwangers, Vorderösterreichers, Reichstädters, and so on, but we have no Württemberg people [*Volk*] yet". Emphasising all these communities' connection to the one royal family, headed by an exemplary prince, was clearly one way of addressing this lack of unity.[7]

Celebrating the Württembergers' age-old dedication to the dynasty was neither new nor original, though. In her examination of the monarchical cult in Saxony and Bavaria, Simone Mergen has identified loyalty as a "collective virtue" that served as a leitmotif in the way the dynastic story was narrated to many nineteenth-century audiences. History knows nothing greater "than love and reciprocated love of the people for the prince", a publication marking the anniversary of King Friedrich August I of Saxony (1750–1827, r. 1763–1827) declared in 1818. And it was this quality which history had, "gloriously accorded especially to the Saxons amongst all the German and European peoples". In a pamphlet on "Bavaria's National and International Position" published in 1894, the author pointed to the Bavarian people being "ruled by an indigenous dynasty, which very few in the world can rival in terms of age, glory and wealth. Its indissoluble togetherness with its people has been proved by history especially during times of danger." Such statements speak to the effectiveness of a dense network of practices and traditions that covered the country as a result of the "appeal to loyalty" that was at the heart of the monarchical cult. Its near-ubiquity—the appeal was conveyed in churches, schools and public squares, during festivals, obsequies and royal visits—meant that the "cultic habituation of this political loyalty engaged the Bavarian population quantitatively to a high degree".[8]

Closely connected to this theme of mutual loyalty and age-old bondedness between a specific dynasty and its people—often referred to as a *Stamm* (tribe) of common descent—was the notion of family. The monarchical ruler was styled as the *Landesvater* ("father of the country"), a term which carried with it connotations of patriarchal hierarchy, kinship and affectionate closeness. It also focused attention on the private life of the monarch and his family, which was presented as attuned to middle-class preferences of a more modest domesticity and intimacy. To round the story off, monarchies went for what Mergen calls "the staging of royal

affability". This was especially directed at the petty bourgeoisie and rural populations and was epitomised in the figure of the *Landesvater*, a gentle and wholesome patriarch happy to meet the simple folk while enjoying the outdoors during a hunt or a walk. Monarchy was by no means the only force shaping the specific identity of Germany's sub-national units. Yet the powerful regionalisms that developed in the course of the nineteenth century—especially in areas that coincided with a state like Bavaria, Württemberg or Saxony—were clearly influenced by it. "Their political utopia lay with the monarchical order and not with the people's sovereignty or the nation-state", Siegfried Weichlein has argued; "the monarchy or even the dynasty—as the 700-year old Wittelsbach dynasty in Bavaria or the 800-year old Wettin dynasty in Saxony—provided continuity and identity for these state regionalisms".[9]

Prince Wilhelm, Prince Friedrich August and Prince Ludwig thus had to fit into and continue the telling of dynastic stories of regional rootedness that had helped turn their kingdoms into clearly defined narrower German fatherlands within a wider German nation. As befitted a cultural and historical landscape characterised by multi-polarity and variety, there was no one-size-fits-all pattern of staging the monarchical cult across nineteenth-century Germany. Each story had to be integrated into regional traditions. But there were recognisable similarities in approach. Perhaps the most eye-catching one was the public staging of the mutual relationship between dynasty and subjects: this could be done by infusing existing public events with monarchical meaning or by creating them, for instance through the eager adoption of various monarchy-related jubilees.

"The Paragon of a Well-Ordered, Happy State": Württemberg and the Virtues of Loyalty

In Württemberg, the cohesive effect of the 1819 constitution on the kingdom's enlarged and varied population was buttressed by a variety of monarchical narratives. The overall aim, powerfully expressed in 1822 by the Verein für Vaterlandskunde, a regional studies association founded by royal decree, was to lift the country's popular spirit. This task, it was believed, would be facilitated by "the natural advantages of the country, the high degree of its culture, the character and attributes of its inhabitants, its history—the humble beginnings and the wonderful preservation of state and ruling tribe [*Regentenstamm*], the steady progress of both to greater things, their uninterrupted connection, from the cradle onwards,

in which they live, like a family under their father". Thus jubilees—like the 25th anniversary of the accession of King Wilhelm I (1781–1864, r. 1816–1864) in 1841 or that of his son Karl (1823–1891, r. 1864–1891) in 1889—were celebrated with great fanfare, but royal birthdays, deaths, engagements and weddings were also marked. In 1841 a procession of more than 10,000 participants—amongst them tradesmen, veterans and more than 500 virgins with white roses in their hair—wended its way to the royal palace to honour the king. The effect, a contemporary observer recalled, was to create something that went beyond a courtly celebration or a popular feast and constituted "a festival, in which the whole nation, from the richest nobleman to the poorest peasant, participated with heart and soul". This notion of togetherness was also very much the tenor of the declaration read out by the speaker of the Württemberg parliament when, in September 1842, the foundation stone was laid for a column to commemorate the king's anniversary of the previous year: "One feeling—that of innermost gratitude towards providence and the noble prince—is alive in every Württemberger. Every estate and class of the country unite in this feeling when celebrating the jubilee of its king."[10]

On occasions like this, monarchical representation had to be seen to deliver for the people in some benevolent fashion. A connection between royal presence and well-earned prosperity was suggested most obviously at the great annual fair, the *Cannstatter Wasen*. On 28 September, the day after his birthday, King Wilhelm I would attend the festivities to honour the prize-giving for outstanding agricultural achievements with his presence. This chimed with what was known about a king who, in order to acquaint himself with the needs of his people, reportedly read the small ads in the local press and met "members of every estate" on his frequent travels through the country. The journalist Albert Schäffle called him "not just a King of Swabians, but a Swabian himself".[11]

Wilhelm's reputation as a caring king close to his people, was complemented by the family that surrounded the monarch. His second wife, Katharina, the daughter of Tsar Paul I of Russia, achieved almost saint-like status. The loving dedication with which the young queen was reported to have cared for the suffering Württembergers during the famine year of 1816/1817 and her many charitable deeds secured her an extraordinarily prominent place in the country's dynastic hagiography. "Never has a throne possessed such a woman", the publisher Johann Friedrich Cotta enthused; "she was queen, minister, friend, wife, mother—everything, everything, for the king and for us". Katharina died in 1819, aged only 30

and after three short years of marriage. Her memory persisted though—not least because of a prominent architectural reminder erected by the widowed king between 1820 and 1824. Supported by public donations Wilhelm I ordered the construction of a mausoleum for his "deceased, eternally loved spouse". Built atop the Rotenberg near Stuttgart and emblazoned with the motto "Love never ends", the Palladian chapel became an effective *lieu de mémoire*. And so, almost 40 years later, the poet Justinus Kerner would still call upon the late queen to "Disperse from us with a breath of love this dark and fearful night/Oh Katharina! Guardian spirit, watching o'er our land!"[12]

The king's son and successor, Karl, could not rival Wilhelm I or Katharina in terms of energy or of the charismatic quality that had been constructed for these personae. The vigour the new king demonstrated immediately after his accession in 1864 by making trips across the country soon gave way to a somewhat self-indulgent languor. Yet the cult of monarchy continued. Against his late father's wishes for a private burial, King Karl laid out Wilhelm's body in the royal palace at Stuttgart. Fifteen thousand Württembergers filed past their dead king, who was dressed in a general's uniform and a scarlet mantle edged in ermine. Seven years later, the silver wedding anniversary of King Karl and his wife Olga was celebrated on a grand scale: in churches up and down the country thanks were given for the couple's happy marriage; public festivities were organised in Stuttgart; and a "Karl and Olga Foundation" was set up to support orphaned daughters of civil servants and soldiers. Four years later, following a local initiative spearheaded and largely funded by the town of Canstatt, an equestrian statue of King Wilhelm was unveiled. Working from photographs that had been provided to him by the royal family, the sculptor Johannes Halbig had created a very life-like figure of the late king, mounted on an Arabian steed, crowned with laurels and peering thoughtfully at the copy of the constitution he held in his right hand. According to the inscription on the pedestal, the monument had been "erected by his grateful people" and newspaper comments reminded readers of the "blessing of his long, 43-year, peaceful rule, during which Württemberg became, in every direction, the paragon of a well-ordered, happy state". Though privately put out by what was perceived as the highlighting of an unflattering contrast between a late great father and a less impressive son, King Karl and his wife attended both the unveiling and the festive dinner that concluded the day.[13]

The following year King Karl decided to commission the sculptor Paul Müller to create a monarchical monument of his own choosing. The

sculpture was unveiled in 1881 and depicted Karl's much more distant—and less threatening—ancestor, the fifteenth-century Duke Eberhard the Bearded. As discussed, he was famously so loved by his subjects that he could sleep in the lap of any of them, and thus the medieval duke was a powerful symbol of the trust between the people and their monarch. The late King Wilhelm cast a shadow on this initiative as well, though, for the 1881 sculpture was not the first monument dedicated to Eberhard. In 1859 King Wilhelm had already erected an equestrian statue of the duke outside the Stuttgart palace and identified himself with the bearded duke whom the inscription described as the king's "Great Ancestor". During the unveiling of that statue, the speaker of the Württemberg chamber of deputies praised Eberhard as the "founder of order and civic freedom in our country" and could think of no better way of honouring him than to cheer King Wilhelm, "the sponsor of this monument, the restorer of our constitution".[14]

Thirty years later, Wilhelm's son Karl made an attempt to construct a line of dynastic continuity of his own. Karl had a long-standing admiration for Duke Christoph, who introduced the Reformation in Württemberg in the sixteenth century and oversaw important educational reforms. In 1868 he organised a commemoration marking the 300th anniversary of Christoph's death, and when it came to celebrating the 25th anniversary of Karl's accession in 1889 the king made the monument to Duke Christoph the centrepiece of the occasion. Highly realistic and adorned with relief tablets showing scenes from the duke's life, the sculpture, another creation by Paul Müller, functioned as a "stony history textbook". It stood, in the words of Friedemann Schmoll, for the "belated flowering of a cult of monarchical rule". Representatives of "almost all of Europe and a part of Asia were assembled to witness the unveiling of a monument which His Majesty had ordered to be erected for one of his excellent ancestors", the *Schwäbische Kronik* observed.[15]

Occurring, as they did, against the background of the long-running crisis of King Karl's absenteeism and homosexual affairs, the jubilee celebrations of 1889 were a remarkable spectacle. In spite of the king's scandals, his biographer Paul Sauer maintains, Karl and his wife Olga managed to retain widespread sympathies on account of the king's tolerance, philanthropic activities and support for arts and education. The festivities—which began on 6 June with a children's party—lasted for almost three weeks. They included formal dinners for parliamentarians and foreign dignitaries, church services and military parades—but also the opening of a children's

playground, a rowing regatta, a ride-past of more than 300 cyclists, arts and crafts displays and a torch-lit parade with thousands of participants. That the celebrations passed off so splendidly in spite of the monarch's well-known shortcomings puzzled and irked some observers. Baroness von Spitzemberg, whose view of the Württemberg king never recovered after Karl had dismissed her father from his post as minister-president in 1870, gave a fairly vitriolic appraisal: "Overall, the celebration is pure lies and deception", she wrote in her diary "and that it was possible to stage its outward appearance like this, in spite of the 'No' that individuals say to it internally, throws a peculiar light on mankind, which sways back and forth between Social Democracy and Byzantinism".[16]

June 1889 proved to be the king's swansong. Karl died sixteen months later to be succeeded by his nephew Wilhelm, who thus inherited, along with the crown, a well-established Württemberg narrative about the relationship between dynasty, land and people. A carefully tended *Geschichtspolitik* emphasised the royal family's uninterrupted, centuries-old linage anchoring it in the country, the rulers' commitment to providing Württembergers of every station with a well-ordered and free state, the close, trusting and caring relationship between the ruling family and their subjects and the dynasty's public and emphatic commitment to a loving married life. Even though Prince Wilhelm was, by inclination, a rather introverted and somewhat phlegmatic man, he did enough to project a public persona that anchored him in the specific dynastic traditions of his Württemberg *Heimat*.

"This much, we believe, we can prophesy the country on the basis of the best available evidence", a booklet on the new king happily predicted in 1891: "King Wilhelm II unites in his nature the firm hand of his grandfather, the chivalrous spirit of his father and the rich soul of the ladies of our royal house." Wilhelm had achieved this integration into the regional narrative against some initial reservations. There had been comments about his extended absences at university in Göttingen and while serving with the Prussian army. After the prince's return to Württemberg, he took some time to find his feet. Wilhelm's eventual decision to get more involved with local affairs, as the Bavarian envoy wryly observed in 1875, would be "greeted with great joy by every loyal Württemberger". The heir to the throne took his time, though, and in 1876 the envoy still reported that there were complaints about the prince's reclusiveness and reluctance to make public appearances.[17]

After a slow start, the future king of Württemberg eventually developed a reasonable degree of political nous in the course of the fifteen years

before his accession. His cautiously progressive and reform-orientated constitutional politics placed him firmly within the narrative of Württemberg rulers as givers and protectors of the people's freedom. The prospect of a caring future *Landesvater* was affirmed by Wilhelm's philanthropic commitments. "As prince His Majesty was moved by the liveliest interest in every enterprise and institution that serves the common weal", the *Schwäbischer Merkur* recalled upon Wilhelm' accession; "above all it was numerous committees and associations which enjoyed the competent and successful personal management of their affairs". His modest lifestyle and easy affability also fitted the regional self-image. After all, as a pamphlet on the new king claimed in 1891, the Württembergers "see in their kings no supernatural beings, in front of whom one prostrates oneself like the Orientals do".[18]

Most obviously, though, it was in the realm of the politics of emotion where Prince Wilhelm connected with the existing strains of the Württemberg version of the monarchical cult and especially with themes established by his great-uncle and namesake, King Wilhelm I. There were strong echoes to the latter's celebration of his pure and undying love for this late wife Katharina and the lasting veneration of the dead young queen. "It was an unshakeable conviction for him", Karl Biesendahl declared of the new king Wilhelm II in 1891, "never to marry for any other reason than for a true, sincere inclination of the heart". This passage—from a booklet whose publication Wilhelm had assisted—reminded the readers of a statement the prince had made to explain why he was taking his time to re-marry after the death of his first wife Marie in 1882: "I do not wish to give my country the example of a cold, loveless marriage", he had insisted. "I think too highly of this holy estate to wish to de-sanctify it in this way and thereby to debase myself." Unlike King Wilhelm I, the prince was not in a position to build a temple of love for his late wife, but he also took steps to consolidate and benefit from her memory. Popular rituals associated with the late princess—like the distribution of Christmas gifts to needy villagers—were continued. In 1883 Prince Wilhelm also arranged for the publication of a memorial volume celebrating Marie's life and virtues in a fashion that borrowed heavily from tropes established by mourned female icons like Queen Katharina or Prussia's Queen Luise.[19]

The moment that fully demonstrated the royal heir's integration into the mythscape of the Württemberg dynasty came a few months after King Karl's jubilee celebration in 1889. In October of that year, the mentally deranged Gotthold Martin Müller fired a shot at Prince Wilhelm, who

was on his way to attend a church service. The outrage caused by this act had a noticeably monarchical dimension to it. As mentioned above, for much of the nineteenth century the notion that Württembergers had, since time immemorial, been distinguished by an unparalleled loyalty to their ruling dynasty had become a much vaunted part of their collective identity. This was often expressed with reference to Duke Eberhard's legendary claim that he could safely sleep in the lap of his people. Müller's deed appeared to have shattered this record of flawless loyalty. "A grieving Württemberg has to cover its head in shame", the *Württembergische Landeszeitung* lamented on 22 October in response to the news of the shooting; "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 sullied by a shameful stain". Stuttgart's *Neues Tagblatt* initially found it incredible "that a child of Württemberg" should have done this. 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." It came as some small comfort, though, that the gunman was certified as mentally ill. "The old and tested Swabian fidelity is, thank God, untainted now", the *Schwarzwälder Bote* concluded with a sigh of relief, "for the deed of a madman can surely not demean an honest, faithful people". To be on the safe side, the Württembergers still 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.[20]

As it turned out, the heir to the throne played his part in this reciprocal process of popular monarchy very skilfully, and so the Bavarian envoy to Württemberg soon reached a gratifying conclusion: "the most significant consequence of the assassination was an immense increase in Prince Wilhelm's popularity. […T]his had to be even more the case after this specific incident, since the attitude of His Royal Highness was an entirely admirable one." Wilhelm personally visited the gunman in prison and calmly interrogated him about his motives; he comforted the would-be assassin's distraught brother; he mingled with the well-wishers and rewarded the affection shown by the inhabitants of Ludwigsburg with a financial gift to benefit the town's poor. Amongst the many things Wilhelm did in the

wake of the assassination attempt, one 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 the prisoner. "Did you not consider that you could have hit and killed the child, my daughter?" the *Neues Tagblatt* quoted the prince as asking, whereupon the assassin reportedly "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 by which Wilhelm won everyone's heart. The successor of the Bearded Duke Eberhard, the widower of the beautiful Marie, the caring father of his motherless child thus proved himself to be a true Swabian *Landesvater*.[21]

"A Prince, Who is Father to His House, is Father to His People": Saxony and its Royal Family

In the course of the nineteenth century, Hellmuth Kretzschmar has argued, the Saxon monarchy underwent a process that stripped off the lustrous garb of divine grace and left it with the "characteristics of an office" (*Amtscharakter*). "One can trace the growing restrictions, the increasing plainness, especially in everyday things and, beyond that, one can observe that there were ever fewer days, when the unfolding of courtly pomp, of grand festive events interrupted the drab rhythm of a dutiful, civil service like, sober princely life." This development towards a mode of sobriety paralleled the Saxon monarchs' steady withdrawal from direct governmental intervention. Following the passing of the kingdom's constitution in 1831 none of the Wettin monarchs showed any inclination to challenge the constitutional restrictions on their position, let alone seek a return to an absolutist status quo ante. On the contrary, both King Friedrich August II (1797–1854, r. 1836–1854), who acted as co-regent for his elderly uncle King Anton (1755–1836, r. 1827–1836) in 1831, and especially his younger brother Johann (1801–1873, r. 1854–1873), who would succeed as king after Friedrich August's death in 1854, actively supported Saxony's transformation into a constitutional state.[22]

The dynasty's relatively low-key style and its careful observance of the legal framework meant that the individual monarchs' personal preferences could give some colour to their reigns: the somewhat introverted,

studious and intellectual King Johann fulfilled the administrative responsibilities of his office with dutiful dedication and enjoyed a reputation as a scholar of some distinction. While he was undoubtedly a revered example of the nineteenth-century phenomenon of rulers adapting the persona of an erudite *homme de lettres*, there is some doubt as to whether his kind of "cultural kingship" amounted to a coherent political programme.[23]

Unlike the cerebral Johann, his son Albert (1828–1902, r. 1873–1902) was an "intellectually uncomplicated" soldier. Albert's significant achievements as a senior commander in the wars of 1866 and 1870/1871 adorned the Wettin dynasty with an aura of martial glory and set the scene for a military presentation of the monarchy. This was complemented and softened, though, by a carefully cultivated sense of homely and modest domesticity. The richly illustrated *Volksbuch* ("People's Book") *Sachsen unter König Albert*, published in 1898, for instance, provided this account of how the royal couple spent their afternoons in their garden: "Cosily smoking a cigar, the king—side by side with his wife, who, when the weather is cool, is wrapped (just like a middle-class housewife) in a comfortable shawl, and surrounded by his favourite dogs—enjoys the idyll, which his spouse's tirelessly active, truly German domestic wifely spirit [*Hausfrauengeist*] has created for his relaxation from the arduous work of government."[24]

With its emphasis on gentle married life, modesty and the monarch's diligent work for the state, this account—published to mark the 25th anniversary of Albert's accession—was part of a narrative continuity that dated back to Saxony's pre-constitutional days. The staging of monarchical jubilees and anniversaries in Saxony got underway in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. Unlike Württemberg or Bavaria, which emerged enlarged from the conflict and had to tackle the challenge of integrating new communities, Saxony paid dearly for its loyalty to the French emperor. The kingdom lost two thirds of its territory and one third of its population. Efforts to rebuild the reputation of the dynasty after this trauma took shape in 1818, when the 50th anniversary of the King Friedrich August I's formal accession to the throne was marked. In keeping with the straitened circumstances and the central narrative of dignified duty, the celebrations were designed to be modest. A "General Celebration of Gratitude and Prayer" (*allgemeines Dank- und Betfest*) was to take place in churches across the kingdom and Friedrich August decided that this should happen on a Sunday—rather than on the actual anniversary day—so as to avoid disrupting the country's trade and traffic. This sense of austerity—shot through with powerful motifs of family and duty—is reflected

in the sermon preached on this occasion in Leipzig's famous St Thomas Church: "On his joyful day, children and grandchildren gather round the head of the family who has lived for fifty years in faithfulness and love with the wife of his youth; the members of his community gather round the teacher who has proclaimed the word of life for fifty years; his fellow citizens gather round the public servant who has dedicated his long life to the fatherland; around the king the whole people gathers on such a day, and they rejoice with him and with him thank the lord of kings and peoples."[25]

A year later, King Friedrich August and his wife Maria Amalie publicly marked their golden wedding anniversary. The notables of the Saxon capital were keen to give this celebration the character of a "family event for Dresden" and to present it "as commanded by the heart and the love for the royal couple". The logic implied in the achievement of a happy and successful marriage was that the subjects' love for the ruler was bound to be reciprocated in a paternal fashion. Or, as a sermon in honour of Friedrich August and Maria Amalie expressed it in 1819: "A prince, who is father to his house, is father to his people."[26]

A pattern was thus established for a series of monarchical celebrations that spanned the century and periodically reminded Saxons of their royal family's record of dedicated service and family bliss. In 1872 King Johann and his wife Amalie followed in the footsteps of Friedrich August and Marie Amalie by celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. Events stretched over the best part of a week; obelisks were erected on the palace square illuminated with the words "To the Wise and Just King" and "To the Pious and Merciful Queen"; and a photograph was released that showed the elderly couple sitting together, with the king's hand resting tenderly on his wife's forearm. The event engendered feelings of warmth and familiar closeness: "When we see a princely couple, surrounded by a rich wreath of children, faithfully providing and devising within this intimate circle", the popular paper *Die Leuchte* commented in 1872, "then we feel a homely warmth, for here the chasm disappears, that separates us from the prince". Similar feelings of domestic bliss were evoked six years later, when Johann's son, King Albert, and his wife Carola marked their own silver wedding anniversary.[27]

Alongside these more narrowly family-oriented celebrations of the Saxon dynasty, there were also events—like the 800th anniversary of Wettin rule in Saxony in 1889 or the double anniversary in honour of Albert's 70th birthday and his 25 years on the throne in 1898—that focused on broader aspects of dynastic rule. The very grand staging of the dynastic anniversary

in 1889, which commemorated the unparalleled length of the Wettins' rule over the Saxon lands, illustrates the heterogeneity of the ingredients that made up the pro-monarchical narrative at the time. Most obviously, the event that was marked testified to the chronological depth of the dynasty's roots in the region and its purported near-identity with the development of the Saxon state and people since the days of the eleventh-century Margrave Heinrich I. The central message was essentially the same as that so stunningly illustrated in the monumental 100-metre-long sgraffito "Procession of Princes" (*Fürstenzug*) that had adorned the rear wall of the Stallhof in the heart of Dresden since 1876: a seemingly endless succession of 35 majestic Wettin princes, ending with King Albert's younger brother Prince Georg, were shown to follow the lead of Margrave Konrad the Great in neatly chronological order. The depiction of the procession is completed by an allegorical group of figures representing present-day Saxon society—among them young girls, students, an architect, painters and sculptors, an art historian, a librarian, a miner and a peasant. The procession ends with a fond wish: "Thou ancient tribe/forever be renewed/in your line of noble princes;/Just like your people will dedicate to you/old German loyalty forever" (Fig. 4.1). The pompous and carefully choreographed military and courtly displays and processions that filled several days in June 1889 laboured the same point: "As God wished it, the throne of the Wettins has endured times of great change", a pamphlet published in 1889 declared. "Alliances have changed, political aims, too, but amid all this change, amid an endless waning and waxing, our ruling house has stood firm".[28]

This narrowly dynastic focus was only one element of the Saxon *Geschichtspolitik* effort in 1889. A second important aspect is highlighted by Siegfried Weichlein, who points to the middle-class (*bürgerlich*) character of the jubilee. This was a dominant strain in the memorial literature produced for the occasion. The reason for the longevity of Wettin rule, so the underlying argument went, could be found in the quality of the match between dynasty and people. Saxony's monarchy rested on the "happiness of the people". The grand spectacle in Dresden, especially the procession, thus depicted a historicised version of modern Saxon society and included such icons of technological modernity as a locomotive and electric cables. Even conservative voices, like the *Leipziger Zeitung*, thus gave a fairly functionalised reading of the Wettins' claim to rule: "Whether it [=Saxony's crown] guards the holy light of wisdom,/Or guards the citizen that he may live in peace/Or decorates venerable halls in the service of the arts/Wettin feels blessed amongst its people." One effective

Fig. 4.1 The tale of monarchical continuity literally carved in stone: Dresden's *Fürstenzug* showing all the Wettins in a row and leading an allegorical version of the Saxon people.

way of linking this *bürgerlich* dimension of the jubilee to the dynastic focus was to emphasise that great royal gift that linked crown and people: the kingdom's constitution. There was a plan to locate the King Johann monument, newly unveiled on 18 June 1889, next to the older statue of his predecessor King Friedrich August in order to highlight the two brothers' joint role as fathers of the 1831 constitution. Even though this did not come to fruition the monarchy made sure to involve the Saxon parliament. An extraordinary session of the Landtag was called which allowed King Albert to integrate the parliamentarians into the celebrations. "The coming days will witness a rare festival of commemoration, the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the connection of our royal house with the Saxon lands", Minister Georg von Fabrice declared, when opening the session on 13 June 1889. "During these festivities we will look back on the blessings that we owe to this connection: the founding of our state, its maintenance and care, its rich development through the vagaries of a history of eight centuries. His Majesty the King has the wish to share this important celebration with the estates as the constitutional representatives of his people."[29]

Two more significant monarchical jubilees were staged in Saxony ahead of Friedrich August III's accession in 1904. In 1893 50 years had elapsed since King Albert, then a fifteen-year-old prince, had joined the army. Five years later, Saxony organised a combined event to celebrate the king's 70th birthday and his 25 years on the throne. While the former occasion was, naturally, dominated by pompous and rather formal military pageantry culminating in the visit of the German Kaiser, there was also a marked contribution from middle-class organisations. Led by the "Civic Committee for Patriotic Demonstrations" (*Bürgerausschuß für patriotische Kundgebungen*) numerous *bürgerlich* associations had joined the event and contributed some 5000 bearers of torches and lanterns to augment the size of the procession. In an age of conscription, the central narrative of the occasion—Albert's decades-long service as a dutiful soldier—made it easy to connect the life story of the king to that of thousands of his subjects. The celebrations in 1898, which were again significantly shaped by the confident attitude of civic groups, emphasised the aged king's paternal role and the beneficent record of his reign. Before he passed through the *via triumphalis* of a double line formed by some 15,000 school children, Albert received a bouquet of flowers from the hands of a little girl. The grand procession, which consisted of torch bearers allegorically representing the arts, the sciences, the trades and commerce, also displayed tablets marking the great moments of Albert's quarter-century on the throne: the 50th anniversaries of the constitution and of civic self-government, his silver wedding anniversary, the 800th anniversary of the Wettin dynasty and the king's golden military jubilee. By 1898, a new element had thus been added to the established elements of Saxony's monarchical cult—already including married and family life, respect for the constitution, a centuries-old tradition and faithful stewardship of the people's weal—the commemoration of past commemorations.[30]

Prince Friedrich August of Saxony was born in 1865, the very year when the city of Dresden's buildings department recommended that the painter Wilhelm Walther's design for the monumental sgraffito of the Wettin *Fürstenzug* be adopted. When the mural was finished in 1876 the prince was apparently still too young to feature, even though he had, by then, already been integrated into the Wettin version of the monarchical cult for some time. The most consistent strand of Friedrich August's involvement in the partially re-militarised monarchical narrative of the late nineteenth-century Wettins has already been discussed in the context of his military career: he played a public role as a soldier. This started

when the six-year-old was present to welcome the Saxon troops returning from the war with France. In 1878 the pre-teen princely officer served with the troops performing a parade to mark the silver wedding anniversary of King Albert and Queen Carola. As he advanced up the ranks Prince Friedrich August continued with the public-facing dimension of his military career, including—where appropriate—some philanthropic or specifically Saxon duties. In 1894, for instance, he was appointed inspector of the educational institution for the children of soldiers in Struppen near Pirna. Four years later, the Prussian envoy to Saxony reported that the heir to the throne had attended the celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the Königlich Sächsischen Militärvereinsbundes (Royal Saxon League of Military Associations).[31]

The lavish "People's Book" published to mark King Albert's 25th anniversary on the throne naturally referred to Prince Friedrich August's highly visible soldiering: "During the great parade on the Alaunplatz General-Major Prince Friedrich August commanded the two grenadier regiments Nr 100 and 101", it observed. But the account dwelt much more fully on the heir to the throne's blissful family life. "Not just the royal house but the whole country were overjoyed when Prince Friedrich August led the Archduchess Luise, princess of Tuscany, to the altar in Vienna on 21 November 1891", the book recalled. "In a trice Princess Friedrich [i.e. Luise], alongside Queen Carola, who cared for her like a mother, became the declared darling of the Saxon people. The birth of her first little son, Prince Georg the younger, on 15 January 1893 was a day of joy not just for the royal family, but for the whole land of Saxony."[32]

Warm though these words were, they hardly caught how very emotional the language used at the time had been. "If ever the word bond of hearts [*Herzensbunde*] was justified amongst members of princely families", the *Dresdner Nachrichten* declared in 1891, "then it can be uttered in this hour, when the priest will bless Prince Friedrich August's marriage". A few days later the same paper added poetically that "a new book has been opened, its pages are still blank, but the title is already there; it reads 'love and hope await you, young couple!' Love is everywhere, where the scions of the Wettins dwell; hope greets you, who will one day guard the fate of our people." The *Dresdner Anzeiger* reprinted a poem read to the couple by Dr Paul Mehnert, member of the lower Saxon chamber and chairman of the Civic Committee: "A new sprig on an ancient tree/Dew-fresh and maiden fair/The highest prize of purest love!/This is how God has wished it/[…]/With hand and heart we pledge/To thee, young princely

couple/As our wedding gift to thee/We Saxon loyalty bring/[…]/Thus an unbreakable bond/Will link prince and people/Hail to you, Hail to our Saxon people/Hail a thousand times, Wettin!" Moreover, several papers specifically referred to the people skills of the newly-wed couple. The *Leipziger Zeitung* praised the "affability [*Leutseligkeit*] and deftness" displayed by the "youthful wife of the all-admired prince", as well as her good looks and pleasant voice. Friedrich August also proved to be a veritable Prince Charming: "The young, serene husband, beaming with joy, discharged the duties of a 'cavaliere servente' towards his serene wife in a lovely, unforced manner. One really gained the impression: 'This is a truly happy couple!'"[33]

The stage was thus set for Prince Friedrich August and Princess Luise to repeat the pattern of long and happy marriages, like the ones recently celebrated for King Johann and King Albert and their wives in 1872 and 1878 respectively. Two factors further aided the process of popularising the heir to the throne as a family man. Firstly, Princess Luise, frequently described as vivacious and down-to-earth, appeared to be a real public relations asset. "The lovely appearance and the simple, charmingly affable manner of her royal and imperial highness, which slightly contrasts with the more rigid attitude common to the Saxon court", the Bavarian envoy Friedrich von Niethammer observed in December 1891, "has won the hearts of the population of Dresden". Secondly, the couple proved wonderfully fecund. The birth of their first boy in January 1893 delighted the "whole country", Niethammer reported. More princes and princesses followed later in the same year, in 1896, 1900, 1901 and finally in 1903. Over the years, this impressively fertile family idyll was proudly documented on picture postcards eagerly bought by those with a penchant for monarchical bliss.[34]

It is worth noting that Friedrich August stuck to this central message of paternal love and personal affability even amid the torrid events of the scandal caused by Luise's elopement in December 1902. Together with his continuing commitment to parliamentary duties and philanthropic activities, his refusal to eschew occasions where he came into contact with the population and the public demonstration of his private role as the single father of his motherless children, placed Saxony's royal heir squarely within a Wettin narrative that had emerged in the course of the nineteenth century. Accordingly, when he acceded to the throne in October 1904, Friedrich August promised the inhabitants of the kingdom not just a careful observance of the constitution, but also his "paternal care [*landesväterliche Fürsorge*]".[35]

"Sprung from the Same Land and Soil": Dynasty, Constitution and People in Bavaria

In 1893 Prince Ludwig of Bavaria and his wife Marie Therese celebrated their silver wedding anniversary. In line with the greater public prominence enjoyed by the Wittelsbach prince since 1886, when the death of King Ludwig II had moved him much closer to the throne, this event attracted a great deal of attention. A large choir representing the Bavarian league of choral associations assembled outside the palace to serenade the couple. As was his usual practice, Ludwig addressed the singers afterwards. In his speech he referred to his late royal cousin, who still commanded a great deal of affection, and also to the grand celebrations of the dynasty's 700th anniversary in 1880: "In his address at the celebration of the Wittelsbach jubilee the blessed king said: 'I and my house feel at one with my people!'", Ludwig said; "and I add to this: 'The people feel at one with their house!'" This moment of oratory encapsulates much that was characteristic about the presentation of the relationship between the monarchy, the people and the public in nineteenth-century Bavaria in general, and about Prince Ludwig's role in particular. The Bavarian case arguably stands out amongst the general pattern of German monarchies for the intensity and coherence of the efforts with which the Wittelsbach dynasty sought to win the hearts and minds of the Bavarian people. Based on a rich and resourcefully disseminated *Geschichtspolitik* narrative, the royal house sought to establish the notion that the crown rested on a deep and mutual "alliance of prince and people".[36]

As was the case in Württemberg and Saxony, the Bavarian constitution—granted in 1818—proved the most important institutional bond between the monarchs and their (Bavarian) nation. Like Württemberg, Bavaria emerged from the peace negotiations of 1814–1815 with an array of new and disparate territories, which turned the relatively homogenous "Old Bavarian" pentagon into a bigger and more diverse state. The constitution did not merely have a modernising function, it also helped to integrate recently acquired communities into the newly created kingdom. "One can hardly believe what a great royal word, like our constitution, can achieve in a very short time", the philosopher and Bavarian judge Anselm von Feuerbach enthused in 1819. "Only with this constitution has our king conquered Ansbach and Bayreuth, Würzburg, Bamberg and so forth. Now, someone should have the audacity and expect us to carry a banner other than the [Bavarian] blue and white!"[37]

The "father" of the constitution, King Maximilian I Joseph (1756–1825, r. 1799–1825), promptly turned the act of 1818 into a royal *lieu de mémoire*. On the first anniversary of the decree, a coin was struck commemorating the day when the king had decreed the "*Charta Magna Bavariae*" and monuments marking the king's constitutional step were erected in Passau, Munich and Volkach. Maximilian I Joseph's son, King Ludwig I (1786–1868, r. 1825–1848), firmly integrated the year 1818 into his narrative of the dynastic cult. He commissioned frescoes depicting great moments in the history of the Wittelsbachs from the twelfth century until the present day. Installed in the arcades of Munich's Hofgarten and opened to the public in time for the Oktoberfest of 1829, this patriotic-monarchical "picture book of Bavarian history" was clearly designed to educate the people. The sixteenth and final fresco of the series was entitled "King Maximilian Josef grants his people the constitutional charter 1818" and came with the motto: "The love of my people is the joy of my heart and shall be the glory of my throne." This was not the only time the royal gift of the constitution was the topic of a patriotic painting. The new Bavarian National Museum, opened in 1867, during the reign of Ludwig I's grandson, Ludwig II (1845–1886, r. 1864–1886), contained a series of murals depicting the great achievements of the Wittelsbachs. One of those was also dedicated to the constitution. When addressing an audience in Nuremberg in 1891, Prince Ludwig offered a short historical *tour d'horizon* and naturally started his narrative at the beginning of the century. He asked: "Do we not owe our constitution, which still provides the relevant standards today and which was excellently worked out and offers what the Bavarian people want, to His Majesty King Maximilian I?"[38]

Even though each of the Wittelsbach rulers adopted his own mode of telling the story of "prince and people" the rich seam of *Geschichtspolitik* remained important throughout the century. Ludwig I initiated an architectural and cultural policy on a grand scale. Adorning Munich with great building projects—such as the Siegestor, the Feldherrenhalle, the Pinakothek gallery or the State Library—that testified to the Wittelsbachs' historical achievements and artistic sensitivities, the king sought to create a worthy capital of the Bavarian nation and fashion a city of European rank. Beyond that, Ludwig actively used the discipline of History—shaping the faculty of the university he had transferred from Landshut to Munich, supporting the foundation of historical associations across the kingdom and pursuing a busy programme of erecting monuments to honour Bavaria's greats. All these activities, according to Hans-Michael Körner,

served a "triad of priorities": integrating the kingdom, raising Bavaria's profile in Germany and emphasising the particular greatness of the house of Wittelsbach. Ludwig combined these cultural policies with an attitude of paternal care for the simple people that expressed itself in his regular visits to the Oktoberfest, his concern for low beer prices, his protection of factory workers or his commitment to effective forms of charity.[39]

Ludwig's son, the hesitant and ponderous King Maximilian II (1811–1864, r. 1848–1864) was very different from his impulsive and energetic father. He did not champion great building projects and proved much more scrupulous and almost scholarly in his treatment of history. There was nevertheless a great deal of continuity in the methods and aims of his dynastic politics. Maximilian still used historical narratives to anchor the Wittelsbachs in Bavarian society. He furthered the wearing and preservation of traditional local costume, supported folkloric poetry and song, founded the Bavarian National Museum and generally aimed at spreading a popular version of Bavarian history across all classes of society. "Several years ago", Maximilian's secretary wrote to the painter Wilhelm von Kaulbach in 1849, "his majesty the king conceived of the idea to commission a popular account—using successful images with explanatory comments in poetry and prose—of such deeds of the Bavarian princes and the Bavarian people as are apt to bring the princes and the people more closely together and increase love for prince and fatherland and to distribute them amongst the people as small booklets or pamphlets at a very low price". To attain such patriotic ends, art was also to play a crucial role, for, in the words of a memorandum kept amongst the king's papers, "art and only art transplants history from the memory into the heart, from the scholar's study into the souls of women, the young and the people". The more than 150 murals of historical scenes in the National Museum marked the high point of this endeavour. During Maximilian's reign these educational and dynastic policies continued to be complemented with ideas about the social commitment of kingship—though this was now done in the ponderous manner associated with the king's indecisive character. He organised a public competition to find out "By what means the material needs of the lowest classes of the population in Germany and especially in Bavaria can be met most effectively and lastingly?" and awarded the winning prize to a pragmatic and well-informed treatise by the civil servant August von Holzschuher.[40]

As a Prussian-led unification of the German states appeared ominously on the horizon, the need for a monarchical wooing of the population

appeared even more pressing. After the Prussian victory over Austria and her allies in 1866, Maximilian's son, the young King Ludwig II was persuaded to spend a month on a carefully planned tour meeting and greeting the people of Franconia. This northern part of Bavaria, a somewhat reluctant addition to the kingdom after 1803, had been the scene of fighting only a few months earlier. King Ludwig's increasingly eccentric and eventually pathological behaviour, though, soon posed a challenge to the project of keeping the monarchy popular. His shyness deteriorated to the point where he abhorred conventional forms of human interaction. Concerns about the king's tendencies to eschew company were raised as early as 1865, when the Munich Police Commissioner deplored Ludwig's isolation. It caused "love and respect to wane, without which no regent can rule effectively". Complaints about the king's invisibility continued as did ministerial pressure on the monarch to make himself available, but this proved fruitless and so the situation drifted towards the king's deposition and subsequent death in 1886. Even the eccentric Ludwig II made some positive contributions to maintaining and creating the cult of monarchy, though: anecdotes made the rounds illustrating his affability during his rare encounters with simple mountain folk, while his fantastical castle-building programme constituted artistic patronage on a gargantuan scale. Yet along with the financial catastrophe caused by the king's spending habits and rumours of his deranged and morally unacceptable sexual behaviour, his isolation became a political problem, for "in his day the symbolism of royal representation was probably as important as executing governmental power".[41]

Ludwig's reluctance to play his part nearly spoilt the large-scale celebrations organised in schools, churches, military institutions and town halls across the country to mark the 700th anniversary of Wittelsbach rule in 1880. Designed as a "high-point in the communication of monarchism and patriotism", the celebration took place in towns and cities all over the country and engaged different parts of society—each with their own emphasis. Civic elites, especially those in Munich, wanted to showcase their own economic, cultural and technological progress. The *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* noted with obvious satisfaction that, over the seven centuries of Wittelsbach rule, Munich had "grown into a large, populous city, where trades and commerce flourish, where arts and sciences are cherished". The city owed all this to its princes, the paper argued, who had been like "an uninterrupted chain of blessings". The Catholic bishops emphasised the central importance of religion as a link between people

and monarchy, while liberal circles pointed to the beneficial reciprocity of German and Bavarian history. Writing on behalf of the popular Catholic movement, the Landtag deputy Alois Ritter demanded "a truly patriotic, an exclusively Bavarian celebration" cast in the language of the family—with the Bavarians assuming the roles of children of their royal *Landesvater*. With the royal father of his people refusing to engage himself, though, the jubilee had to be salvaged by other senior members of the dynasty—especially by Prince Luitpold, the king's uncle, who was to succeed Ludwig as the regent of the kingdom six years later. The lavish celebrations to commemorate the 100th birthday of King Ludwig I that were staged in July 1888 reflected the extent of the change in terms of monarchical performance. At the culmination of the ceremonies Luitpold unveiled a bust of his father. He did so in front of 10,000 spectators, accompanied by the thunder of cannons and fireworks. Thereupon the massed choirs sang the Bavarian national anthem and there were shouts of "*vivat*" for Luitpold. The event ended with a popular fête on the Theresienwiese—the site of the annual Oktoberfest. According to the *Illustrirte Zeitung*, Munich had never witnessed "a greater ovation for the prince".[42]

Even on more mundane occasions the regent never shied away from mingling with his Bavarians to cement the emotional link between prince and people. The charm offensive that would, by the time of his widely celebrated 90th birthday in 1911, earn him epithets like "Father Luitpold" or "The Blessing of his House" began soon after the commencement of the regency. Luitpold immediately set out to travel the length and breadth of the country. He visited Swabia and Franconia, returned to Munich to hand out prizes at the Oktoberfest—thenceforth an annual ritual—and showed a real talent for striking the right note when engaging with his people. Patient, modest and approachable, but with an innate dignity, Luitpold gradually, over years and decades, developed into a revered figure. Cigars shared with huntsmen endeared him to the simple folk. His habit of wearing local Bavarian costume—leather shorts, Loden-jackets and the *Gamsbart* hat—also struck a chord with the *Bürgertum*. The same was true for his well-publicised commitment to a prominent Wittelsbach tradition: patronage of the arts. Luitpold's regular participation in Munich's Corpus Christi Procession and his strict observance of a Maundy Thursday ritual, when he washed the feet of elderly paupers, spoke of the depth of his Christian faith. These were soothing gestures at a time when his anti-clerical ministry steered a rather different course. Finally, as Katherina Weigand observes, the regent's old-fashioned courtesy and healthy old

age turned Luitpold into the calm centre of a frantically changing world; it made him a "palliative against the problems of modernity".[43]

Luitpold's son, the ever-active Prince Ludwig, naturally played a prominent role in the staging of the Wittelsbachs' monarchical cult. The public attention generated by his silver wedding anniversary in 1893 and his 50th and 60th birthdays in 1895 and 1905 fit snugly into the wider pattern of monarchical public relations of this period. When congratulating the princely couple in 1893, the *Münchner Tageblatt* did not just employ the usual tropes about this being a royal marriage based not on politics, but on true love. It also spoke of the more than 700 years of Wittelsbach rule and emphasised that—apart from Saxony—Bavaria was "the only country on earth whose rulers had sprung from the blood and the soil of the land". On the eve of Ludwig's 50th birthday, the *Bayern-Kurier* declared that it was quite unnecessary to remind anyone of this important date, since "this noble royal house, firmly rooted in the Bavarian land and people is so intimately and inseparably united with its subjects that everywhere and always its suffering will provoke the most sincere sympathy, its joys, however, will call forth a jubilant echo in the heart of every Bavarian". Ten years on, the story had not changed. "Across the whole kingdom, but especially in the capital and royal residence Munich, the house of Wittelsbach can boast a popularity amongst its subjects like no other", the *Augsburger Postzeitung* observed in 1905. And Prince Ludwig was a central part of this: "affable and charming towards everyone, taking an active interest in everything that is going on in the country and an example to everyone in his family life".[44]

Ludwig was far from being a passive canvas onto which such notions were projected by the press. In fact he propagated the tale of the unique bond between his tribe—the Bavarian *Stamm*—and its ruling dynasty more actively and intensively than any other royal heir at the time. He did so as a result of his innermost convictions. In a report to the German chancellor, the Prussian envoy Count Monts described Ludwig as full of dynastic pride—and judging by the record of the prince's public utterances the diplomat was not wrong. The characteristic ingredients of the Wittelsbach narrative form a recurring motif in Ludwig's oratory: "I would not be a scion of the artistically minded house of Wittelsbach", he began a speech in 1890; "I would not be a grandson of the unforgettable King Ludwig I, the re-awakener of German art; I would not be the son of the eager patron and friend of the arts and of artists, His Royal Highness the prince regent, if I did not joyfully welcome everything that is meant to benefit the arts". Ludwig again referred to his descent from the "art-loving house of

Wittelsbach", which had left "monuments of art" in almost every place it had ruled, when opening Munich's international arts exhibition in 1892. As an openly devout Catholic Prince Ludwig also affirmed, through his personal practice, another important traditional feature of the Wittelsbach dynasty. For all the criticism triggered by his Altötting speeches in 1910, the Bavarian heir's fervent commitment to the faith in which his parents had brought him up appealed to a sizeable section of Bavarian public opinion. "May the prince's declaration echo in Catholic hearts everywhere", the *Lindauer Volkszeitung* enthused and praised the "gorgeous words" in which Ludwig had confessed his "true, innermost Catholic faith".[45]

Even more prominent, though, were Ludwig's near constant appeals to the close bond between people and dynasty in Bavaria. Speaking in Tölz in Upper Bavaria in 1885, he praised the area for a heroic, though tragically unsuccessful attempt made by loyal Upper Bavarian insurgents in 1705 to free Munich from Austrian occupation and called their sacrifice for the dynasty unforgettable. The celebration of the regent's 70th birthday in 1891 provided Ludwig with yet another opportunity for driving home that central message: "I know—and my father knows it as well as I do—that in Bavaria it is not necessary to have grand celebrations to prove the strength of the people's attachment to its ruling house or that of the ruling house to the people […] 700 years are, I think, the proof of that." The main reason Ludwig seized upon for this almost unparalleled mutual attachment was that "the dynasty has emerged from the people". And so he closed with a toast "to the country into which I am woven with every fibre of my entire life, to our much-loved Bavaria"! The Wittelsbachs have always been able to rely on the people, Ludwig explained to an audience in Lower Bavaria a few months later, "because the house of Wittelsbach is as Bavarian as the people and has sprung from the same land and soil". Time and again the heir to the Bavarian throne repeated Ludwig II's quote about the king feeling at one with his people: he did so in Nuremberg in 1895 and two years later in Weiden, where he also reminded the delegates of the Bavarian agricultural association of the many times when the people had shed its blood for the princely house and the "dynasty had also stood up for the people when it counted".[46]

Ludwig underpinned his rhetoric about the bondedness and reciprocal benefit of dynasty, land and people by pointing to his own long history as a farmer, who knew the problems and traditions of those working the land. "I have run an agricultural estate under my own steam for eighteen years", the prince told the German agricultural society in 1893, and he

was pleased that the results of his efforts showed "what you can do even with a poor farm if you sacrifice some money". His experience was meant to make the royal heir appear in touch with the hardships encountered by what was still the country's largest economic sector. "I know from my very own experience what the situation is like", he assured an audience at the 32nd meeting of the Bavarian farmers' association in 1895.[47]

The prince's efforts to generate closeness to the people did not stop there. He also expressed and furthered it through his commitment to philanthropy. "He is either honorary president of patron of no fewer than 50 charitable associations", Hans Reidelbach's authorised biography reminded its readers in 1905, "and he regards these honorary positions not as pure formalities, but he takes a lively interest in the endeavours of all of these clubs and supports them in word and deed". Ludwig's integration into the Wittelsbachs' monarchical narrative of "prince and people" was rounded off by the almost demonstrative modesty of his comportment and his willingness to mingle freely with the public. "Prince Ludwig has understood how to make himself popular and inscribe himself everlastingly into the hearts of the loyal Bavarian people", the Catholic and agrarian daily *Das Bayerische Vaterland* enthused in 1905, "through manly directness, openness, through plain, simple behaviour and appearance, through his affability even towards the very lowest of the people".[48]

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Heinz Gollwitzer's analysis of the trope "prince and people" in the history of the nineteenth-century Wittelsbachs focuses on its function within the dynasty's wider efforts at "self-assertion" (*Selbstbehauptung*) following the "shock of the Jacobin regicide" and confronted with the latent risk of revolution. The extent of such a putative alliance between monarch and population was severely limited, though, as a monarchical policy of actively furthering significant social change was never on the cards. At most, the Bavarian rulers came to the conclusion "that the monarchy had to offer a home that was accessible to all layers of the population and had to provide for a balanced consideration of every class". In that way, loyal partners (*Loyalitätspartner*) could be gained and since close connections to political parties would have compromised the impartial status of the constitutional crowns, popular groups and movements—such as agrarian, religious or military associations—emerged as preferred interlocutors for a mutually reinforcing dialogue on the monarchical cult.

It should also be noted, though, that the monarchical tale so fervently told by the dynasty and its functionaries was by no means heard—let alone

believed—by all of the people with whom the princes claimed to be so closely united. In Bavaria, for instance, the Wittelsbach cult enjoyed much more traction in the dynasty's ancestral lands of "old-Bavaria" than in some of the more recently acquired "new-Bavarian" territories. In January 1895, for example, when papers in Upper Bavaria were brimming with effusive articles reflecting on Prince Ludwig's 50th birthday, Nuremberg's *Fränkischer Kurier* did not mention the event at all. The sum total of the Upper Franconian *Bamberger Tagblatt*'s reporting on this day of national thanks-giving consisted of one laconic line: "Today HRH Prince Ludwig celebrates his 50th birthday."[49]

Moreover, as Werner K. Blessing has observed, the increasingly important group of Bavaria's industrial labourers appears to have been much less receptive to what must have struck many of them as an anachronistic and twee monarchical narrative. For a good deal of such people, Blessing surmises, the monarchical cult must have had an alienating effect.[50] As the anti-Catholic attacks on Saxony's Wettins after 1902, the misgivings about increases to Prince Wilhelm's civil list or the condemnations of King Karl's scandalous lifestyle illustrate, the staging of the monarchical cult did not succeed to the extent of transforming all the "children" of the various *Landesväter* into mesmerised followers. For all the sophistication with which the monarchical narrative was communicated and the sincerity with which it may well have been professed by many, it is important to recognise that a large amount of the patriotic noise generated by it was the sound that reverberated within so many dynastic echo chambers.

Gollwitzer's findings are thus not unique to Bavaria, but resonate in Württemberg and Saxony, too. In all three of the Reich's smaller kingdoms, a tale was told according to which the Bavarian, Saxon or Württemberg *Stamm* had, over the centuries, been fused with its indigenous ruling house to form an emotional relationship between the royal family—headed by a kind *Landesvater*—and the assumed wider kinship group. As part of a much vaunted reciprocal deal, the people duly repaid the monarch's paternal care with characteristic loyalty. Alongside other important mechanisms—Abigail Green and Siegfried Weichlein have drawn attention to the importance of railways, postal services, schooling and press policies—the successful dissemination of the monarchical tale contributed significantly to defining the distinct sub-national identities that gave cohesion to these constitutional monarchical states. Even though this could not stem the growing influence of forms of a Reich identity, it delayed and constrained these centralising and homogenising forces. The dynastic narratives would

have assisted the respective regional monarchies in their "self-assertion" against possible challenges from below. After the foundation of a German nation state in the shape of the Reich, though, the strength of these distinct regional identities and the role played by future monarchs in their softening or accentuation emerged as a new source of political tensions.[51]

Notes

1. Endres, 1916, p. 90.
2. Applegate, 1990, pp. 3, 4, 7–8; Green, 2001, p. 338.
3. Green, 2001, p. 338; Kertesz, 1970, p. 71; Barnes and Feldman, 1980, p. 85; Treitschke, 1866, p. 9; Schipfer, 1892, p. 3; Mitchell, 1973, p. 589.
4. Langewiesche, 2000, p. 55; Applegate, 1990, pp. 11, 13; Confino, 2000, p. 355; Bismarck, 2011, pp. 173–177.
5. Nunnenmacher, 2016.
6. Ibid.; see also: Schmoll, 1995, pp. 109–111.
7. Green, 2001, p. 40; Mergen, 2005, pp. 102–112; Schmoll, 1995, p. 20.
8. Mergen, 2005, p. 105; Franziß, 1894, pp. 11–12; Blessing, 1979, p. 188.
9. On the notion of *Stamm*, see Green, 2001, pp. 270–274; Mergen, 2005, pp. 40–44; Wienfort, 1993, pp. 169–203; Weichlein, 2012, p. 94.
10. Schmoll, 1995, pp. 22, 79–82, 87–97.
11. Green, 2001, pp. 86–87, 89.
12. Vaupel, 2016; Mann, 2016.
13. Sauer, 1999, pp. 108–116, 120–121; Schmoll, 1995, pp. 80–81, 102–106.
14. Nunnenmacher, 2016; Schmoll, 1995, pp. 108–109.
15. Schmoll, 1995, pp. 111–114.
16. Sauer, 1999, pp. 293–300; Vierhaus, 1960, p. 262 (25 June 1889).
17. Schweizer, 1891, p. 3; Tauffkirchen to Ludwig II, Nr 22, 1 February 1875 and Nr 3, 9 May 1876 (Bay. HStA, MA3035, 3036).
18. *Schwäbischer Merkur*, quoted in *Neue Preußische Zeitung* (7 October 1891); *König Wilhelm II.*, 1891, pp. 13–14.
19. Biesendahl, 1891, p. 20; Schweizer, 1891, pp. 27–28; Green, 2001, p. 86.
20. *Württembergische Landeszeitung* (22 October 1889); *Neues Tagblatt* (23 October 1889); *Schwarzwälder Bote* (23 October 1889).
21. Tauffkirchen to Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1889 (Bay. HStA, MA91225); *Schwäbische Kronik* (21 October 1889); *Neues Tagblatt* (23 October 1889); *Tübinger Chronik* (23 October 1889).
22. Kretzschmar, 1950, pp. 470, 481; Blaschke, 2002a, p. 553.
23. Weigand, 2004, pp. 189–202; Kroll, 2001, pp. 135–140; Groß, 2004, pp. 263–278.
24. Blaschke, 2002a, p. 554; Neitzel, 2004; *Sachsen unter König Albert*, 1898, p. 27.

25. Mergen, 2005, pp. 56, 59–60, 118, 131.
26. Mergen, 2005, pp. 60, 131.
27. Müller, 2004; Mergen, 2005, pp. 176–207.
28. Mergen, 2005, pp. 261–279; Blaschke, 1991; *Bilder aus der Geschichte*, 1898, p. 4.
29. Weichlein, 2006, pp. 363–366; Mergen, 2004, pp. 437–438; Mergen, 2005, p. 262; *Mittheilungen über die Verhandlungen des Außerordentlichen Landtags im Königreiche Sachsen*, opening, 13 June 1889 (http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id20028359Z/16; accessed 29 May 2016).
30. Mergen, 2005, pp. 221–247, 249–253.
31. Sturmhoefel, 1908, pp. 781–782; Dönhoff to Hohenlohe, Nr 100, 15 July 1898 (AA, R3225).
32. *Sachsen unter König Albert*, 1898, p. 42.
33. *Dresdner Nachrichten* (21 and 24 November 1891); *Dresdner Anzeiger* (25 November 1891); *Leipziger Zeitung* (26 November 1891).
34. Niethammer to Foreign Office, Nr 77, 15 December 1891, Nr 7, 17 January 1893 (Bay. HStA, MA2860, 2862).
35. *Dresdner Journal/Sonder-Ausgabe* (16 October 1904).
36. Pückler to Caprivi, Nr 40, 26 February 1893 (AA, R2800); Gollwitzer, 1987, p. 723.
37. Sellin, 2011, p. 228, 231.
38. Sellin, 1988, pp. 254–255; Körner, 1992, pp. 142–145.
39. Sellin, 1988, pp. 252–253; Körner, 2002, pp. 170–171; Gollwitzer, 1987, pp. 733–736.
40. Weigand, 2002, pp. 176–180; Hanisch, 1991, pp. 342–345; Gollwitzer, 1987, pp. 736–740.
41. Adami and Borkowsky, 2003; Kink, 2011, pp. 139–140; Körner, 1992, pp. 297–322; Häfner, 2008, p. 147.
42. Mergen, 2005, pp. 204–219, 279–186; Körner, 1992, pp. 303–313; Weichlein, 2006, pp. 356–363.
43. Weigand, 2001, pp. 367–375; Blessing, 1982, pp. 230–231; Ursel, 1974, pp. 148–149; Möckl, 1985, p. 193; Joos, 2012, pp. 151–176.
44. *Münchener Tageblatt* (17 February 1893); *Bayern-Kurier* (7 January 1895); *Augsburger Postzeitung* (8 January 1905).
45. Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 20, 28 January 1896 (AA, R2802); Forster, *Ludwig*, 54; *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (3 June 1892); *Lindauer Volkszeitung* (6 September 1910).
46. Forster, 1894, pp. 49, 61–62; *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (13 March 1891); Forster, 1897, pp. 101, 113.
47. Forster, 1894, p. 76; Forster, 1897, p. 103.
48. Reidelbach, 1905, p. 92; *Das Bayerische Vaterland* (8 January 1905), 1–3.
49. *Bamberger Tagblatt* (7 January 1895).

50. Blessing, 1982, pp. 228–233. The significant public engagement with the funeral of Prince Luitpold in 1912 suggests that the "intensive wooing for loyalty" that had been pursued since 1886 had not been without success, Blessing concedes. He nevertheless asserts that the demonstrations of 1912 merely reflected Luitpold's personal standing and that nothing had been achieved to stop the steady loss of monarchical substance or halt the decomposition of the authority of the institution (229). Blessing follows this claim with a note of caution, though: "How and where this reduced the effect of the royal cult can hardly be detected with any precision" (231).
51. Gollwitzer, 1987, pp. 723, 744–745; Weichlein, 2006; Green, 2001.

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CHAPTER 5

"We Do Not Want to be Regarded as Lesser Brothers"

Royal Heirs in the German Reich and the Challenges of Particularism

In March 1911 Prince Luitpold celebrated his 90th birthday and a few months later Bavaria marked that a quarter of a century had passed since he had become regent of the kingdom. Among the many messages of goodwill for the venerable prince on the double-jubilee there was a characteristically crass greeting in the form of a piece of doggerel. It read "All the time ever-ready for the glory of the Reich" (*Allezeit/stets bereit/für des Reiches Herrlichkeit*) and was, unsurprisingly, signed "Wilhelm Imperator Rex". Even when congratulating the ancient ruler of the second-largest member state, the German emperor could not help himself and emphasised the superior claims of the all-German Reich on the loyalty and services of its princes. In private, Wilhelm II was even more outspoken when he was angered by what he perceived to be Bavarian reluctance to give the Reich its due. Eleven years earlier the Kaiser had lost his composure upon learning that Bavaria had stopped the practice of flying flags from official buildings to mark his birthday: "Just you wait, Wittelsbach", he ominously scribbled in the margin of the report; "You will yet learn to know and respect the Reich!"[1]

Though Wilhelm, as was his wont, managed to inject an additional helping of bombast and tactlessness into the issue, there was an underlying

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problem that went beyond the personal vanity of exalted individuals. It arose from one of the several fundamental compromises that Bismarck had hard-wired into the constitution of the German Reich. The new state, as Thomas Nipperdey has observed, "combined diverse traditions and principles of the great forces of the age in an artful—perhaps even artificial—synthesis: the national-unitary, the federal, the hegemonic, the liberal and the authoritarian-antiparliamentary principles". At the heart of the occasional moments of aggravation between the Wittelsbach kings of Bavaria and the German emperor lay the purposefully unresolved relationship between the individual sovereignty of the Reich's member states and their—mostly monarchical—heads on the one hand and the demands for supremacy from the united all-German nation state led by the Prussian-German emperor on the other. The preamble of its constitution, for instance, made the newly-founded Reich sound like a princely league. It read: "His Majesty the King of Prussia in the name of the North German Federation, His Majesty the King of Bavaria, His Majesty the King of Württemberg, His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Baden and His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Hesse and by the Rhine […] conclude an everlasting federation." The document then proceeded to list the 25 member states of the Reich: three Free Cities and 22 monarchies—ranging from the kingdoms of Prussia and Bavaria to the tiny principalities of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt and Schaumburg-Lippe.[2]

This rhetoric of federalism was more than a mere fig-leaf. The intricate mechanisms of central and federal, Prussian and non-Prussian balances and counter-balances in government, legislation and administration established by the 1871 Reich constitution ensured, to quote Nipperdey again, that "the Reich was not a Greater Prussia—merely with federal and democratic occlusions". Rather, as Alon Confino has argued, it was a distinctive feature that the united German nation state was created as "a conglomeration of regional *states*" which ensured that "German nationhood continued to exist as […] a mosaic of divergent historical and cultural heritages sanctioned by the nation-state's federal system".[3] Notwithstanding these federal continuities, however, 1871 also brought with it substantial changes affecting the status of the individual member states. The official doctrine was that the 25 "allied governments" formed the Reich's "collective sovereign"[4] and governed Germany jointly through the federal council (Bundesrat). This merely veiled the reality, though, that the restrictions the new order placed upon the states and their rulers marked a sea change. By joining the German Reich they lost essential elements

of their sovereignty—most obviously in the fields of foreign and military policy—and this change hit no-one harder than the non-Prussian sovereigns. According to Hans Boldt, after 1871 the German Kaiser was the only ruler in the Reich who was a monarch "in the full meaning of the word". For the other crowned heads, the most Bismarck's tact and constitutional prestidigitation could achieve was to sweeten the bitter pill of a fundamental shift from a confederation of states (*Staatenbund*) to a Prussian-dominated federal state (*Bundesstaat*).[5]

The "legend of the *Reich* as a 'league of princes' (*Fürstenbund*)" proved a hardy plant, though, and coloured how many viewed the complex constitutional compromise between the forces of monarchy, liberalism, nationalism and the public. This was even more the case since such a reading of the Reich–states relationship contained more than a kernel of truth and served a clear purpose. As the statesman masterminding the foundation of the German Empire and the architect of its constitution, Otto von Bismarck provided for both the reality of the monarchical element of the new nation state and the rhetorical exaggeration of its princely federalism. The frantic politics of unification in 1870—pursued amid the fog of war and complicated by a stubbornly disinclined Prussian king—required a conciliatory attitude to South German demands for an essentially federal constitution and specific concessions. Without the chancellor's readiness to grant certain legal exemptions (*Reservatrechte*)—such as Württemberg's control over its own postal service or the Bavarian king's command of his troops in peace time—it would have been hard to bring the negotiations to a timely conclusion. Bismarck's flexibility even enabled him to pull off the neat trick of having King Ludwig II of Bavaria formally invite Wilhelm I of Prussia on behalf of the German princes to accept the imperial title. It is also worth remembering that Bismarck transferred substantial amounts of money into the private coffers of the chronically over-spent Bavarian king. This financial lifeline and the care the chancellor took to spare particularist sensitivities helped to secure the Wittelsbach king's cooperation in 1870 and sustained an almost amicable relationship between the two men that lasted until Ludwig's death in 1886.[6]

Even though they had all accepted the arrangements of 1870–1871, some of the non-Prussian German monarchs and members of their families never reconciled themselves to their dynasties' relegation to the second rank. A sense of demotion contributed to King Ludwig II's irrational escape into an illusionary world of fantastical seclusion, and it turned the somewhat cranky Prince Heinrich XXII of Reuss—ruler over some

69,000 Thuringians—into a pathological enemy of anything to do with the Reich. In 1878, for instance, Heinrich opposed Reich laws providing for both the protection of birds and the persecution of Social Democrats.[7] Such tensions heightened after Bismarck and the reticent Wilhelm I had been replaced by the pompous Wilhelm II whose slight regard for the other German princes echoed his father's haughty outlook. Bavarian hackles were already raised when, in 1891, the Kaiser inscribed the Golden Book of the city of Munich with the motto *regis voluntas suprema lex* ("The king's wish is the highest law")—only months after he had publicly declared himself to be the only ruler in Germany.[8]

The sniping between the Hohenzollerns' imperial monarchy and Bavaria or the regular spats with the Prince of Reuss, whose truculence soon earned him the epithet of "Heinrich the Ill-Behaved" (*Heinrich der Unartige*), were, it must be said, affairs fraught with uncommonly large helpings of acrimony. They constituted exceptions that proved the rule of the other monarchs' less fractious acceptance of Berlin's tutelage. The gradual rise of the Kaiser to the public rank of an all-German monarch with a prominent media presence and the expansion of the competence of Reich institutions into areas of social, economic and legal policy—at the expense of the political authority of the separate states and the Bundesrat—affected all German monarchies, though. When these processes met with resistance—from regional political forces reacting to a perceived threat of Prussianisation and the feared loss of their specific identity, or from monarchies guarding their status against an over-bearing Kaiser—the charge of particularism, of a lack of German loyalty or even hostility to the Reich was quickly, and often stridently, made. If this resistance was associated with confessional politics, reactions would usually be particularly abrasive.[9]

In 1894, for instance, the teacher Franz Franziß published the pamphlet "Bavaria's National and International Position". The Prussian envoy immediately dismissed this confident plea for defending the kingdom's separate rights as "the Song of Songs of Bavarian megalomania and Bavarian particularism". Two years earlier, the political writer August Schipfer had devoted a lengthy and ill-tempered pamphlet to the war-cry "Against Particularism!" He castigated "all of this independence of pigmy-, small-, ay, even medium-state independence" as a "pipe-dream, as empty, as void as anything, and lacking in all and every real foundation". For Schipfer, particularism was not just damaging to the wider interests of the nation, but also to monarchy. He approvingly quoted the late Kaiser Wilhelm I: "Nothing has done more damage to the monarchical principle

in Germany than the existence of these small and powerless dynasties which eke out their existence at the expense of the national development and compromise the prestige of the monarchical principle."[10]

Embodying, as they did, the future of their sub-national monarchies, the heirs to the throne of Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony had to chart a course through these treacherous waters. Given the political realities in the Reich and the growing strength of an all-German national identity, the dynasties in Württemberg, Saxony and Bavaria could not project an anti-Reich, let alone an anti-German attitude. In this regard, the rulers and future rulers even of these smaller sub-national kingdoms could not avoid participating the "nationalisation of monarchy". According to Frank-Lothar Kroll this was crucial for the successful "self-stabilisation" that Europe's monarchies achieved in the second half of the nineteenth century. In their search for fresh legitimisation, dynasties in the nineteenth century not only underwent processes of constitutionalisation. Everywhere across the continent they also sought to integrate themselves with and eventually come to embody the national community. As future federal princes of the German Reich and (quasi-)sovereign rulers of millions of Germans, the heirs to the thrones of Württemberg, Saxony and Bavaria had to be part of this general nationalisation process. At the same time, the monarchies of these smaller German fatherlands had, over the decades and centuries, built up firm loyalties within narrower regional or tribal identity groups. As prospective *Landesväter* of their Württembergers, Saxons and Bavarians, Wilhelm, Friedrich August and Ludwig had to stand up for their regional traditions and peculiarities as well as for the rights their countries enjoyed according to the Reich constitution. As a result of the different experiences of the kingdoms of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg and their dynasties, the three men who would be the last kings of these countries trod different paths between their narrower and wider fatherland.[11]

"The Unity, Power and Glory of the Reich": The Wettins' Swift Path into Germany

That the integration of the kingdom of Saxony into the political realities and commemorative culture of the new German Reich was completed with relative ease was certainly surprising. The relationship between the Saxons and their mighty Prussian neighbours to the North had been antagonistic for more than a century and in 1866 the two states met each other on the battlefield. Saxony's defeat was followed by an onerous occupation of the

country by Prussian troops and the temporary exile of King Johann. All of this was grist to anti-Prussian and particularist mills in Saxony. "We are a well-governed people", the Saxon archivist Carl Weber wrote in 1866: "We wish to keep our King, our sovereignty and our constitution." For a while, a common anti-Prussian front suspended existing political hostilities within the kingdom. It lasted beyond the signing of the peace treaties of July and August 1866 which lifted the threat of the fate suffered by Hanover, Electoral Kassel and the city of Frankfurt—annexation of the kingdom by Prussia—and continued even after King Johann's triumphant return from exile in October 1866. The determination of a broad coalition of political forces to defend the country's independence led to fierce attacks from those who advocated that Saxony must engage willingly with the Prussian-led North German Confederation. In a pamphlet published in Dresden in 1866 the writer Eduard Löwenthal accused the Saxon government of offering its people "the bitter cup of particularist syphilis" and called it either foolish or shameful for the Saxon people "to uphold the glory of its dynasty for reasons of loyalty and submissiveness, thereby defying reason and their own national interest". Writing at the same time, the Saxon-turned-*über*-Prussian historian and journalist Heinrich von Treitschke described the Wettin dynasty as "ripe, over-ripe for a deserved destruction". Notwithstanding—or perhaps especially motivated by—such rantings, Saxony's anti-Prussian consensus held and delivered overwhelming victories in the elections to the North German Reichstag.[12]

Ironically, it was the success of anti-Prussian candidates and their membership of the North German Reichstag that paved the way for Saxony's integration into the federal German nation state led by Prussia. For it was here, Siegfried Weichlein has argued, "that staunch Saxon particularists made peace with the new state". Their concerns were assuaged by the federal character of the North German Confederation and it also became apparent that the new state of affairs offered many Saxons practical and political advantages. With regard to reconciling the Wettin dynasty to its new role within a wider German fatherland, another process was arguably even more important than Saxony's participation in the new federal institutions: the Franco-German war of 1870–1871. During the campaign in France, both Crown Prince Albert of Saxony and his brother Georg successfully assumed senior command positions and Saxon troops were entrusted with important responsibilities. This allowed the vanquished of 1866 to gain battlefield honours—most famously at the battle of St Privat in August 1870, which became a central reference point for Saxon

memories of the conflict. Public acts of commemoration—held in town squares and schools—kept these victories alive, reaffirmed Saxony's martial pride and highlighted the kingdom's contribution to the foundation of the Reich.[13]

The grand reception organised in Dresden on 11 July 1871 to welcome the Saxon troops returning from France is a case in point. More than 20,000 men paraded through the Saxon capital; maids of honour handed them laurel wreaths and oak leaves; they were greeted first by the city council and then by the king and his family. Acting on behalf of the Kaiser, King Johann promoted his son also, Crown Prince Albert, to the rank of field marshal, and on the same day Chancellor Bismarck and Field Marshal von Moltke became "honorary citizens" of the city of Dresden. The great day had to live on, though. In 1876 the Hermann-Foundation advertised a competition for a grand painting of the occasion that would be hung in Dresden's old town hall. Eight drafts were submitted, and the commission—worth 6000 Mark—went to the painter Friedrich Wilhelm Heine. In 1879 the artist completed the monumental work. Bearing the less-than-catchy title "The Solemn Welcome for His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Albert of Saxony as Field Marshal and Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Maas by the City-Council of Dresden on 11 July 1871" Heine's painting was displayed in Vienna and Leipzig before it found its proper place in the Dresden city hall. Centred on the Saxon crown prince and his brother, the highly realistic and detailed painting depicted no fewer than 216 recognisable individuals, representing the cream of Saxony's military, civic and cultural elites. Right up until the twentieth century Heine's work continued to be treated as an indispensable visual source. In 1910 the painting was transferred to the museum in the Neues Rathaus where it featured as part of an exhibition on recent German history.[14]

The prominence of the war of 1870–1871 in Saxony's public memory provided the Wettin dynasty with an easy way to integrate itself into the new imperial order. It opened up "a more sustained military-dynastic festival culture" which—according to Erwin Fink—"brought the Saxon and Prussian traditions into line symbolically, as was to be evident in 1876 during the first imperial military review headed by Wilhelm I outside of Prussia". Once Albert, the victorious field marshal depicted at the centre of Heine's painting, had ascended the throne in 1873, the narrative that highlighted the outstanding contribution the Wettin dynasty—and therefore of Saxony, its soldiers and its people—had made to winning German

unity became even more prominent. This had already been prefigured during the grand entry of the Saxon army in 1871. The scene was decorated with a monumental bust of Wilhelm I, flanked by those of Moltke and Crown Prince Albert—with those of Bismarck and Prince Georg nearby and the bust of King Johann facing that of the new emperor. Subsequent dynastic celebrations—such as King Albert's 50th military anniversary in 1893—were staged to communicate the same theme. The bond was thus renewed between the venerable Saxon king and the grandson of the first German emperor. In his address in 1893 Kaiser Wilhelm praised King Albert for having helped to "conquer security, unity and the imperial crown on the field of battle".[15]

There were further factors minimising possible frictions between Saxony and its new wider imperial German setting. Conservative by nature, King Albert was content to support a succession of conservative ministries that were underpinned by majorities of pro-governmental parties united by their common and fierce opposition to the socialism which had flourished in the kingdom since the 1860s. The Saxon government's robust anti-socialist policies, with its rigorous application of Bismarck's anti-socialist legislation further aligned the Saxon "playground of authoritarianism" with Berlin. In 1896, in an effort to stymie the electoral progress of the Social Democrats, the Saxon Landtag eventually enacted a plutocratic electoral reform bill, modelled on the Prussian three-tier franchise. Given the absence of a Catholic or clerical party in the overwhelmingly Protestant kingdom, the socialists were soon the only critics of the nation state and its government. Once the erstwhile anti-Prussian majority consensus had been transformed into an anti-socialist one, there was limited political space for a particularist Saxon critique of the Reich.[16]

The prospect of Prince Friedrich August of Saxony's monarchical future was thus not riven with any great divergence between his duties as a *Landesvater* to his Saxon people and his wider German role. His predilection for the military dimension of his royal office allowed him to integrate easily into the patriotic German dynastic narrative established around the figure of King Albert. As a very young boy-soldier he witnessed the grand entry of the victorious Saxon troops—led by his uncle, Crown Prince Albert, and his father, Prince Georg—into the Saxon capital in 1871. It is worth noting that this fact was specifically recalled by the semi-official *Leipziger Zeitung* upon Friedrich August's accession in 1904. On 17 August 1895 the prince represented the royal family during celebrations

to mark the 25th anniversary of the battle of St Privat. At the Dresden war cemetery he placed a laurel wreath on the grave of General-Major von Craushaar, the commander of the 45th infantry brigade, who had been killed in action in 1871. In September 1903 Crown Prince Friedrich August commanded the XII (Saxon) Army Corps during the Imperial Manoeuvres and was rewarded with specific praise by Kaiser Wilhelm, who was present to inspect the troops and complimented the future king of Saxony for the excellent performance of his "magnificent corps".[17]

Given the pro-Reich direction taken by the Wettins under King Albert and King Georg and in view of Friedrich August's low political profile there was little to suggest that the Saxon monarchy would ever kick against the goads of the Reich. When, in 1915, Paul Franz Bang published a short biography of the last king of Saxony on the occasion of his 50th birthday, the author could claim that Friedrich August—like King Johann before him—"had committed his entire personality for the unity, power and glory of the Reich". According to Bang "amid the circle of federal princes no other German prince had insisted more emphatically that harmony and loyalty should be observed".[18]

This did not mean, though, that even the slightest sign of Saxon particularism would escape the notice of a watchful and tetchy German emperor. In 1890, Prince Friedrich August undertook a long trip around the Mediterranean. On the way back, he was given a grand reception at Bucharest and was welcomed—the German envoy Bernhard von Bülow reported to Berlin—"to the strains of the Saxon anthem". Kaiser Wilhelm, who took the time to read this report, angrily scribbled "does not exist" in the margin and later concluded with undisguised disdain for the heir to the Saxon throne: "*tant de bruit pour une omelette*". Eight years later the prince attended the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Royal Saxon League of Military Associations. As was widely known, the Prussian envoy explained, this organisation "owed its formation to a particularist, specifically Saxon urge, developed following the Prussian initiative to unite all the German military and veterans' associations into a 'German Warriors' League'". This then triggered a Saxon counter-initiative and as a result the "specifically Saxon character was especially prominent" at the celebrations in 1898. The envoy reported, with obvious chagrin, that the podium was decorated purely with busts of the Saxon king and his brother Georg and with the Saxon colours. Speeches and songs emphasised "loyalty towards the king and the Saxon lands". Yet again, the Kaiser, pen at the ready, closely read this report and

exasperatedly concluded in the margin that "not even Bavaria is worse than that".[19] In terms of particularist riling of the emperor, however, there was a step between the relatively tame kingdom of Saxony and Wilhelm's Bavarian *bête noire*: the kingdom of Württemberg.

"Swabians Wanted to Remain Swabians": The Württemberg Dynasty Between Particularism and Adaption

In 1868 a decision was made that Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg would travel to Potsdam the following summer to be trained as a soldier. What happened as this project unfolded speaks to the particularist sensitivities surrounding the issue of how the future king of Württemberg was to be shaped. "Above all I now want to calm your funny yellow-and-white heart" (= the colours of the recently annexed kingdom of Hanover), Wilhelm wrote to his university friend Detlev von Plato, "by assuring you that I—at least initially—will not enter the Prussian service, but will go to Potsdam next summer to learn the military trade at the source". This subtle distinction—being trained in Prussia while not joining the Prussian army—was clearly important to the Württemberg government. A year later the kingdom's envoys in Munich, Vienna, Berlin, Bern, Paris, Karlsruhe and St Petersburg were informed that—contrary to some newspaper comments—it was neither King Karl's nor the prince's intention to enter the Prussian service. He was merely going to Potsdam to be trained there, for "this would, on account of the position of His Royal Highness, not be possible with success in his own country, because in it too much personal consideration is usually paid". But the message was hard to get across. Oskar von Soden, the Württemberg envoy in Munich, reported that misleading articles in the Prussian press, suggesting that the prince had entered the Prussian service, had caused misapprehensions, especially amongst already disgruntled military circles. Foreign Minister Karl von Varnbüler was clearly irked that this was "still the cause of misunderstandings"—even within the Bavarian government—and that anyone could give credence to murky newspaper reports: "It is downright incomprehensible", he wrote to Soden, "that, in the face of an official statement, one can refer to the opposite case being made in Prussian newspapers, which […] perhaps have an interest in distorting it".[20]

In the years that separated Prussia's victory over Austria and her allies in 1866 from the foundation of the German Reich in 1871, the government and the dynasty in Württemberg were clearly walking on eggshells: keen not to antagonise Berlin, but full of suspicions, and at the same time worried about creating an impression of excessive servility towards Prussia in other German capitals with whom they hoped to build political alliances. The war of 1866 had left a legacy of particularism and anti-Prussian animus in the kingdom which—though not a member of the North German Confederation—was concerned about its future independence vis-à-vis its mighty Prussian neighbour. Suspicions about Berlin's intentions dated back to King Wilhelm I of Württenberg, who had declared in 1861 that being France's ally was preferable to a life as a Prussian vassal. When his son Karl succeeded him in 1864, the new king sent out a clear sign that he also preferred a "Greater-German" Austrian-led future to a "small-German" nation state headed by Berlin: he ordered that the uniforms of the Württemberg army be altered so that they would closely resemble those worn by the Austrian army. The defeat in 1866 did nothing to endear Prussia to the coalition of government, civil service, democratic particularists and Catholics who shared the king's political standpoint.[21]

The consequences of the war—the alliance treaty Württemberg had to conclude with Prussia and the required military reforms modelled on the Prussian army—poured oil on the smouldering fires of particularism. The democratic Volkspartei (People's Party), for instance, collected 150,000 signatures of Württembergers opposing the adaptation of the military reforms. As a result of these ructions, the Landtag elections of July 1868 produced an anti-Prussian majority of the Volkspartei and pro-Austrian "Greater-Germans". When the king opened the new parliament in December he emphasised his determination "together with my people to guard the independence of Württemberg". In the following year Karl ensured that the 50th anniversary of the granting of the kingdom's constitution was duly commemorated as an event that set Württemberg apart from states with shallower constitutional roots. Donning a full dress uniform, the king attended the service in the palace chapel at Stuttgart to hear the court preacher Prelate Karl von Gerok liken the Württemberg constitution to a healthy and strong tree. "May God bless today's celebration, so that under the oak tree, which was planted by us fifty years ago, prince and people may join hands anew to form a bond of justice and peace! May God's grace be with our king and his house, God's spirit

with his counsellors and our parliament, God's blessing with our dear Württemberg and the whole German fatherland."[22]

The distinction encapsulated in the last few words of Gerok's prayer—"dear Württemberg and the whole German fatherland"—was to condition much of Württemberg's politics in the decades that followed. Parties aligned according to their determination either to embrace a small-German nation state or to champion a more independent status for Württemberg amongst the German states. As in Saxony, the war of 1870–1871 proved to be a game-changer for Württemberg. A wave of patriotic excitement swept away the reluctance of both the king and the government to declare war on France. As he placed his troops under Prussian command, King Karl bade a tearful farewell to the Comte St Villier, the French envoy to Württemberg. The chambers supported the war credits almost unanimously and on 22 July 1870 thousands of national-minded Württembergers—including called-up soldiers—thronged into Stuttgart's palace square to serenade the king with patriotic anthems. This mood was sustained by the string of German victories which saw Württemberg troops commanded by the popular and inspirational figure of the Prussian Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, who prefigured the future of a united Germany. Following the decisive victory at Sedan in September 1870, Stuttgart was illuminated and decorated with flags; thousands streamed through the streets bearing torches and celebratory fires were lit on the hilltops surrounding the Württemberg capital. The dynasty could not refuse to be drawn into these patriotic jubilations and King Karl greeted the Stuttgarters with a hearty "Hail Germany! Hail our brave warriors! Hail Württemberg!" This did not mean, though, that he and his government simply acquiesced to the kingdom's integration into the German Reich that Bismarck was putting together against the background of the war. The negotiations about Württemberg's membership dragged on until late November and were only concluded after the kingdom had been granted a number of special dispensations (*Reservatrechte*)—concerning postal services, beer and liquor taxes and some military matters—to ensure a degree of autonomy.[23]

The political balance in Württemberg had shifted, but the tensions had not gone away. The elections to the Landtag at the end of 1870 delivered a victory for the pro-Reich Deutsche Partei but a great deal of support for the new political framework was only grudging, and some outright opposition continued. This was particularly the case for King Karl and his wife Olga, who felt the pain of the reduction of their status very acutely. The king blamed himself for having squandered away the sovereignty he

believed to have inherited from his ancestors and found it very hard to come to a realistic appreciation of the new political situation. When meeting the new Prussian envoy Anton von Magnus in 1872 Karl impressed on him that he had to be a particularist in order to be able one day to pass on an undiminished crown to his successor. He also attacked Württemberg's Deutsche Partei for allegedly disowning their own fatherland. It took the king until March 1872 to meet Kaiser Wilhelm I in Berlin. A number of successful visits and counter-visits followed, but the king would regularly relapse to a default position of anti-Prussian aversion. In 1879 he described Württemberg's membership of the Reich as the worst misfortune; in 1885 he chided his own subjects for preferring Prussian things "for the sake of uniformity". This attitude was not restricted to Karl and his anti-Prussian wife. In March 1882 the Prussian envoy Otto von Bülow sent Bismarck an article from the democratic newspaper *Der Beobachter* to demonstrate the "crass particularism and bitter hatred of Prussia" about in Württemberg. Entitled "Observations on the King's Birthday" the piece commented on the German flags flying from churches and public buildings which, the author believed, were not a suitable "symbol of regional joy and regional loyalty" (*Landesfreude und Landestreue*). Much better to keep this "pure and unadulterated, in the true Württemberg colours". But there was nothing "loyal and true" anymore in that "political *mixtum compositum* [=muddle], in which we half-annexed people live". The article ended by dreaming about a freer future not "under the yoke of black-white [=Prussian] bureaucracy and militarism".[24]

Prussian-trained Prince Wilhelm, who had studied at Göttingen before serving in the German army headquarters in 1870–1871, had a different outlook. He did not speak with the characteristic Swabian dialect and it took some time—and some gentle persuasion—for the prince to integrate himself into Württemberg life, society and politics after he had left his Prussian regiment. The time in Prussia had shaped him. "I still have a great attachment to Berlin, where I spent such agreeable years", he wrote to the Duke of Urach who was in the German capital in 1889; "and I always noticed the same observation as you now, that one is at the centre of a great machine and intellectually elevated through the intercourse with so many interesting and important people". These positive feelings for Prussia were not without consequences for the prince's political outlook. In the autumn of 1876, he wrote to his old friend Plato about Kaiser Wilhelm's recent visit to Stuttgart. "The whole country was up and about and my plain Swabians showed themselves as loyal to the Reich

[*reichstreu*] as possible", Wilhelm observed; "there was an enthusiasm the like of which I had never seen before, and I have to recant quite a lot of what I previously said against them". When, after the death of Kaiser Friedrich III in June 1888, his son Wilhelm II convened an extraordinary meeting of the Reichstag, Prince Wilhelm travelled to Berlin to represent Württemberg during the opening ceremony in the White Hall of the Berlin Palace.[25]

In line with this attitude—and as a further move to distinguish his own reign from the increasingly dysfunctional and problematic tenure of his predecessor—Wilhelm made sure to emphasise his willingness to respect and embrace the new order as soon as he had succeeded to the throne. In his proclamation "To My People", dated 6 October, King Wilhelm promised "faithfully to maintain the constitution of the land, to cultivate piety and the fear of god, to be a warm friend and helper to the poor and the weak and a keen protector of the law". Thus went the draft of his proclamation, kept in the Stuttgart State Archives, but there followed an additional promise in the king's own hand: "to realise my position as regent of a German state in unshakable loyalty to the treaties which founded our German fatherland". According to the liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Wilhelm's change of tone was in line with a new mood in the country. While there would never be a complete amalgamation of Prussian and Swabians, the paper observed, the differences were being diminished. "Even the greatest particularists would not want to do without the Reich anymore."[26]

Prince Wilhelm managed to combine his clearly Reich-friendly attitude with a reputation for protecting Württemberg's interests and distinctive culture. "We Württembergers are a peculiar people", a pamphlet on the new king contended in 1891; "the tribal character of the Swabian tribe is fundamentally different from that of the North German tribes. […] More than once has the new king seen himself in the situation where he had to counter the claims and arrogance from certain quarters on the basis of his position as heir to the Württemberg throne." When a haughty Prussian general offended the Swabian people, the author went on, the prince "rushed to Berlin to present the just demands of the Swabian people to His Majesty Kaiser Wilhelm II". The Württembergers owed it to their prince, the booklet reminded them, that Württemberg troops were now being commanded by a Württemberger.[27]

The background to this praise for Prince Wilhelm was the removal of the unpopular Prussian General Gustav Hermann von Alvensleben, who commanded the XIII German (Württemberg) Army Corps. Even though

he had been warned by King Karl in 1886 that he should respect the local customs and that "Swabians wanted to remain Swabians" the general's very Prussian bearing soon caused friction. By 1888 Karl was pushing for Alvensleben's recall and two years later the local press commented on bad blood the general was causing. In January 1890 the Württemberg envoy to Prussia warned the German government that the powerful position of the corps commander made Württemberg soldiers more dependent on him than on their own king. Less diplomatically, newspapers in Württemberg now demanded that Alvensleben "be sent back to his ancestral potato field and be replaced with an honest Württemberger".[28]

Berlin was in no mood to give in, though. "An unusual concession, like appointing a Württemberger corps commander, would reinforce the impression of a general conciliatoriness on our part", the Prussian envoy Philipp von Eulenburg argued in a letter to the chancellor in September 1890, "and would, as I said, give a new boost to particularism". In fact, the Kaiser considered replacing Alvensleben with his confidant Alfred von Waldersee. Rather than jumping at the chance of becoming the "viceroy of Southern Germany", as the Kaiser had suggested with his inimitable tact, Waldersee hated the idea and turned Eulenburg's argument on its head: the appointment of another Prussian would fan the flames of particularism and because of that a reliable Württemberger should be appointed. At this point Prince Wilhelm, who had been considered for this post, travelled to Berlin for talks with the Kaiser and persuaded him to appoint General Wilhelm von Woelckern—the first Württemberger to hold this post—as commander of the XIII Corps. The success of the prince's mission was warmly praised in military and governmental circles and had clearly not been forgotten when Wilhelm succeeded to the throne a year later.[29]

For Wilhelm's critics, moments like this intervention in 1890 were amongst a small number of exceptions that proved the wider rule of the Württemberg king's penchant for comfortable inactivity. It was indolence, Hans Philippi concluded, that caused Wilhelm to leave "the initiative in minor matters to his ministry and in the major ones to 'his imperial lord'". Moving beyond the question of whether the kind of monarchical role implied as proper in Philippi's critique was really all that desirable, the future *modus vivendi* associated with Wilhelm looked politically viable. It worked both at the Reich level, where relations between Berlin and Stuttgart were set to be largely trouble-free, and within Wilhelm's narrower fatherland with its emphatic constitutional tradition, where Swabians felt that they could remain Swabians.[30]

"Not Vassals, But Allies": Prince Ludwig and the Reich

Whatever misgivings Prussian observers may have had about particularist traits in Saxony or Württemberg, they paled into insignificance compared to the exasperation caused by the Bavarians in general and by Prince Ludwig in particular. "He is dangerous and deceitful", a vexed Kaiser Wilhelm II scribbled onto a diplomatic report from Munich in 1900. This antagonism was fuelled by both sides. Like his father before him, the Kaiser looked with disdain on the other German princes. Wilhelm II was as irritable about the Bavarians' perceived lack of deference to him as he could be high-handed in his treatment of the smaller German princes. These "old uncles", as he called his fellow monarchs in a letter to Bismarck in 1887 would have to learn to "come to heel". Four years later the Kaiser ended a speech he gave in Düsseldorf with an infamous claim that caused immediate upset at the courts of the other German monarchs: "Only one is master in the Reich", Wilhelm asserted, "and I am he, I will not tolerate any other".[31]

In the case of Bavaria, a part of the Reich that struck Thomas Mann's Tony Buddenbrook, a merchant's daughter from the venerable Hanseatic port of Lübeck on the Baltic coast, as a "real foreign country", this kind of claim was likely to cause particular resentment. After all, as Allan Mitchell has observed, "the visual and audial impact of national unification was very slight" in post-1870 Bavaria: citizens carried Bavarian passports, had their luggage checked by Bavarian customs officers, hoisted white-and-blue flags instead of the German black-white-red, licked their own Bavarian postage stamps and "bought them from Bavarian postal clerks in offices that did not bear the inscription above the door, 'Kaiserliches Postamt', which appeared everywhere else in Germany except in Württemberg". As the main Catholic country in the Reich at a time of rising tensions between the Roman Church and political Catholicism on the one hand and a coalition of anti-clerical liberalism and the Prusso-German state on the other, the kingdom soon assumed a special role within in a wider context of particularist tensions. This was also reflected in the great care Bavaria took in order to avoid being defeated in the votes of the Bundesrat, the imperial organ representing the allied governments.[32]

Bavaria's monarchy, naturally, had an important part to play in all this, and the Wittelsbach dynasty "both embodied and cultivated a non-Prussian style of public life". In many respects, Prince Ludwig was ideally placed

to keep adding his six to the Kaiser's half-dozen and thus maintain a relationship that was never entirely without acrimony. "The whole pride and defiance of the House of Wittelsbach live in Prince Ludwig", the Prussian envoy Count Monts observed in January 1896, "but his intellect tells him at the same time that, in the foreseeable future, Germany can offer his house nothing but the second position. In order to conserve that which, according how things are seen here, was salvaged from the shipwrecks of 1866 and 1870 for his dynasty, he wants to wave the Bavarian sceptre for a few years." This time Monts, whose appraisals of Ludwig usually tended to err on the side of invective, hit the nail on the head. He correctly identified the future king of Bavaria as caught on the horns of a dilemma: viscerally opposed to brooking any reduction of Bavaria's autonomy or slight on the Wittelsbachs' dignity, Ludwig nevertheless realised that there was no viable alternative to the realities created by the "shipwrecks" of 1866 and 1870. Determined as he was to play a substantial role in the present and future politics of his country, the Wittelsbach prince faced a difficult road ahead. As a result, no other German prince would rattle the cage of the Reich quite as often or as loudly as the last king of Bavaria.[33]

It is important to contrast Prince Ludwig's attitude to Bavaria's role within the German Reich to that of his cousin, King Ludwig II, and of his father, Prince-Regent Luitpold, who responded in markedly different ways. The late king had been cajoled into nominally spear-heading the German princes' initiative to call upon King Wilhelm I of Prussia to accept the imperial title in 1870. Moreover, he only experienced the superintendence of the Reich during its milder Bismarckian period. In spite of this Ludwig II never came to terms with the new status quo. "I know your Bavarian heart and that of your husband", he wrote to Baroness von Gesser in 1871, "and I am convinced that—like mine—it often bleeds because of so much that is deeply regrettable which the creation of the newly founded Reich has brought with it. Woe, that I have to be king at such a time […] I have rarely enjoyed happy hours since these baneful treaties were concluded, am sad and distempered, which is inevitable, given what I have to bear and suffer on account of these political events." Six years later the king still castigated the "party of the Germanisers [*Deutschtümler*]" who refused to "recognise the peculiarities of the individual tribes and seek to undermine more and more the well-justified existence of the individual German states". Instead he drew some comfort from the continued existence of "better elements, who rally together more and more and loyally support their indigenous prince". By regarding the foundation of

the Reich as a mediatisation of Bavaria in favour of a Prussian-led "small-German" nation state the king certainly reflected the strong scepticism of a majority of Bavarians, but for him personally the loss of sovereignty felt catastrophic. It developed into what Hans-Michael Körner has called "a trauma in Ludwig II's political imagination". The sense of having failed to defend his ancestral rights and the unbearable contrast between his notion of his own majesty and that of his dynasty on the one hand and the political realities on the other contributed greatly to Ludwig II's ultimate descent into a delusional escapism.[34]

Ludwig's uncle Luitpold, who succeeded first the late king and then Ludwig II's incapacitated brother Otto as regent in 1886 approached the issue of Bavaria's place within the Reich in a more relaxed manner. Even before he assumed office, some observers pointed out that Luitpold would not only be less of a particularist thorn in the flesh of the Reich than his nephew had been, but would also be more amenable than his own emphatically Catholic son. "Not the clerical Ludwig will be given the regency", Vienna's *Neue Freie Presse* predicted in May 1886, "but his liberal, pro-Prussian father". As an army officer Luitpold had been involved in the Prussian-orientated reform of the Bavarian military in the wake of 1866. Moreover, as a steady supporter of the moderately liberal Bavarian ministries led by Johann von Lutz, Friedrich Krafft von Crailsheim and Clemens von Podewils-Dürniz, the prince-regent came to be associated with a positive engagement with the Reich. Luitpold maintained a sense of pride in the Wittelsbach dynasty, but he approached the issue with a degree of discretion. Thus, in 1905 the regent promptly acted upon Prussian misgivings about plans to celebrate the centenary of Bavaria's elevation to the rank of a kingdom. In line with Luitpold's wishes the jubilee would be marked quietly, the *Berliner Tageblatt* reported with patent satisfaction. This was welcome since Napoleon's creation of Bavaria's royal crown reminded Germans of the "deepest humiliation of the fatherland". The public statement in which Luitpold announced that there would be no grand celebrations to mark the centenary epitomised his balanced and unflappable approach. The octogenarian prince gratefully acknowledged the patriotic spirit which had motivated many of his subjects to plan a festive occasion. He took this as "a new proof that all parts of the kingdom rejoiced in being united under the sceptre of the house of Wittelsbach" and ended by praising the recent "unification of the German states in a mighty empire, within which Bavaria knows herself to be respected and highly regarded". By assuming this stance, the regent reflected the gradual

advance of elements of an Imperial-German monarchical cult into the patriotic mentalities of late nineteenth-century Bavaria and acknowledged the need for Wittelsbach loyalties to be reconciled with these wider identities, rather than antagonising them.[35]

Luitpold's diplomatic and emollient attitude to the issue of Bavarian particularism needs to be seen against the context of his son's notoriety as a staunchly Catholic defender of both the kingdom's constitutional position within the Reich and of the dignity of the Wittelsbach dynasty. By the time Luitpold called off the centenary celebrations in 1906, Prince Ludwig already had a well-established record of particularist outbursts. The prince put his deep unease about the creation of the Reich on the record from the very start. When the Bavarian upper chamber debated the treaties that would form the German nation state in December 1870, the young Ludwig spoke at length. First, he grimly listed all the injustices and missed opportunities that had led to the current situation and then, through gritted teeth, announced that he would vote for the treaties now proposed—"but truly not with a light heart". The main reason for this, he explained, was his fear that Bavaria would otherwise be forced to accept "much worse conditions". Ludwig ended his speech with an appeal to the Bavarian government to seize the opportunities afforded by the ongoing peace negotiations to strengthen Bavaria, if possible through territorial gains. This was crucial for, "the stronger Bavaria is in Germany, the safer it is from being absorbed by Prussia".[36]

When, after the death of his cousin and his father's assumption of the regency, Prince Ludwig adopted a more prominent political position, he immediately seized upon the issue of Bavaria's and his own rights. In November 1886, less than half a year after King Ludwig's death, his namesake protested against an existing regulation whereby the German navy would fire more guns when saluting a Prussian prince than in honour of a non-Prussian one. Though grumbling that there was too much wasteful firing of salutes going on in general, Bismarck readily agreed that this rule was "incompatible with the federal character" of the Reich and made the necessary amendments. From a Prussian vantage point, this kind of request fitted into the wider picture of a prince who had previously gone out of his way to avoid having to meet the popular German crown prince—even when they both happened to be in Madrid at the same time in 1883—and whom newspapers and diplomats considered a keen champion of political Catholicism and particularism. He is widely seen as "ultramontane and belonging to the anti-Prussian tendency", the Württemberg

envoy Oskar von Soden reported in 1889. "The heir to the Wittelsbach throne repeatedly feels the need to emphasise military autonomy from the point of view of the Bavarian crown", the Prussian diplomat von Pückler reported in 1893. A year later his successor, Max von Thielmann, hoped against hope that Ludwig would one day "show some understanding with regard to Bavaria's special rights where these damage the prestige of the Reich without generating the least benefit for the country of Bavaria". Characteristically, Thielmann's successor Count Monts chose a particularly memorable formulation to express his concerns about the future king of Bavaria. In a passage marked "important" by the Kaiser, Monts observed in May 1896 that "the worm of envy against the house of Hohenzollern was gnawing incessantly on the prince's soul" and that Ludwig would, "with truly Wittelsbach tenacity, cling to this feeling until the end of his days".[37]

Those expressing misgivings about the prince's commitment to intra-Reich harmony would have seen their worries spectacularly confirmed only a few weeks later, when, in the full glare of an international celebration, Ludwig caused the so-called Moscow Incident. In June 1896, the prince travelled to Russia to represent his father at the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II. At a garden party organised by the city's German community, a hapless functionary offered a clumsy toast in honour of Prince Heinrich of Prussia—the Kaiser's younger brother, who attended on behalf of the Prussian monarch—and the German princes who had travelled to Russia "in his entourage" (*Gefolge*). Before the raised glasses could be emptied, however, Prince Ludwig intervened indignantly. "The German princes are not vassals, but allies of the German Kaiser", he snapped at the speaker. "As such, as Kaiser Wilhelm I always acknowledged, they stood side by side with Prussia twenty-five years ago, as such they will stand together again, should Germany be in danger. Germans everywhere should be mindful of this and should not, because of the wider fatherland, forget the narrower *Heimat* and their attachment to their indigenous dynasty." According to a report from the German ambassador, Ludwig had also claimed that there was much—including the imperial crown—that Prussia owed to the other German princes.[38]

While the icy silence that ensued and Prince Heinrich's swift exit made clear that he had caused offence, Ludwig showed only scant remorse and remained largely unrepentant during the journalistic maelstrom that followed. The Wittelsbach House Archive in Munich contains two large volumes of press cuttings just on the aftermath of this affair with hundreds

of clippings from dozens of German and foreign newspapers. Friends and enemies of the Wittelsbach prince rode into battle either to celebrate the manly and liberating words bravely spoken against Prussian haughtiness or to castigate the Bavarian for having shown the world a disunited and bickering Reich. "No German, regardless of who it is", Berlin's *National-Zeitung* insisted, "must bring about the spectacle of a political argument amongst Germans when abroad and create the impression there that the fabric of the Reich has been loosened by particularism".[39]

As could be expected, the journalistic organs of Bavaria's particularist camp chose a rather different line. *Das Bayerische Vaterland* welcomed Ludwig's "right word at the right time" which would "find a vigorous echo across the whole country of Bavaria and in every Bavarian heart". The Moscow speech would make the prince unforgettable because it had "given Bavarian feelings and Bavarian consciousness a proud, robust, Bavarian expression in front of the whole world". Under the headline "Fair Enough!", Munich's *Volkszeitung* reported a few days later that a North German, who had dared to speak ill of Prince Ludwig in a Munich tavern, had been duffed up and thrown out by two patriotic Bavarians. To round things off, the landlord had thrown the glass from which the man had been drinking after him with the words: "No honest Bavarian will ever drink from this again, you rotten …!" (See also Fig. 5.1) More worryingly, from a Reich point of view, was the fact that such feelings were not confined to Bavaria. The Prussian envoy in Württemberg sent a clipping from the Stuttgart *Beobachter* to Berlin, which celebrated that Ludwig had confronted "arrogant, pompous Prussiandom" with the indignant call of "This far and no further!" The prince, the paper claimed, had not just spoken for Bavaria, but "from the heart of all of South Germany". The *Elsaß-Lothringische Volkspost* from Colmar in Alsace carried the very same article a few days later and, commenting from France, *Le Soleil de Paris* was one of many foreign papers stoking the fire. "By affirming the autonomy of Bavaria and his equality in rank with Prince Heinrich in such a positive manner", it claimed, "Prince Ludwig knew himself to be in accord with the feelings of his future subjects".[40]

The excitement was not restricted to newspaper columns. Only a few days after the incident the unfortunate Theophil von Reichlin-Meldegg, the Bavarian military plenipotentiary in Berlin, met the Kaiser. Wilhelm II told him "in a very excited manner" that Ludwig's speech had created "the very worst [*allerübelsten*] impression abroad". He also insisted that he had known about the prince's anti-Reich attitude for some time.

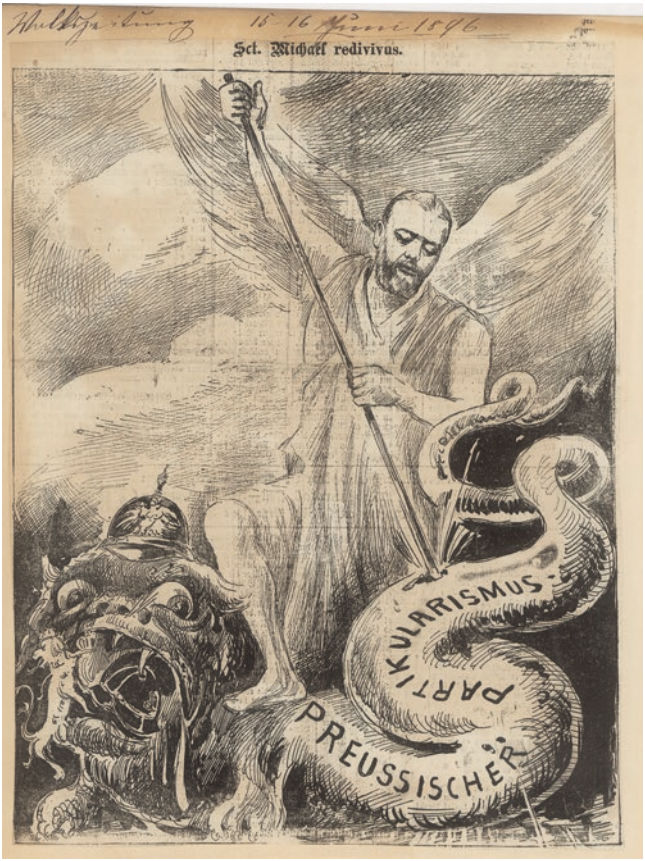

Fig. 5.1 For Munich's *Volkszeitung* (15 June 1896) Prince Ludwig's Moscow speech had turned him into "St Michael Redivivus"—slaying the dragon of Prussian particularism.

Reichlin struggled to defend Ludwig—given the "extremely agitated manner of the Kaiser's utterance"—and did not make much headway. The Kaiser insisted that Ludwig's behaviour was unacceptable. The pressure on Ludwig to eat some humble pie was clearly mounting. However, even when he was forced to visit the Kaiser in person a few weeks later aboard the imperial yacht at Kiel, he was, according to Wilhelm, "nowhere near experiencing remorse about his unpatriotic and un-German behaviour".

Ludwig still complained that Germany's non-Prussian princes, were often unjustly treated like vassals. The meeting, where the Bavarian, who had had struggled into a full-dress uniform, was received by a noticeably casually dressed Wilhelm, left a bad taste in the mouths of both royals. The Kaiser may have crowed about having forced Ludwig to "go to Canossa" afterwards, but Catholic and particularist circles and their newspapers continued to celebrate the gutsy Wittelsbach prince for clarifying that Bavaria would give the Reich its due—but no more.[41]

Ludwig had clearly not enjoyed his clash with the Kaiser. On the eve of the meeting he wrote a nervous letter to his wife, describing how he had spent the day in Hamburg waiting to be told where to meet Wilhelm II and ended on "May God make it all go alright". But this experience did not change him in the long term. "His Royal Highness Prince Ludwig appears not to have had enough after one Canossa experience", the clearly exasperated Bavarian Minister-President von Crailsheim sighed to the Prussian envoy in May 1900. It was another of Ludwig's speeches that had caused more furore, although this time the setting was rather more mundane than the coronation of the Russian tsar. On 21 May 1900 the prince rose to address a meeting of the "Association for the Improvement of River and Canal Navigation" in the town of Straubing in Lower Bavaria. "Having ridden his hobby horse, namely that agriculture and industry are not opposed to each other […] he suddenly moved onto political terrain and constructed a controversy which […] at all events had better been avoided", is how the Württemberg envoy Oskar von Soden described what followed. "No-one really understands what drove the princely speaker to make this very strong statement", Soden concluded with a shrug and put it down to Ludwig's impulsive nature. What had happened?[42]

Having dwelt on industrial-agricultural synergies for a while, Ludwig moved on to the importance of river traffic and then demanded Reich subsidies for Bavarian steamship companies. At this point he suddenly swerved into a discussion of the relationship between Bavaria and the Reich. "We in Bavaria are often accused of not sufficiently appreciating the benefits we derive from the German Reich. I especially want to protect Bavaria from the claim that it is a grace bestowed on us that we belong to the Reich; for the German Reich has been forged together with Bavarian blood just as much as with the blood of any other German tribe, and because of that we do not want to be regarded as lesser brothers, but as full brothers, and just as we stood up for and are standing up for the whole German Reich, so we demand that the German Reich protect our special Bavarian interests."[43]

Reactions to this speech, which appeared verbatim in the press the following day, were not slow in coming. If Bavarians want to be seen as "full brothers", the Kaiser wrote on the margin of a diplomatic report, then they had better "behave accordingly and not like distant cousins". The national-liberal *Kölnische Zeitung* strongly regretted the prince's words and could not find any facts to support Ludwig's complaint of unfair treatment. "We are convinced", the paper claimed, "that, on the contrary, the exaggerated special wishes of Bavaria and the middling and small states, are fulfilled in a far-reaching and perhaps rather excessive fashion". According to Count Dönhoff, pro-Reich circles in Saxony reacted with astonishment to Ludwig's words and could not explain "the extraordinary fierceness with which he described the relationship between Bavaria and North Germany". True to form, the clerical press in Bavaria praised the "hero of Straubing" with the *Augsburger Postzeitung* and the *Neue Bayerische Zeitung* supporting the prince and the *Bayerischer Kurier* warning against the "erosion of Bavaria's special political rights".[44]

Encouraged by this support, Ludwig ignored the chorus of criticism and returned to the issue of the Reich constitution in a speech he gave to members of the Bavarian agricultural association at Nördlingen a few days later. "Study the constitution of the German Reich", he exhorted the journalists in the room. "The Reich constitution is based on the treaties, which the North German Confederation, after a victorious war, concluded with the allied and co-victorious South German states." Before returning to the agricultural theme of his speech he regretted that, "everywhere, in every place and at every time wrong opinions were being disseminated about the Reich constitution". What followed was a predictable pattern of responses. Under the headline "Prince Ludwig of Bavaria's Relapse" the *Berliner Tageblatt* complained that the scandalous comments made at Straubing had not been corrected and that the prince was misinterpreting the history of the Reich constitution. The Bavarian government and Prince-Regent Luitpold, Count Monts assured Chancellor Hohenlohe, also deeply deplored the prince's recent utterances, which had led to expression of *Schadenfreude* at Germany's patent disunity in the French press. The government's regret did not impress the Kaiser. "No use", he commented, "the tort abroad is now done". Yet the "whole pack of the Bavarian chaplain-press", as Count Monts described the journalistic organs of the Catholic Zentrum party, chose to applaud the prince. To illustrate what he meant the envoy enclosed a long article from the *Münchener*

Zeitung entitled "By the Grace of Prussia" which praised Prince Ludwig's courage before providing a long and dispiriting list of alleged Prussian insults and centralising excesses.[45]

It is important to note that, noisy though these ructions were, they did not lead to a policy of scorched earth. Thoughtful voices, like the liberal *Vossische Zeitung*, calmly analysed the issues raised by Ludwig. These speeches were being criticised in some quarters, the paper observed, but they were meeting with great satisfaction across South Germany and beyond, where reactionary Prussian policies had caused much bad blood. Even though the purpose driving Ludwig's speeches appeared opaque, they constituted an important political event which must not be underestimated. After a few weeks had passed even the Kaiser found himself in a more constructive mood. In July, Count Lerchenfeld, the Bavarian envoy to Berlin, reported that during the recent launch of the battleship *Wittelsbach*, the Kaiser had gone out of his way to be friendly to him, had taken his arm and told him that he had ensured that the event was particularly festive to honour Bavaria and Ludwig's son Rupprecht, who had christened the ship. This was meant to compensate for some of the things that had recently happened, Wilhelm explained, such as Ludwig's speeches, which had irked him greatly.[46]

This willingness to maintain a serviceable relationship with the Wittelsbachs in spite of the provocations from the future king of Bavaria may well have been the result of Ludwig's regular attempts to balance his particularism by presenting himself in a more Reich-friendly, more German manner and thus avoid being politically side-lined. Ludwig's ambivalence about Bavaria's place within a wider German state had deep roots. Amongst his papers there survive two early undated draft memoranda offering "Comments in case Bavaria were to join the North German Confederation" and thoughts on "Bavaria within the Reich". Though both pieces focus on the need to safeguard Bavaria's special position—with demands, amongst others, for a Bavarian diplomat to be assigned to every German embassy, for a compulsory Bavarian representation in various federal committees and for the inclusion of the Bavarian colours in the imperial flag—Ludwig nevertheless worked on the basis of his country's membership and did not advocate a separatist agenda. The same spirit of grudging acceptance of the dictates of *realpolitik* also informed his speech to the upper chamber in December 1870, where he reluctantly supported Bavaria's accession treaties—not least because of the commercial, economic and strategic advantages this would bring.[47]

Ludwig's concerns for Bavaria's place within a wider economic and transport context—especially with access to trade routes via the great rivers and to the oceans—provided an avenue for the prince to pursue a more German outlook in the shape of his support for the imperial navy. Having already addressed Bavaria's contribution to a German navy in his undated memorandum on the North German Confederation, he actively returned to the topic in the 1880s. In 1884–1885 he mentioned his lively interest in "our" fleet several times to the Prussian envoy and hoped to be able to travel on a German warship one day. Keen to build good relations with the Bavarians, Bismarck readily offered to arrange such a cruise and assured the thrifty Wittelsbach prince that the costs would be covered by the Admiralty. Ludwig renewed this initiative in July 1886, shortly after his cousin's death, and attended naval exercises at the Baltic port of Kiel in August 1887.[48]

The Bavarian prince's naval interests did not wane after Kaiser Wilhelm II, a true enthusiast in matters maritime, had come to the throne. In April 1897, Ludwig spoke on behalf of Wilhelm II at the launch of the cruiser *Hertha* and thanked the Kaiser for his "most charming invitation". He described it as a "great joy to show how great his interest in the flowering and flourishing of the German navy was". Having launched another German warship—the cruiser *Munich*—in 1904, Ludwig sent the Kaiser a telegram to thank him for this opportunity to document his commitment to the German navy, which Wilhelm II—by return of post—took as "a new proof of the patriotic spirit connecting North and South". The unveiling of the model warship *Rhineland* in 1910, a gift by the Kaiser for Munich's "German Museum", provided Ludwig with an opportunity to celebrate Bavaria's "true friend and ally, His Majesty the Kaiser", who was, "the main driver, no-one will deny this, the person who had done the most" for the German navy. Wilhelm II made sure to keep the future king of Bavaria on the hook. In 1912 he invited Ludwig to Kiel launch a battleship, to be named *Prince-Regent Luitpold* in honour of his 90-year-old father in the Kaiser's presence. "Your Majesty is according my father a rare honour", Ludwig exclaimed on the day, "and gives me—I hope I may say this—great joy".[49]

There were also occasions outside the nautical sphere, when Ludwig tried is best to present himself in a more agreeable light towards the Reich hierarchy. His efforts never escaped the eagle eyes of the Prussian envoys posted in Munich, but their reports tended to be laced with a generous helping of scepticism. The unusual name "Helmtrud", with which the Bavarian

heir had saddled his unfortunate baby daughter, the prince explained to Georg von Werthern in April 1886, had been chosen to honour Kaiser Wilhelm I through the use of the second syllable of his name. The 89-year-old emperor must have been bemused, but he thanked Ludwig for this charming gesture. A speech Ludwig gave in August 1888 to welcome a convention of shooting clubs attracted praise from some national liberals because of its warm words for his grandfather King Ludwig I, who had been "as good a Bavarian and as good a German". The Prussian envoy advised caution, though: it was probably too early to take this as evidence of a change in the prince's attitude. The next year brought an even more fulsome speech. Addressing the all-German congress of gymnasts in July 1889, Ludwig started with a lengthy paean of praise for the late Wilhelm I, "our venerable hero-emperor" and his son, the late Friedrich III, who had fought so bravely first against Germany's enemies and then against his cruel illness. The prince ended by calling on the audience to fulfil "our task: to hold true to Kaiser and Reich and to remain united". This speech triggered a lively echo in the press, with many papers endorsing the verdict of the liberal *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* that Ludwig had developed a "programme which can be welcomed as a pledge for Bavaria's and Germany's future". Notwithstanding the Prussian envoy's subtle observation that the national tone of Ludwig's speech may well have been intended to enhance his popularity in the less particularist regions of Bavaria, such as Franconia, the Kaiser was pleased and asked for the prince to be congratulated for his excellent, warm and patriotic speech.[50]

When—in 1897, just one year after the Moscow Incident,—Emperor Wilhelm II stage-managed a nation-wide series of celebrations to mark the centenary of his late grandfather's birth, Prince Ludwig dutifully attended the various Munich events, including some to which he had not even been invited, the Prussian envoy Count Monts reported with disbelief. On one occasion the prince chose to give a speech which—given Ludwig's usual attitude—was quite remarkable in that it referred to the "power and lustre" the late Kaiser had given to the new German Reich. But to some Ludwig's periodic expressions of warmth towards the Reich and Prussia smacked of insincerity. Quite often, the prince did not manage to hit the right note. When giving a toast to mark the Kaiser's birthday in 1900, Ludwig soon drifted into a discussion of Bavaria's historical importance and degree of autonomy. These passages, Count Monts observed, struck listeners as "unsuitable and embarrassing". The prince must have noticed this himself and subsequently treated the Prussian diplomat with studied

affability: "the usual, unmistakeable sign of a guilty conscience", according to Monts.[51]

Caught, though, as he was between his desire to stake out a federal-particularist claim for Bavaria and the need to placate Kaiser and Reich, Ludwig kept sending out mixed messages. The mechanism, whereby the Hohenzollern cult that was being staged at Reich level had to be countered with a Wittelsbach cult in Bavaria, was too powerful to allow Ludwig to talk about just one side of the equation. In the very speech he gave in 1910, where he had tried his best to praise Wilhelm II as undeniably the "main driver" pushing for the growth of the German navy, the Wittelsbach heir could not stop himself from adding: "naturally alongside all of the German federal princes and the representation of the German people". When reading this passage, the Kaiser underlined the words and wrote a puzzled "Hello??!" in the margin of the report. This bafflement would never be fully resolved as it correctly reflected the consistently ambiguous attitude to which the Wittelsbach heir adhered right up until his accession. "Prince Ludwig, as he once explained himself, is true to the Kaiser and the Reich", the *Lindauer Volkszeitung* summarised in December 1912, when welcoming the new regent after Luitpold's death; "he recognises that the unity of the German tribes is the firmest foundation for the Reich; but—he added at the time—the special rights accorded to the separate states have to be protected, so that they can fulfil their cultural tasks".[52]

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Standing, as they did, at the very centre of the dynastic future of their respective kingdoms, the heirs to the thrones of Saxony, Württemberg and Bavaria both reflected and impacted on the tensions between particularism and centralism within the Reich. Going by the letter of its 1871 constitution, the imperial-federal German nation state was both formed and constrained by the irrevocable pooling of the sovereignties of its 25, mostly monarchical member states. This peculiar construction was not only a product of the immense political pressures dominating the moment of its foundation, but of Bismarck's determination to ensure the Reich's essentially monarchical character by giving it a multi-polar and monarchical basis. Sharp-eyed contemporaries knew exactly what the chancellor was doing. Germany was heading for "the crassest form of absolutism", Wilhelm Liebknecht predicted in December 1870, "and the new federation will be, in the crassest form, what it is designed to be: a princely insurance company against democracy". But this kind of insurance policy came

with a political price tag. One constant cost incurred by this arrangement was the struggle that ensued to keep balancing the Reich's hegemonic Prusso-German centre, led and personified by the Hohenzollern Kaiser, with the distinct interests and identities of the other member states, whose leaders had become the eternally unequal allies of the German emperor.[53]

In the course of the nineteenth century, Germany's constitutional monarchies had engaged in a multi-dimensional and largely successful process of individual state- and identity building, often woven around a central monarchical and dynastic narrative. As the men pre-destined to take over and eventually pass on the flame enshrined in the monarchical principle, the heirs to the throne of the three smaller German kingdoms played a key role in setting the tone of this ongoing balancing process. In their different ways—which reflected both their specific dynastic traditions and their own personalities—Friedrich August of Saxony, Wilhelm of Württemberg and Ludwig of Bavaria presaged a viable future development of their monarchical systems and a recognisable role for their future realms within the German Reich. This ranged from the military and political emulation of Prussia in Saxony, via a measured articulation of Swabian peculiarities on the basis of a pro-Reich attitude in Württemberg to Prince Ludwig's erratic and defiant insistence on Bavaria's special position.

The future kings of Saxony, Württemberg and Bavaria were thus of central importance not just to the development of the Reich into a more or less homogenised, more or less federal state, but also to the question of whether the Reich—as a whole or in its federal parts—was capable of moving away from what Liebknecht had polemically called the "crassest form of absolutism". Counterintuitively, if Bismarck's original idea is to be taken as a starting point, after 1888 it was the defence of some degree of regional distinctness—and not a move towards greater homogeneity under the Kaiser's leadership—that opened up potential for moving monarchical systems in Germany, albeit slowly, in a more democratic direction.[54]

Notes

1. I am indebted for this opening to Rumschöttel, 2013, p. 41; Körner, 1991, pp. 31–32.
2. Nipperdey, 1986, p. 96; *Gesetz betreffend die Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches* (http://www.documentarchiv.de/ksr/verfksr.html; accessed 14 June 2016).

3. Nipperdey, 1992, p. 97; Confino, 1997, p. 14; Reichold, 1977, pp. 15–44.
4. Ostermann, 2009, p. 234.
5. Boldt, 1991, p. 34; Albrecht, 2003, pp. 319–29; Möckl, 1972, pp. 39–40; Dietrich, 1984, pp. 49–81.
6. Huber, 1963, pp. 724–741, 788–789; Albrecht, 2000, pp. 39–64; Pflanze, 1990, pp. 490–506.
7. Botzenhart, 2004, pp. 197–199; Hüttl, 1986, pp. 210–215; Reichold, 1977, pp. 84–85, 170–171; Nathan, 2016.
8. Müller, 2011, pp. 94–99; Möckl, 1972, pp. 377–378, 393–397; Körner, 1991, pp. 31–42; Fehrenbach, 1969, pp. 143–157; Röhl, 2001, pp. 568–572.
9. Nipperdey, 1992, pp. 485–497; on the complex issue of the (changing) nature of the Reich as a federal state see also: Binder, 1971; Rauh, 1973; Ambrosius et al., 2015. Oliver F. R. Haardt (Cambridge) is about to complete a major new study on this topic.
10. Eulenburg to Caprivi, Nr 24, 23 February 1894 (AA, R2727); Schipfer, 1892, pp. 27, 29.
11. Kroll, 2007, p. 359.
12. Green, 2005, p. 133; Retallack, 2015, pp. 107–137; Weichlein, 1997, pp. 241–270; Weichlein, 2000, pp. 172–175; Treitschke, 1866, p. 8.
13. Weichlein, 2000, pp. 175–177.
14. Starke, 2000, pp. 143–169.
15. Fink, 2007, pp. 207–211; Mergen, 2005, p. 250.
16. Retallack, 1992, pp. 53–57; Retallack, 1990, pp. 276–278; Weichlein, 2000, pp. 178–179.
17. *Leipziger Zeitung* (17 October 1904); *König Friedrich August III.*, 1905, p. 21; Kracke, 1964, pp. 40, 69.
18. Bang, 1915, p. 35.
19. Bülow to Caprivi, Nr 39, 21 March 1890 (AA, R3253); Dönhoff to Hohenlohe, Nr 100, 15 July 1898 (AA, R3225).
20. Wilhelm to Plato, 4 January 1868 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato); despatch to Württemberg envoys, 28 January 1869; Soden to Varnbüler, 29 January 1869; Varnbüler to Soden, draft, 30 January 1869 (HStA Stuttgart, E55, Bü 426).
21. Confino, 2000, p. 346.
22. Sauer, 1999, pp. 158–162; Green, 2001, pp. 59–60.
23. Sauer, 2011, pp. 15–22; Sauer, 1999, pp. 165–190; Confino, 1997, pp. 21–23; Müller, 2011, pp. 131–134.
24. Confino, 2000, pp. 347–352; Sauer, 1999, pp. 217–224; Bülow to Bismarck, Nr 17, 8 March 1882 (AA, R3362); *Der Beobachter* (8 March 1882).

25. Wilhelm to the Duke of Urach, 28 February 1889 (HStA Stuttgart, GU117, 1305); Wilhelm to Plato, 3 October 1876 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato).
26. King Wilhelm's proclamation, 6 October 1891 (HStA Stuttgart, E130a, Bü 1); *Frankfurter Zeitung* (7 October 1891).
27. *König Wilhelm II.*, 1891, p. 13.
28. Sauer, 2011, pp. 87–90.
29. Eulenburg to Caprivi, 25 September 1890, in: Röhl, 1976, pp. 574–575; Röhl, 2001, pp. 468–469; Sauer, 1994, p. 92.
30. Philippi, 1972, p. 164.
31. Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 74, 24 May 1900 (AA, R2805); Müller, 2011, pp. 95–99; Wilhelm to Bismarck, 29 November 1887, in: Bismarck, 1975, p. 550; Obst, 2010, p. 131.
32. Mitchell, 1973, pp. 591–592; Fenske, 1974, p. 269.
33. Ibid.; Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 20, 28 January 1896 (AA, R2802).
34. Albrecht, 2000; Rumschöttel, 2013, pp. 41–42; Körner, 2011, p. 20; Fink, 2007, pp. 203–205.
35. *Neue Freie Presse* (27 May 1886), quoted in: *Allgemeine Rundschau* (17 June 1911), 401; *Berliner Tageblatt* (8 December 1905); Rumschöttel, 2013, pp. 42–43; Blessing, 1982, pp. 179–181 (with an interesting discussion of the effect of the deaths of Emperors Wilhelm I and Friedrich III in 188 on the mood in Bavaria), 233–235.
36. Forster, 1894, pp. 37–42.
37. Werthern to Bismarck, Nr 76, 11 Nov. 1886 (AA, R2796); Werthern to Bismarck, Nr 42, 17 December 1883 (AA, R2707); Soden to Mittnacht, 28 July 1889 (HStA Stuttgart, E50/05, Bü 213); *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (17 April 1892); Pückler to Caprivi, Nr 97, 9 June 1893 (AA, R2800); Thielmann to Caprivi, Nr 68, 31 May 1894 (AA, R2801); Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 50, 16 May 1896 (AA, R2802).
38. Forster, 1897, p. 108; Radolin to German Foreign Office, 7 June 1896 (AA, R2802). It should be noted, though, that the Moscow Incident had been preceded by protracted and unedifying squabbling caused by Prussia's stubborn insistence that, as the representative of the Kaiser, Prince Heinrich be granted ceremonial precedence over other German princes, even though this was not warranted by his place in the order of succession. To placate Berlin and spare the blushes of the increasingly embarrassed Russian hosts Prince Luitpold had eventually agreed for his son to be placed below Prince Heinrich. It is likely that this contributed to Ludwig's tetchiness. See the detailed and wry correspondence on these bickerings in Bay. HStA, MA98530.
39. Bay. HStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv, NL König Ludwig III. Nr. 312; *National-Zeitung*, quoted in *Pfälzische Presse* (10 June 1896).

40. *Das Bayerische Vaterland* (11 June 1896); *Der Beobachter*, sent by Wesdehlen to Hohenlohe, Nr 67, 10 June 1896 (AA, R2802); *Volks-Zeitung* (14 June 1896); *Elsaß-Lothringische Volkspost* (12 June 1896); *Le Soleil de Paris* (21 June 1896).
41. Reichlin to Bavarian Ministry of War, 9 June 1896 (Bay. HStA, MA98531); Wilhelm II to Hohenlohe, telegram, 30 June 1896 (AA, R2803); Lerchenfeld to Crailsheim, 30 June 1896 (Bay. HStA, MA98531).
42. Ludwig to Marie Terese, 28 June 1896 (Bay. HStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv, NL Königin Marie Terese, Nr 54); Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 74, 24 May 1900 (AA, R2805); Soden to Mittnacht, 22 May 1900 (HStA Stuttgart, E50/05, Bü 224).
43. For the text of the speech see *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (22 May 1900).
44. Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 72, 22 May 1900 (AA, R2805); *Kölnische Zeitung* (27 May 1900); Dönhoff to Hohenlohe, Nr 94, 27 May 1900 (AA, R2805); the clerical papers are reviewed in Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 73, 23 May 1900 (AA, R2805).
45. Text of the Nördlingen speech in *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (29 May 1900); *Berliner Tageblatt* (29 May 1900); Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 79, 31 May 1900 (AA, R2806); *Münchener Zeitung* (31 May 1900).
46. *Vossische Zeitung* (29 May 1900); Lerchenfeld to Crailsheim, 6 July 1900 (Bay. HStA, NL Krafft Graf von Crailsheim, 51, 43/66).
47. "*Bemerkungen für den Fall, daß Bayern in den Norddeutschen Bund eintreten sollte*" and "*Bayern im Reich*" (Bay. HStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv, NL König Ludwig III., Nr 302, 304); Forster, 1894, 41.
48. Werthern to Bismarck, 9 May 1885, Nr 17, 20 May 1885 (AA, R2707); Werthern to Rottenburg, 2 July 1886 (AA, R2795); Werthern to Bismarck, Nr 44, 15 August 1887.
49. Forster, 1897, p. 111; Ludwig to Wilhelm, 1 April 1904 and Wilhelm to Ludwig, 1 May 1904 (AA, R2809); Schlözer to Bethmann-Hollweg, Nr 50, 29 September 1910 (AA, R2730); for documents on the launch of *SMS Prinzegent Luitpold* see Bay. HStA, NL König Ludwig, Nr 314.
50. Werthern to Bismarck, Nr 15, 6 April 1886 (AA, R2793); Zeilenberg to Bismarck, Nr 79, 9 August 1888 (AA, R2797); Forster, *Ludwig*, 50–53; *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (30 July 1889); Lindenau to Bismarck, Nr 85, 1 August 1889 (AA, R2797).
51. For Ludwig's 1897 speech see: Forster, 1897, pp. 109–111; Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 32, 23 March 1897 (AA, R3438); for Ludwig's 1900 speech see: *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (27 January 1900); Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 18, 6 Feburary 1900 (AA, R2805).
52. Rumschöttel, 2013, p. 49; Schlözer to Bethmann-Hollweg, Nr 50, 29 September 1910 (AA, R2730); *Lindauer Volkszeitung* (14 December 1912).

53. *Verhandlungen des Reichstages des Norddeutschen Bundes*, vol. 15 (Berlin, 1870), 154; *Lindauer Volkszeitung* (14 December 1912).
54. On the development of the Reich's federalism see the literature reviews by Hans Fenske (1974) and Abigail Green (2003).

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CHAPTER 6

"My Government Will …"

Variations on a Future Theme

The letter of codified constitutional law as well as the development of both its spirit and the political culture in the course of the nineteenth century constrained monarchs and monarchs-to-be in how they could play their role realistically and successfully. The contexts within which they had to operate—regionally, nationally and across Europe—and patterns of cross-dynastic and transnational transfer generated a process of convergence. All over the continent as well as up and down the monarchical landscape of the German Reich, royals made near-identical claims, presented themselves in well-nigh indistinguishable ways and regaled themselves and their subjects with very similar tales of their mutual devotion—all the while insisting that their situation reflected precisely the characteristic traits of their very own house, *Stamm*, people or nation.

That monarchical constitutionalism had not merely established itself as a "European constitutional type" but had spawned a fairly standard pattern of cultural, ceremonial and rhetorical practices to envelope it, does not mean, however, that there was no room left for a measure of variety. Both local traditions and the contingent factor of the personality of the monarchical personage in question could make an appreciable difference. In some extreme cases—one may point to the delusional neo-absolutist reveries of Bavaria's King Ludwig II or Kaiser Wilhelm II—the model was stretched to near-breaking point. However, such aberrations usually came at a hefty political price for the monarchical system. Declared insane by his

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ministry, the Wittelsbach king was deposed in 1886 and died a mysterious death shortly afterwards. Only a few years into Wilhelm II's reign his eccentric behaviour led the classicist and left-wing writer Ludwig Quidde to pen his widely read pamphlet "Caligula. A Study about the Roman Madness of the Caesars". This spectacularly irreverent denunciation was universally understood to be less about the insane Roman emperor than about the Kaiser. The Prussian monarch unfortunately evoked the image of Ludwig II, Friedrich von Holstein wrote to Philipp zu Eulenburg in 1895, and pointed gloomily to the "conclusions the German people would draw from this".[1]

The censure attracted by these extreme cases pointed to exceptions that proved a wider rule: that there could be legitimate variations of the "European constitutional type" reflecting specific contexts, traditions and preferences. In their respective ways Wilhelm of Württemberg, Ludwig of Bavaria and Friedrich August of Saxony lived public lives that complied with the applicable standards of constitutional probity, methodical educational attainment, military training, parliamentary service, public virtuousness, regional rootedness and folksy affability. They had also understood—though the pill was clearly proving a particularly bitter one for the future king of Bavaria to swallow—that professing an all-German patriotism and a willingness to affirm their country's membership of the German Reich had become non-negotiable. The heirs to the throne thereby demonstrated an awareness of the expectations now placed upon them as future holders of the highest office in the land and a willingness to live up to them. Beyond that, the three different versions of a constitutional monarchical future and of their own role within it communicated by the heirs to the thrones of Saxony, Württemberg and Bavaria provide an illuminating demonstration of the range of possibilities contained within the German model of constitutional sub-national monarchy.

A New "Type of Middle-Class Monarch"? Friedrich August's Future Kingship

There was little in Prince Friedrich August of Saxony's performance as royal heir to suggest that he would deviate from the politically low-key and pro-ministerial role Saxony's constitutional monarchs had played during the preceding decades. As far as "the four Saxon kings who were sitting on the throne between 1871 and 1914" are concerned, Karlheinz Blaschke has argued, "one can hardly talk of government activity, for this

was now more and more in the hands of the ministers". Upon their respective accessions in 1854, 1873, 1902 and 1904, Johann, Albert, Georg and Friedrich August III did not even change the makeup of the ministries to indicate the arrival of a new monarch with different priorities, but on each occasion they simply continued with the men already in post. "There was", according to Blaschke, "no striving for absolutism or even for autocratic rule, but—on the contrary—the willingness to forego absolutism, even in its enlightened version, and remain loyally within constitutional limits". It was hardly surprising that this trajectory should lead to King Friedrich August III: "a jovial, popular king without political ideas or initiatives". The public declaration which the new monarch issued in October 1904 thus offered the inhabitants of his kingdom a predictably warm but bland promise of royal care fortified with an explicit commitment to constitutional propriety: "We confirm to them that our royal-paternal [*landesväterliche*] benevolence will constantly be directed to the maintenance of law and justice and to the furtherance of the common weal and to the best of our country; we will also during our reign adhere to, maintain and protect the constitution of the country in all of its provisions."[2]

Even before the marriage scandal of 1902 pushed the crown prince into emphasising features such as the fatherly love he felt for his children and his readiness to be on close, affable terms with the people, his public profile had been largely about soft power. The radical *Dresdener Rundschau*, usually a fierce critic of the court and a champion of the absconded Crown Princess Luise, welcomed Friedrich August to the throne by pointing out that it was "known how likeable all the people have found the new king when he was a prince". The paper referred to the affection in which he had been held at Leipzig during and after his happy student days there and particularly recalled a celebration he attended in that city together with his young wife Luise, when the happy couple had won everyone's hearts.[3] As the crown prince's reactions to the marriage scandal—including his small gestures in the direction of confessional harmony and the carefully publicised moments of kindness towards his estranged wife—show, the desire to regain and retain that level of popular affection continued to motivate him.[4]

Friedrich August's popular, but non-political image of a competent, yet affable officer, who was also a good family man and loving father was rounded off with a gamut of philanthropic and associational commitments. A detailed and lengthy document kept amongst the papers of the Saxon Ministry of the Royal House provides a comprehensive inventory of the "clubs [*Vereine*] of which His Royal Highness the Crown Prince

is a member or which bear his name". The dimension of this operation was truly impressive. There were a total of 69 clubs of which Friedrich August was a member, an honorary member, an honorary chairman or the patron. These clubs covered the length and breadth of the kingdom—from Dresden and Leipzig to Plauen, Chemnitz, Altenburg and Loschwitz. The earliest membership date recorded is 1886—when the 21-year-old prince became an honorary member of the Plauen military club "*Grenadiere*"—and then the dates come in thick and fast throughout the 1880s and 1890s with the latest entry marking the prince's patronage of the anniversary exhibition of the Leipzig Horticultural Club in October 1904. The range of Friedrich August's clubbable interests is striking: hunting, horse-riding, the breeding of foals, geography, antiquities, veterans, music, rowing, art, ethnography, historic weapons, photography, flood victims, the navy, colonial matters, horticulture, welfare and Dresden's intriguingly-named "*Verein zu Rat und Tat*" ("Advice and Action Club") which the prince joined on 14 January 1895.

Addtionally, many clubs and associations bore Friedrich August's name: the Militair-Vereine in Plauen, Chemnitz or Frankenstein, for instance, were all called "Prinz Friedrich August". The Welfare Club Sächsische Festspiele printed a picture of the prince on the front page of its festival programme. More surprisingly, perhaps, the name of the future king of Saxony was even present in the everyday of Saxons with no associational life. The documents in the Saxon archives point to a cornucopia of branded goods and services offered to the patriotic consumer under the name of the crown prince: Friedrich August sparkling wine, Friedrich August cigars and cigarettes, Friedrich August perfume, Friedrich August restaurants, several Friedrich August viewing platforms and streets and at least two baths named after the future king. Just as in the Prussian case explored by Eva Giloi, consumer capitalism provided Saxons with new means "to participate in their royals' lives".[5]

As may be expected from a man readily and willingly associated with social clubs, a hearty meal, a drink and a smoke, the former royal heir gradually evolved into a much-loved figure, widely perceived as a thoroughly likeable, largely non-political, quirky and somehow characteristically Saxon king over the years that followed his accession. Mindful not to transgress the boundaries of a narrowly defined role as constitutional monarch and anxious not to be associated with any unpopular stances—such as maintaining Saxony's reactionary three-class franchise—he took his royal duties seriously. He was especially devoted to providing public visibility

and cultural patronage across his little realm. Hellmut Kretzschmar has gone so far as to detect in Friedrich August a new "type of middle-class monarch" (*bürgerlicher Monarchentyp*)—a phenomenon that invites speculation about whether a democratic evolution of Germany's monarchies might have been possible.[6]

"Nurturing Steady, Prudent Progress": The Prospect of Wilhelm of Württemberg's Rule

Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg was by no means politically assertive, socially extrovert or characterised by great energy. The circumstances that marked his time as heir to the throne meant, however, that he ended up sending out a subtle political message that was more clearly defined than in the case of Prince Friedrich August. Just like in Saxony, though, the future ruler of Württemberg also had to engage in the appropriate pattern of soft power-generating activities that were designed to augur a kindly, socially engaged kingship. Wilhelm's public portrayal as a devoted father, grief-stricken widower, believer in marriage built on love and affable military commander has already been addressed, but there was more. A booklet published to mark Wilhelm's accession in 1891 mentioned that his time as prince had been taken up "by various chairmanships, e.g. at the welfare sales, then through the international art exhibition last spring, through the erection of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-monument and many more". In 1890 Wilhelm also accepted an invitation to act as patron for a display of *tableaux vivants* of colonial scenes with all profits pledged to the German hospital in Zanzibar.[7]

It was not the prince's relatively standard commitment to philanthropic or cultural causes that threw his political effect into sharper relief, though, but the crisis of the Württemberg monarchy in the 1880s. Alienated by Württemberg's loss of sovereignty after the foundation of the German Reich, lacking in energy and a sense of duty, irresponsibly devoted to homoerotic friendships with dubious favourites and affected by ill health, King Karl looked increasingly untenable. By the late 1880s he had brought on a situation where whispers about the need to force his abdication were growing louder. Prince Wilhelm not only stood to inherit a throne that some contemporaries considered to be in a state of decomposition, Karl's unwillingness to fulfil his monarchical functions affected him directly. This became official when the prince was called upon to deputise for the king during his frequent lengthy absences from Württemberg.

As Minister-President Hermann von Mittnacht informed the Prussian envoy in December 1880, the king sought to dress this up as a carefully considered scheme to provide his successor with precious experience of the business of government. Based on a decree issued by the king on 14 December 1880 a short note was published in the official *Staats-Anzeiger für Württemberg* to indicate that King Karl and Queen Olga had left the country to spend several months in the South to protect their health. In their absence, the ministry, chaired by Prince Wilhelm, would deal with all but the most important issues. From then on this pattern would be repeated every year from 1882 to 1888.[8]

In his private correspondence Prince Wilhelm freely admitted that the work associated with his role as deputy was not really taxing. "I am not exactly over-burdened with business", he told his friend Plato in January 1881, "but it ties me down here". A list of items decided by the prince in the king's absence was sent to Karl upon his return in May 1884. It contained just four trivial headings, including moving Collegiate Councillor Dr Stälin up one notch on the salary scale.[9] This is not to suggest, though, that the king's extended stays at Florence, San Remo or Nice were without consequence. On the one hand, they led to a mutual alienation between the monarch and his people, who were getting used to an inactive and invisible monarch spending the winter months south of the Alps and the summer on the shores of Lake Constance. When Kaiser Wilhelm II visited Stuttgart for the first time in October 1888, he asked his royal host a question concerning a particular building. Sadly, he could not say, came Karl's reply, as he was himself a stranger in these parts. On the other hand, the king's sojourns away from home allowed him to indulge in relationships with male favourites—like his infamous friendship with the handsome American Charles Woodcock—which reached unacceptable levels of infatuation and indiscretion. The king was not only wholly devoted to his favourite and showered him with gifts. He allowed him access to state papers and, in the autumn of 1888, granted him the title "*Freiherr von Savage*".[10]

The crisis had now reached its peak. The position of Minister-President von Mittnacht, who had sternly warned Karl not to favour Woodcock in this way, was now under threat from political rivals threatening to turn the king against him. The *Figaro* in Paris wrote openly about the goings on in Württemberg and in October 1888 the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* ominously recalled the case of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, "which latterly ended in such a deeply sad, terrible catastrophe". At this

point Prince Wilhelm—backed by Chancellor Bismarck—intervened to support von Mittnacht by threatening to resign as Karl's deputy. The Württemberg minister-president was fully aware of the prince's role and gratefully acknowledged it in conversation with the Prussian envoy Count Wesdehlen.[11]

Woodcock's subsequent removal from the court brought only a temporary respite, though, as the king quickly fell for another beau, one Wilhelm Georges, who worked as an engineer at the Stuttgart theatre. And so, with Karl growing increasingly frail and Prince Wilhelm unwilling to move directly against the king, the scandal rumbled on. Keen to ingratiate himself with the outraged Kaiser Wilhelm II, the new Prussian envoy in Stuttgart, Philipp zu Eulenburg, expressed horror at the damage all of this was doing to the monarchical principle. In June 1890 he complained that Prince Wilhelm would not put pressure on Georges for fear of damaging his relationship with King Karl. More than a year later, and just a few weeks before Karl's death, the envoy still reported that the prince was hesitating to spell out to the king that his behaviour was "egregious and damaging". Eulenburg put this down to Wilhelm's alleged indolence and claimed that if the prince "rouses himself to any energetic action, then this is more out of a feeling of concern for public opinion, than out of a feeling of a joyful discharge of his duty".[12]

Eulenburg's disdainful comment about Wilhelm's concern for public opinion chimed with a comment made in 1885 by the diplomat Alfred von Kiderlen, who had deplored the prince's "unfortunate […] democratic tendencies". At that time Bismarck had been sufficiently concerned to solicit Count Wesdehlen's opinion as to whether the future king of Württemberg really had democratic inclinations. The answer was reassuring, though, since, according to Minister-President von Mittnacht, there was no need to fear anything of this kind.[13] It is hard to pinpoint the origins of such impressions with precision, but there are some indications that Prince Wilhelm, who had first-hand knowledge of the workings of the Württemberg parliament and had chaired the ministry as his uncle's deputy for several years, had become convinced of the need for constitutional change in the kingdom. The issue of reforming the two chambers of parliament had emerged as a long-running controversy. The parties representing the majority within the elected lower chamber demanded a more democratic electoral system and agitated especially for the removal of the 23 "privileged" members from the elected chamber. The government, however, regarded these unelected representatives of knightly families, the

churches and the University of Tübingen as an indispensable conservative element and refused to remove them without a similar replacement. In a tit-for-tat manoeuvre, the lower chamber blocked the government's 1885 attempt to reform only the somewhat dysfunctional upper chamber. The issue of reform was deadlocked.[14]

A manuscript dated January 1885 and kept amongst the papers of the former Württemberg Minister-President Karl von Varnbüler sheds some light on Prince Wilhelm's attitude to this problem. In a prefatory note Varnbüler explains the genesis of this memorandum: "Prince Wilhelm, when hunting with me at Höfingen, talked about the position of the knights in the chamber of deputies and described them as an oddity [*Unicum*], whereupon I answered 'Yes, but a good one.'" Varnbüler then produced a memorandum to back up his case, but Wilhelm responded with nothing more complimentary than "I have read it with great interest." At the end of the neatly written memorandum Varnbüler scribbled another few lines in his own hand: "Prince Wilhelm spoke of a different composition of the Württemberg parliament along the lines of removing the privileged benches from the second chamber and strengthening the first. He was clearly impressed by the miserable condition of the first chamber. I contradicted him with regard to the second and advocated a reform of the first in the manner already proposed by the government."[15]

The failure of the 1885 initiative must have come as a disappointment to the prince, who picked up on the question of constitutional reform when he gave the speech from the throne to open the 1886 Landtag. "The drafting of a comprehensive constitutional law will form a particularly important item of your business", the told the assembled members of both chambers in March 1886. Based on "confidence in concessions from all sides" the government would make a new attempt "to reach an agreement about a changed composition of both chambers of the parliament". The prince's reference to "concessions from all sides" and the changed make-up of "both chambers" sent out a clear pro-reform signal that was not welcomed by Minister-President von Mittnacht. Another round of reform initiatives ended in stalemate in 1888 and Mittnacht declared the issue "buried" for the time being. In taking this line he was warmly supported by Chancellor Bismarck, who worried about Württemberg's allegedly democratic tendencies. Prince Wilhelm, however, was disappointed about this outcome and openly expressed this to the minister-president. Mittnacht's response was frank: "Your Royal Highness, this will be a task for your reign."[16]

Against this background, the speech with which King Wilhelm II of Württemberg opened the new parliament in October 1891 only days after his accession turned out to offer a more clearly defined sense of the direction of travel than was usually contained in these often bland statements: "Within the narrower fatherland [that is, in Württemberg, rather than in the German Reich] my incessant efforts will be directed at nurturing steady, prudent progress in every area of the life of the state. The question of a revision of the constitution of the country in line with the times, especially with respect to the composition of the parliament has not yet found an answer. My government will renew the attempt of an agreement […]". This message promising constitutional progress was accompanied by a statement indicating Wilhelm's commitment to social justice. The announcement for the traditional amnesty for prisoners on the occasion of the new king's accession stated that this act of sovereign grace was to be directed "especially at the members of the poorer classes of the people who—under the pressure of external need—have committed insubstantial transgressions".[17]

"A Modern Prince in the Best Sense of the Word": The Future King of Bavaria

Wilhelm's subtle dog-whistling suggested a kingship prepared to restore a respectable monarchical role by facilitating a course of prudent constitutional progress. This clearly amounted to more than Friedrich August's prospect of a popular monarchy largely drained of political content. But in terms of leadership ambition and the clarity with which political beliefs were expressed, the future monarchical role indicated by the Württemberg prince paled in comparison with that foreshadowed by the much older heir to the Bavarian throne. When Prince Ludwig took over the reins of monarchical power from his father Luitpold in 1912, he had been recognised as an eminently political, assertive and outspoken operator for many years. His determination to take a prominent stance on public issues predated the death of his cousin King Ludwig II and after the events of 1886 his greater proximity to the throne re-energised the political aspirations of the Wittelsbach prince. By the time he completed his 60th year he was a clearly established player. "The name Prince Ludwig does not mean anything that is emerging, changing or hurrying", the *Augsburger Postzeitung* declared in January 1905; "it is a firm concept. Prince Ludwig's outstanding, detailed and uninterrupted participation in public life, his open

statements—based on a firm conviction—on every economic or political question, which he demonstrates, above all in the finance committee of the upper chamber, but also at various occasions outside of parliament, mark him out as a brilliantly informed, independently thinking royal son."[18]

As has already been shown, Prince Ludwig pursued an unusually vigorous political life and actively sought the public stage. He spoke very frequently, not only in the chamber of the Reichsräte but at numerous public occasions. Keen to demonstrate presence and commitment he travelled all over the kingdom. Between 1870 and 1912 Ludwig addressed Bavarian audiences in Aidenbach, Altötting, Augsburg, Bäumenheim, Friedenfels, Helmstadt, Landau, Landshut, Munich, Nördlingen, Nuremberg, Passau, Straubing, Sulzbach, Tölz, Weiden and Würzburg. That he also gave a brief but forceful speech at an even in Moscow in 1896 quickly became a matter of international note. As was well-known to insiders, the heir to the Bavarian throne also pursued an active role behind the scenes. A whole series of Prussian envoys and several Bavarian ministers believed that Ludwig was pulling the strings behind repeated attempts to start a debate about ending the regency by conferring the royal title on his father or himself. He was known to be in contact with leading figures in the clerical Patrioten or Zentrum party—such as Georg von Hertling or Maximilian von Soden-Fraunhofen. He was also reported to have clever advisers. The Prussian envoy Count Anton von Monts, a particularly implacable critic of the prince, pointed to the fact that Count Lerchenfeld, Bavaria's long-standing envoy to Berlin and "a man seasoned in every intrigue, without scruples and shrewd", was acting as Ludwig's confidant.[19]

To some extent, all of these aspects of Ludwig's political role fit into a fairly coherent whole. His characteristic mixture of "knowledge and stubbornness", Ludwig's biographer Stefan März has observed, "led to an enormous determination to shape things". The prince's statement of 1886, that "in a monarchical state there is always only one who is the master and one who has to decide", was thus not merely a declaration of loyalty to his father. It also laid down a claim for his own future role. This betrays an understanding of his royal office that harked back to his grandfather. King Ludwig I, Heinz Gollwitzer explains, "never conceived of a partnership between people and monarch. He demanded leadership and governance exclusively for himself." Count Monts recognised much of this dynastic tradition in the grandson: "In Prince Ludwig lives all of the pride and defiance of the House of Wittelsbach", the diplomat observed in 1896 and added that the prince was unhappy about how things were

developing in Bavaria. "For all of his openness and familiarity with the people", März summarised Ludwig's attitude, his "thinking with regard to the monarchical principle was reactionary".[20]

Unlike his father Luitpold, Monts added a few months later, Ludwig had no need to be indoctrinated by a "hyper-clerical wife", since he was entirely "Roman" already. He made sure, though, to "conceal this attitude—along with a dynastic pride that is particularly developed in his case—behind liberal affectations [*Allüren*], south-German folksiness and the excessive simplicity of his physical appearance".[21] In expressing it like this, the envoy put a characteristically waspish spin on a couple of genuinely paradoxical aspects of Ludwig's political persona. The prince was, correctly, perceived as culturally and religiously conservative and imbued with a deep sense of the historic role of the Wittelsbach dynasty. Alongside these traditional attitudes, though, Ludwig was committed to a modernising agenda that covered not only economic and technical issues, but also included political questions. Furthermore, it is surprising to note that a future monarch who proved so adept at seeking out public occasions and using various media to project his persona, left, in the words of Hans-Michael Körner, "the wide field of monarchical representation largely unused". It should be noted, however, that both of these contradictory elements—the elements of progressive politics and the proverbial modesty of the prince's lifestyle—paid a dividend by generating new sources of popularity and mellowing the attitude of otherwise anti-monarchical forces.[22]

In October 1910 the Ludwig-friendly weekly *Allgemeine Rundschau* published an article entitled "A Modern Prince in the Best Sense of the Word". It was hardly an accident that the article culminated with an account of the prince's daring recent trip in an airship. What better way to demonstrate the dynasty's readiness to embrace modernity than to entrust the life of the next monarch to the cutting-edge technology of aviation? In Ludwig's case this stunt advertised a well-established track record of a monarchical figure advocating and associating with innovative measures of a technical or economic nature. He had an almost obsessive interest in improving Bavaria's infrastructure, especially canals, but also railways, and he spoke frequently and with urgency about the need to tie Bavaria into the great trade routes of the nation, the continent and beyond. The opening in 1912 of the "Prinz-Ludwig-Harbour" in the Franconian city of Bamberg, which improved transport along the Main-Danube-Canal, put the Wittelsbach's name on the map. Ludwig was also a keen supporter of

modernising Bavaria's agriculture and enhancing its co-operation with the industrial sector. The prince was a vocal advocate of the right of Munich's Technische Hochschule to award doctoral degrees, and when this was eventually granted in 1901, the college awarded the prince with its first honorary doctorate. Another high-profile project keenly endorsed by Ludwig was the foundation of a "German Museum of the Masterpieces of Natural Science and Technology" in Munich. As *Protektor* of the museum, Ludwig took part in all aspects of its planning and proved a tireless fundraiser. He was present for the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone, but did not live to witness its opening in 1925. All of Ludwig's activities in these fields confirm one thing, the *Allgemeine Rundschau* concluded: "he always appears as a prince, who is modern in the best sense of the word, accessible to every healthy expression of progress and with a sharp eye for that which can benefit the weal of the whole people, of every estate".[23]

While Ludwig's championing of technical and economic modernity was relatively uncontroversial and generally welcomed, his active engagement in political issues proved more contentious. As has already been mentioned, his closeness to the clerical Catholic Zentrum party as well as his orthodox and fervent views on religious matters invited fierce criticism from liberal forces. Opposition against the "Black Prince" did not just come from the liberal press and political parties; it was also present in Bavaria's liberal ministerial elite and among anti-clerical forces from outside Bavaria, such as the Prussian and German governments. Ludwig's firm views on the correct balance between Bavarian self-determination and the need for unity within the German Reich proved even more explosive. What is striking though—and this set Ludwig apart from that other supporter of technical progress Kaiser Wilhelm II[24]—is that the Wittelsbach prince added some politically modern aspects to the mix; this was what Monts sneeringly referred to as "liberal affections".

Partly as a result of his religious beliefs, Ludwig showed a sustained interest in social policies. In 1892, for instance—a year after the papal encyclical *Rerum novarum* announced a distinctly Catholic social policy—Ludwig visited the workers' colony Simonshof in Lower Franconia, an institution providing shelter for homeless migrant workers. "The prince's practical eye has recognised the efficacy of every small detail of the institution", the Prussian envoy reported. Ludwig had "admired the co-operation of the different trades" and promised to "dedicate his particular attention to this issue". This was not a one-off. In 1905 Ludwig took up the problem of home workers lacking social protection. This would eventually lead

to the introduction of legal regulations six years later. By demonstrating his concern for this sphere of contemporary life the prince—like many senior members of Europe's ruling houses in the nineteenth century—actively engaged with the concept of "social kingship". This was one of the prominent strategies used by late-modern royalty for generating fresh sources of legitimacy.[25]

There were other occasions for demonstrating Ludwig's awareness of modern developments. In 1893, when opening the German convention of journalists and writers in Munich, the Wittelsbach heir surprised contemporaries with an insightful speech on the role of the press and journalism in modern society. "Reading newspapers is an art now", the prince explained, "for those who read only one paper or just those representing one camp, will of necessity become one-sided. For those placed in high and highest positions this art was also a means to free themselves from the influences of their environment and to find out what would otherwise remain hidden from them because of their isolation." The liberal *Kölnische Zeitung*—quoted approvingly by the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*—warmly welcomed such a "well-intentioned and correct assessment of the activity of the press, based on an appreciation of the bigger picture" and emanating "from such a highly-placed mouth".[26]

Ludwig received even more praise for his support of another political cause: electoral reform in Bavaria. The distortions caused by the existing electoral law (passed in 1848 and amended in 1881) had exercised the Bavarian government led by Clemens von Podewils-Dürniz for a number of years. A governmental reform proposal submitted in 1903 failed. Strengthened by a recent election victory, the Zentrum caucus in the lower chamber of the Bavarian parliament submitted a similar proposal in 1905. After the lower chamber had voted for it on 30 November, the bill moved to the chamber of the Reichsräte. It was here that Ludwig emerged as an emphatic supporter of electoral reform. It was his backing of the progressive direct, equal and secret franchise system already used for Reichstag elections—expressed in a very candid speech on 4 January 1906—that attracted the most attention. The prince declared that the reform bill constituted "a great step forward", described the secret ballot as a "protection of the weak against the strong" and insisted that "we should count ourselves lucky that there existed for the German Reichstag an electoral system which satisfied the majority of the people". Ludwig ended with a swipe against other states with "artificial electoral systems which went counter to the people's notions of justice", and doubted that

they could survive for much longer. After Ludwig had endorsed the bill in yet another major speech on 5 February, the upper chamber voted for it a few weeks later. Bavaria thus acquired one of the most progressive electoral laws of all of the German states.[27]

Writing in the *Allgemeine Rundschau* on 20 January, the Catholic journalist and publisher Armin Kausen praised Ludwig's "important speech" and its "progressive spirit" which was clearly open to "demands for social justice". Commendably, the prince had not let himself be distracted by "Prussian reactionaries" fuming at Ludwig's thinly veiled criticism of the artificially restrictive franchise systems in place in Prussia and Saxony. After the Prussian Reichstag deputy Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau, a conservative stalwart, had attacked Ludwig for his stance on the electoral reform issue, the Catholic *Augsburger Postzeitung* rushed to the prince's defence. "In Bavaria, we are delighted that Prince Ludwig lives with the people. That is why Prince Ludwig advocates the lawful participation of the people in the tasks of the state. He is a supporter of the Reichstag franchise.—In this Prince Ludwig is backed by the whole of the Bavarian people."[28]

Catholics were not alone in feting Ludwig's electoral politics. At the end of January 1906 the *Münchener Fremdenblatt* gave an account of a recent meeting of the Social Democrats, where August Bebel had highlighted that the heir to the Bavarian throne had stood up for equal votes. "If the prince were to attend the present meeting", the Socialist leader was reported to have said during a rally on "Red Sunday", "he would have received a loud and cordial welcome". Bebel, who must have enjoyed riling both Prussian conservatives and political Catholicism in Bavaria, went even further. "If we had an imperial constitution which laid down that the Kaiser was elected by the people with a provision that the Kaiser had to be chosen from among one of the ruling houses", Bebel declared, "I pledge you my word, Prince Ludwig would have the best prospect of becoming German Kaiser. I believe my party comrades, though they are hardly of a pro-monarchical disposition, would only vote for him." For the Social Democrat Party and its fight against Prussia three-class-franchise, Ludwig's stance was a gift that kept giving. "Compared to you", Bebel mocked his political opponents in the Reichstag two years later, "Prince Ludwig of Bavaria is a pure red democrat, a revolutionary; for the prince did not just plead for the general franchise in Bavaria and helped to have it introduced, he also advocated that it should be introduced in every state of the Reich".[29]

Both the clerical party and the Prussians rose to the bait. The *Augsburger Postzeitung* observed that the "exploitation of Prince Ludwig's words on

the electoral issue by Bebel" had caused a controversy and added—somewhat unconvincingly—that this left "us in Bavaria rather cold". After all, in expressing his views on these matters Ludwig was nothing other than "a member of the body of the Bavarian people [*Glied des bayerischen Volkskörpers*]". The Prussian envoy Friedrich von Pourtalès was surprised that the Bavarian minister-president would not even admit that "the desire to court popularity had perhaps seduced the princely orator to declare his support for general and direct voting in a somewhat pronounced manner". Ludwig's efforts to "make himself popular through occasional flirting with liberal ideas", as Pourtalès called the prince's "warm words for universal suffrage" a few months later, thus struck the envoy as anything but harmless.[30]

This is not to suggest that Prince Ludwig was a dyed-in-the-wool supporter of democratic progress, let alone a friend of the Social Democrats. He was known to have maintained close links with the Zentrum party for many years. This would certainly have influenced his decision to support the 1905 electoral reform bill, since the proposed electoral changes would clearly benefit the hitherto disadvantaged Zentrum party. Some observers chose to view the issue mainly through this party political lens: the Württemberg envoy Oskar von Soden, for instance, reported in February 1906 that the new election law had passed after Ludwig "had placed himself completely on the side of the *Zentrum*".[31]

This pro-Catholic interpretation also coloured the perceptions of Ludwig's role in a later development that was seen as a significant step towards moving Bavaria's constitutional system into a more parliamentary direction. As was the case in Germany's other constitutional monarchies, the Bavarian governments were appointed by and responsible to the monarchical head of the state and did not answer to any parliamentary majority. King Ludwig II and Prince-Regent Luitpold had relied on anticlerical and liberal ministries. As the Zentrum party gradually emerged as the dominant force in the lower chamber this practice caused growing tensions. When, as a result of an increasing polarisation of Bavarian party politics, relations between the Podewils ministry and the chamber eventually broke down and parliamentary support for budget items seemed in doubt, the chamber was dissolved for the first time since 1869. Anticipating another Zentrum victory, the government resigned. In the elections of 5 February 1912 the Catholic party, which had profited disproportionately from the provisions of the 1906 electoral law, won an absolute majority. While the 90-year-old regent protested that he was perfectly capable of

dealing with the crisis, it was his son Ludwig who pulled the strings. He arranged for his old intimate Georg von Hertling, a conservative monarchist, member of the Reichsräte chamber and leader of the Zentrum caucus in the Reichstag, to head the new Bavarian government and personally appoint the ministers.[32]

This was widely recognised as a momentous step: the parliamentary majority and the complexion of the government were aligned; the chief minister had a track record as a parliamentarian and party politician. It is "not the cabinet of the regent, but that of Prince Ludwig, that is now being formed", the *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* observed; "Hertling is the first parliamentary minister-president in Bavaria and probably in the Reich. In England it could not have been done in a more parliamentary fashion." The *Berliner Tageblatt* agreed that the new ministry in Munich, "built according to the directives of the royal heir", took account of "the parliamentary situation". The liberal paper hoped that this process would act as a beacon for "a Reich whose princes usually consider it their life's task to exert an artificial pressure on the given circumstances instead of dealing with them in a *Realpolitik* way". Having carefully analysed Hertling's tortuous attempts to demonstrate that the new government could not be parliamentary because this would be contrary to the Bavarian constitution, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* simply concluded that the country now had a "pseudo-parliamentary government, which was formally *konstitutionell*, but materially and in reality in its most important positions staffed with representatives of one political party".[33]

Hertling's insistence that his appointment did not amount to the inauguration of a parliamentary system was not just a monarchical fig-leaf, though. Prince Ludwig, who would succeed to the regency only months later, had chosen the head of his future government with great care: Hertling was not only an old friend. The party he led had been close to the royal heir for decades and had recently taken an emphatically conservative turn. Hertling was also decidedly monarchist in outlook and ready to confront the emerging left-wing coalition of Social Democrats and Liberals. Finally, while the new minister-president could rely on the loyalty of the Zentrum caucus in the Bavarian parliament, his attitude to the deputies was detached. Hertling's instincts were so governmental—rather than parliamentary—that he resigned from his own party upon his appointment as minister-president. The ironic twist at the heart of the ministerial change in 1912 was thus that it was meant to protect—and not to transform—the

system of constitutional monarchism by equipping the crown with a parliamentary majority. Little wonder, then, that, after Ludwig had succeeded his father, the ministers found the new monarch agreeable to work with and reliably constitutional. The bed in which he was now lying as a constitutional king was, after all, very much of his own making.[34]

Over the long years of his time as heir to the throne, Ludwig thus prefigured a complex and substantial version of Bavaria's monarchical future. Its central element was the figure of an active, highly informed and effective monarchical chief executive officer. After the years of Luitpold's supine regency, Ludwig would combine recovering the essence of constitutional monarchism and defending Bavaria's religious-cultural traditions with a modernising agenda. As the prince put it himself in a speech he gave in 1891 to mark his father's 70th birthday: "I wish for the whole people to advance".[35] The latter aim comprised aspects of economic, technological, political and even constitutional innovation.

The relatively high degree of Ludwig's monarchical agency was, to some extent, veiled—not only by "liberal affectations", but also by the emphatically non-majestic style in which Prince Ludwig presented himself. In that the Wittelsbach prince resembled his plain confidant Georg von Hertling, a man of whom Chlodwig von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst once quipped that he "had never drunk a good glass of wine, had never kissed a pretty girl and had never worn a well-cut pair of trousers".[36] Ludwig was similarly well-known for his down-to-earth tastes: his weekly evenings drinking beer and playing skittles in Munich's Pschorr beer hall, his strolls through the streets of the capital and his slovenly sartorial habits. The prince's famously crumpled trousers earned him the mocking epithet of "Ludwig the Manifold" (*Ludwig der Vielfältige*). Some observers deplored his lack of monarchical grandeur. Watching "the prince walk through the streets in the summer, take off his hat, wipe off the sweat with his handkerchief and say 'It's hot today' to passers-by" struck the writer Franz Blei as a rather mundane experience. It is thus fair to say that Ludwig's ostensibly middle-class ordinariness earned him some detractors as well as a reputation for folksy affability. It should be noted as well, though, that Ludwig's foregoing of majestic pomp in favour of a more modest and approachable form of monarchical comportment echoed the style adopted by Wilhelm of Württemberg and Friedrich August of Saxony before him. It also stood in marked—and, one would guess, intended—contrast to the bombast that had become the hallmark of Kaiser Wilhelm II.[37]

"Vigorous Heartache for Both Prussian Conservatives and Über-Marxists": Left-Wing Hopes for a Monarchical Democratisation

In the wake of the Social Democrats' mischievously fulsome celebration of Prince Ludwig and his stance on the issue of electoral reform, the Prussian envoy to Bavaria, Friedrich von Pourtalès, sent Chancellor Bülow a detailed analysis of the machinations he believed to be afoot. The diplomat was clearly exercised by the particularist attitudes and the hatred of Prussia he was detecting amongst the left-liberal and socialist press in Bavaria. Pourtalès saw this as the result of a new and ominous combination of political forces. "On behalf of democratic quarters and in the interest of party politics, a chasm is being opened up between the 'democratic South of German and the reactionary North'", he wrote in 1906, and recognised in this "a connection with the exploitation of particularist thinking by the local Social Democrats". A careful analysis of Bebel's comments on the roles of and differences between different German princes suggests that Pourtalès was not wrong in pointing to an approach whereby Social Democrats modulated their basically anti-monarchical attitude according to a ruler's willingness to play by proper constitutional rules. "I cannot remember, for instance, that a Social-Democrat paper or a Social-Democrat speaker has ever been punished for offending the prince-regent of Bavaria or the king of Württemberg or the grand-duke of Hessen or of another German prince", Bebel had told the Reichstag in January 1903. "Why not?—Well, these gentlemen stick to the necessary reserve, imposed on them by their position as constitutional princes." To shouts of "very true" from his party comrades the SPD leader added: "This has to be said: they do not come to the fore in an aggressive manner, they do not engage, if I can put it like this, in personal, in party politics. That is different with the Kaiser." When put like this, princely federalism could be made to deliver for the political left.[38]

This kind of argument added a new dimension to the tensions between Reich centralism, embodied by Kaiser Wilhelm II, on the one hand and the regional diversity represented by his 21 princely allies on the other. It suggested a possible future role for some of Germany's sub-national monarchs. Once these rulers below—or alongside—the Kaiser came to be regarded by progressive political forces as guardians of different and preferable political cultures, as protecting endangered niches of constitutional

government by invoking the magical charm of the monarchical principle, they could draw on support from unexpected quarters.

The link between left-wing support for the Reich's smaller monarchs and their function as guarantors of distinct political spaces pre-dated Ludwig's intervention into electoral politics and was not restricted to Bavaria. In December 1880, following the death of Prince Ulrich, Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg's infant son, *Der Beobachter*, the paper of the Democratic Württemberg People's Party, commented on the calamity with an almost unseemly political edge. It argued that there were constitutional reasons why the death of the heir would cause deep grief amongst the great majority of the Württemberg people, "who, after the political development of the last decade, see in the dynasty a possible guarantee of its constitutional autonomy". By the eve of the First World War, the monarchy's ability to contribute effectively to the defence of this autonomy had emerged as a clear condition for the willingness of the Württemberg Social Democrats to support it. In 1913, SPD leader Wilhelm Keil gave a number of long speeches to explain his party's refusal to support a proposed increase of the king's civil list. "The federal states are losing their sovereign rights more and more", he observed, "and are turning *de facto* into provinces of the German Reich". In the past, he argued, "the variety of the state's internal organisation" and the "the peculiarities of the governments and parliaments of the separate states" had provided "some protection against the intrusion of one state's reactionary tendencies into another". But faced with "claims for more power coming from the dominant state" the smaller states had behaved in an increasingly spineless manner and as a result, Keil concluded, the "sovereignty of the federal princes" was losing its importance. The message was clear. Even an anti-monarchical party could see the point of a constitutional Württemberg monarch—as long as he fulfilled the function ascribed to him: securing Swabian liberties by keeping Prussian intrusions at bay.[39]

The *locus classicus* for the argument that the local dynasty should be welcomed for its anti-Prussian and pro-constitutional effect was not Württemberg, though, but Bavaria—and especially the future Bavaria presaged by Prince Ludwig. This kind of endorsement had not been offered for free; Ludwig had worked hard for it. An article published in the *Deutsche Nachrichten* in 1895 and carefully archived by Ludwig's wife Marie Therese focused on the link between the future of monarchical constitutionalism and princes' political behaviour. "In these days there is

nothing more important and more necessary for the healthy development of a people with a monarchical constitution", the paper claimed, "than for the bearers of the crown to seek to understand the wishes and needs of the people not from an unapproachable height or through the prism of the narrow class prejudice, but through direct contact with the people itself". Prince Ludwig, "a man of shrewd and moderate progress", had fully understood this "necessity of remaining closely in touch with all the classes of the people".[40]

The closeness to the wishes of the people achieved by the future king of Bavaria, Social Democrat papers suggested, hinged on Ludwig's constitutional correctness. The prince's "repeated references to the constitution are important", Nuremberg's *Fränkische Tagespost* insisted in May 1900 when discussing the royal heir's recent speech at Nördlingen, "and when Prince Ludwig explicitly emphasises that he has always remained within the framework of the imperial constitution, then this must be understood to mean […] that other individuals—he would not name them!—have not always done so". The paper concluded with an emphatic: "In this respect we are entirely in agreement with Prince Ludwig." As a constitutionally sound monarchical counterpoise to the German emperor—and only in this role—the future king of Bavaria received the kind of warm treatment that made Pourtalès wonder about an unholy alliance between socialism and particularism. Though laced with some barbed comments about the sycophancy non-socialist newspapers tended to display on such occasions, the *Münchner Post*, the Bavarian capital's SPD paper, contributed flatteringly to the press coverage of Ludwig's 60th birthday. It called him "probably the most intelligent amongst the persons, who currently rule in the Reich or have the right of succession". The same paper was noticeably gentle on Prince Ludwig, when he was widely attacked for the fervent public confession of his Catholic creed he had given at Altötting in August 1910. "Social Democracy has no reason to bear the prince a grudge on account of his firm faith", the *Münchner Post* reassured its Catholic critics and referred to the SPD's official party organ *Vorwärts*, which had called the speech "thoroughly unobjectionable from a citizen's point of view". Politicians should not worry about this speech, the article concluded amicably, and certainly not its readers, "since for us religion is a private matter."[41]

Such instances of Social Democrats offering an olive branch—albeit a small one—to the monarchical system should not, however, be seen as proof that the workers had swallowed the monarchical narrative hook, line

and sinker. It is perfectly possible that a tentative and strictly conditional offer of a *modus vivendi* was formulated alongside a general and marked scepticism towards the cult and culture of monarchy. In his investigation of the attitude of the Bavarian workers' movement, for instance, Werner K. Blessing has pointed to its collective "falling-away from the traditional political cult" and its portrayal of monarchical figures as "costly relics from a repressive and superstitious past". It is worth noting, though, that, even according to his analysis, the hostile attitude Blessing has detected did not rule out "the recognition of the personal integrity of the monarch". To be sure, this willingness to give the future monarch the benefit of the doubt was, at least partly, owed to what Karl Heinrich Pohl has called the "Special Character" (*Sondercharakter*) of the Bavarian SPD. It was the very pressure put on the Bavarian state—by an over-mighty Prussia and a centralising Reich—that provided the Social Democrats there with a different political context. In 1908, none other than Kurt Eisner made that point when delivering a stern warning to his Prussian party comrades not to disturb South German politics. That he regarded the current prospects as relatively favourable for the Social Democrats was not simply the result of an anticipated period of accelerated industrialisation and "proletarisation". The "small states' fear of Prussia's growing political and economic predominance", which coloured the political process in the small kingdom, also played a role. "That makes you want to live in peace with your proletarians", Eisner explained.[42]

Open to the middle-class and lower middle-class strata of the population of Munich and firmly committed to a course of reform-oriented politics vis-à-vis a state and a government that was not perceived as fundamentally hostile, the Bavarian SPD succeeded in scoring a number of successes. According to Karl Heinrich Pohl this suggested that in Bavaria, unlike in Prussia, a process of gradual democratisation was not impossible. The electoral law of 1906, for instance, greatly improved the SPD's representation in parliament. Like in Württemberg—where the reforms of 1906 finally created a fully elected lower chamber and reinforced the reformist tendencies of the local SPD, whose deputies eventually even attended court functions—the Bavarian SPD thus influenced the creation of more democratic franchise rules. This contrasted, to some extent, with the situation in Saxony. Here the electoral reform of 1909 provided only a partial remedy of the reactionary effects of the three-class franchise of 1896.[43]

Notions of an at least partially symbiotic relationship between a strand of progressive, reformist politics and the kind of particularism that defended

distinct political spaces in Germany from the dreaded intrusion of Prussia's reactionary politics were not restricted to the concrete situation in the southern states of the Reich, though. There was at least a sprinkling of articles addressing the relationship between political progress and monarchy in a general manner that served to underpin this idea. Existing scholarship—like Peter Domann's detailed study of the SPD's engagement with the monarchical systems in Wilhelmine Germany—has largely focused on the Prussian and imperial manifestations of Germany's monarchical systems. That the SPD's attitude to the Kaiser's regime in Prussia and the Reich was unwaveringly antagonistic is well-known. Bebel castigated the "spiked helmet, the absolute force" at the top of the German constitution and even representatives of the right wing of the party, like the Bavarian leader Georg von Vollmar, resented the Reich's "fundamentally *Junker*-like, military and absolutist trait". For Social Democrats the constitution of 1871 was essentially a thinly veiled form of absolutism. During the decade before the outbreak of the First World War, though, there were a number of Social Democrat voices suggesting at least a slightly more malleable approach to the existing institution that was the monarchy.[44]

Taking his cue from August Bebel's Reichstag speech of January 1903, the SPD Reichstag deputy and former pastor Paul Göhre published an essay on "Social Democracy and Monarchy" in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. Like Bebel, Göhre insisted that the SPD was "an opponent of monarchy as an institution, but we are not, by a long way, opponents of the person of a prince". Moreover, unlike representatives of republican liberalism, Social Democrats never "considered the struggle against monarchy as a main issue" and had never acted as aggressively towards it. Rather, the Social Democrats' more penetrating analysis led them to target the true "ruler Capital" and not the already weakened institution that was the monarchy. Commenting on the recent scandalous events at the Saxon court, Göhre praised the socialist press for having offered real insights into this human tragedy without resorting to any denigration of the Saxon king or Crown Prince Friedrich August.[45]

Three years later, the *Monatshefte* published the article "Monarchy or Republic" by the Norwegian socialist and newspaper editor Olav Kringen. Praising Norway's "parliamentary monarchy" as "a more modern institution than a conservative republic" and declaring it preferable to both the USA and France's Third Republic, Kringen made a distinction between the constitutional form of the state—a monarchy or a republic—and what it delivered. "The people nowadays wish to discuss the social and economic

aspects of the Socialist programme", Kringen claimed. To ignore that and focus instead on the barren struggle for a republic would make the party an irrelevance. If at all, constitutional change would come as a result of reformist policies from the bottom up: "The forms of government will change in line with the needs which we create by changing social and economic conditions in the direction of our ideal."[46]

In two articles—"Are We Republicans?" (1909) and "Social Democracy and Monarchy" (1912)—the SPD journalist and Reichstag deputy Ludwig Quessel pursued Kringen's line even more robustly. In 1909 Quessel asked whether there really was a fundamental contradiction between monarchy and democracy. He pointed to the "serviceable relationship between monarchy and Social Democracy in some states in central and southern Germany" and added mischievously that this *modus vivendi* was causing "vigorous heartache for both Prussian conservatives and *Über*-Marxists". For Quessel, this showed that a transformation of Germany's constitutional monarchy to a "state of popular sovereignty" was perfectly possible. In fact, he believed that in Germany the "development towards a democratic monarchy" was ongoing and as long as the party did not call itself "Social Republicans, but Social Democrats" none of its members should be expected to engage in republican propaganda. Quessel returned to this topic in 1912. Since monarchy was not "a firm crystal, but an adaptable organism permanently engaged in change", he focused on the inevitable growth of the parliamentary system. After all, "the functions of a monarch ruling in a parliamentary system are legally indistinguishable from those of the president of a democratic republic". And even though it was undeniable that there was still some distance to travel, Quessel had no doubt: "The parliamentary system of government, which removes the principal contradiction between monarchical and republican constitutions, must come to Germany—sooner or later." It was therefore a political duty for the Social Democrats not to shy away from the palaces, but "to influence the monarch in a democratic direction".[47]

Displaying a degree of political optimism that stretched credulity to near-breaking point, Quessel, a Prussian, suggested that even Kaiser Wilhelm should be approached in this manner. For his comrades in Württemberg and Bavaria, however, Quessel's ideas for the future development of Germany's monarchical systems may not have sounded all that fanciful. Reporting back to Berlin from the celebrations marking the silver wedding anniversary of King Wilhelm of Württemberg and his wife Charlotte in 1911, the Prussian envoy von Below observed that

Württemberg showed how even far-reaching liberal views could be reconciled with deeply held monarchical feelings. Amongst the Bavarian Social Democrats, the Württemberg envoy Carl Moser von Filseck observed in 1913, when Prince Ludwig's long wait for the throne was finally over, the feelings were similar: "there are many who do not want to be deprived of their regent or king and the phrase 'Royal Bavarian Social Democracy' is not without justification".[48]

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Wilhelm, Friedrich August and Ludwig thus foreshadowed three different versions of constitutional monarchy for their kingdoms. These were neither static nor unilinear: following the scandals of the later years of King Karl's reign, Wilhelm of Württemberg sought to restore a degree of monarchical probity by associating his future role with a stewardship of moderate constitutional reforms designed to make the kingdom's parliament both more democratic and more effective. Friedrich August recovered from his marriage crisis to continue the Saxon kings' gradual detachment from active politics. He did this by emphasising his human qualities and minimising his association with any unpopular developments. Ludwig of Bavaria anticipated the end of the regency through the prospect of a restored, modernised and energetic monarchical role more in tune with parliamentary majorities and popular opinion.

To be sure, all of these variants—notwithstanding their explicit emphasis on the monarch's respect for the constitutional settlement in place—were meant to consolidate the status quo rather than actively advance the development of constitutional monarchism in a democratic or parliamentary direction. None of the three future kings would push for an end to *Konstitutionalismus* and the monarchical principle, though it could be argued that, with the possible exception of Ludwig, they would not have put up a very vigorous defence against what Quessel called the "English development".[49] It should be noted, though, that the role of the "constitutional king", which all three of the monarchs-to-be heralded, was portrayed and perceived as clearly distinct from—and sometimes consciously opposed to—the contemporary "other" that was the Prussian monarchy in the snarling shape of Kaiser Wilhelm. This was likely to have added to the warmth of the welcome with which the future monarchical offerings presented by these three royal heirs were accepted by "their" Württembergers, Saxons and Bavarians—and even by some of those among them whose commitment to the cause of Social Democracy would otherwise incline them not to approach monarchical systems with any great affection.

Notes

1. Quidde, 1894; Röhl, 2002, p. 187.
2. Blaschke, 1997, pp. 14–16; Blaschke, 2002, p. 554; *Dresdner Journal/ Sonder-Ausgabe* (16 October 1904).
3. *Dresdener Rundschau* (22 October 1904), 3.
4. In June 1903 the Munich-based magazine *Die Jugend* published a poem commenting on a confirmed report that Friedrich August had recently sent his wife a telegram to congratulate her warmly on the safe birth if her daughter. The poem ends: "A truly chivalrous man/thus repays a wife for her injustice/ a Christian avenges the humiliation he has suffered thus/I wish Saxony happiness on the occasion of this congratulation." (*Die Jugend*, Nr 24, 10 June 1903, 431).
5. *Verzeichnis derjenigen Vereine etc., denen Seine königliche Hoheit der Kronprinz als Mitglied angehört hat und welche höchstseinen Namen führen* (HStA Dresden, 10711, Ministerium des Königlichen Hauses, Loc 40, Nr 32); Giloi, 2011, p. 186.
6. Kretzschmar, 1950, p. 468.
7. Schweizer, 1891, pp. 26–27; on Wilhelm's opening of the Stuttgart art exhibition see Eulenburg to Caprivi, Nr 29, 2 March 1891 (AA, R3368); Wilhelm to Karl, 22 February 1890 (HStA Stuttgart, E14, Bü 85).
8. Dönhoff to Bismarck, Nr 59, 9 December 1880 (AA, R3361); Karl to Ministry of the Royal House, 14 December 1880, Karl to Wilhelm, 14 February 1882, decrees by King Karl dated 6 November 1883, 9 November 1884, 3 November 1885, 2 November 1886, 7 November 1887, 16 October 1888 (HStA Stuttgart, E55, Bü 428); *Staats-Anzeiger für Württemberg* (30 December 1880).
9. Wilhelm to Plato, 18 January 1881 (HStA Stuttgart, Q, NL Plato); list of items decided by Prince Wilhelm (HStA Stuttgart, E40/31).
10. Sauer, 1994, pp. 85–96; Sauer, 1999, pp. 229–258.
11. Sauer, 2011, pp. 126–135; *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (13 October 1888); Wesdehlen to Bismarck, Nr 74, 17 November 1888 and Nr 79, 30 November 1888 (AA, R3397).
12. Eulenburg to Marschall von Bieberstein, 15 June 1890, in: Röhl, 1976, pp. 555–558; Eulenburg to Marschall von Bieberstein, 1 September 1891 (AA, R3400); on the wider context of attempts to remove homosexual monarchs from the throne and the plans made against King Karl of Württemberg see: Häfner, 2008, pp. 68–74.
13. Kiderlen (private letter), 20 February 1885 (AA, R3375); Wesdehlen to Bismarck, No 7, 27 February 1885 (AA, R3375).
14. Sauer, 2011, pp. 61–64; Huber, 1969, pp. 412–413.
15. Denkschrift Varnbüler (HStA Stuttgart, NL Varnbüler, P10, Bü 850).

16. Wilhelm's speech of 12 March 1886 (http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/sammlungen/sammlungsliste/werksansicht/?no_cache=1&tx_dlf[id]=1026&tx_dlf[page]=6; accessed 27 April 2016); Sauer, 2011, pp. 64–65; for Wilhelm's commitment to constitutional reform up to 1891 and beyond see also: Stickler, 2015, pp. 61–64.
17. Wilhelm II's speech from the throne on 22 October 1891 (http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/sammlungen/sammlungsliste/werksansicht/?no_cache=1&tx_dlf[id]=3836&tx_dlf[page]=624; accessed 27 April 2016); *Im Lichte*, 2015, p. 56.
18. *Augsburger Postzeitung* (6 January 1905).
19. März, 2014, pp. 46–47; Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 20, 28 January 1896 (AA, R2802).
20. März, 2014, pp. 39, 65, 83; Gollwitzer, 1987, p. 731; Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 20, 28 January 1896 and Nr 50, 16 May 1896 (AA, R2802).
21. Monts to Hohenlohe, Nr 50, 16 May 1896 (AA, R2802).
22. März, 2014, pp. 65–66; Körner, 2001, p. 378.
23. *Allgemeine Rundschau* (15 October 1910), 738; März, 2014, pp. 33–36, 59–64; Röschner, 2014, pp. 127–144.
24. König, 2007.
25. Pückler to Caprivi, Nr 64, 25 May 1892 (AA, R2799); März, 2014, pp. 42–43; Kroll, 2015, pp. 111–140.
26. Forster, 1894, p. 79; *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (18 July 1893).
27. Huber, 1969, pp. 394–396; speech on 4 January 1906 in: Verhandlungen der Kammer der Reichsräte, XXXIV. Landtagsversammlung, Beilagen-Band, I. Session 1905/6: 28. September 1905 bis 18. August 1906, 126; speech on 5 February 1906 in: Verhandlungen der Kammer der Reichsräte, XXXIV. Landtagsversammlung I. Session 1905/6, 64–66.
28. Armin Kausen, "Der bayerische Thronfolger für ein fortschrittliches Wahlrecht", *Allgemeine Rundschau* (20 January 1906), 26; *Augsburger Postzeitung* (29 May 1906).
29. *Münchener Fremdenblatt* (22 January 1906); März, 2014, p. 67; Bebel's speech to the Reichstag, 24 March 1908 (http://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k12_bsb00002841_00816.html; accessed 2 May 2016).
30. *Augsburger Postzeitung* (28 January 1906); Pourtalès to Bülow, Nr 14, 30 January 1906 (AA, R2847) and Nr 86, 19 December 1906 (AA, R2810).
31. Soden to Mittnacht, Nr 12, 6 February 1906 (HStA Stuttgart, E50/05, Bü 230).
32. Albrecht, 1974, pp. 357–361; März, 2014, pp. 67–69.
33. *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (11 February 1912); *Berliner Tageblatt* (29 February 1912); *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (6 March 1912).
34. For a warning not to exaggerate the parliamentary dimension of the changes of 1912 see: Möckl, 1972, pp. 535–547; März, 2013, pp. 64–66; Katharina Weigand, 2014, pp. 145–156.

35. "Ich wünsche, daß das ganze Volk vorwärts schreitet"—*Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (13 March 1891).
36. Bülow, 1930, p. 480.
37. März, 2014, p. 38.
38. Pourtalès to Bülow, Nr 14, 30 January 1906 (AA, R2847); *Reichstagsprotokolle*, 22 January 1903, 7484 (http://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k10_bsb00003567_00915.html; accessed 20 July 2016).
39. *Der Beobachter* (30 December 1880); *Die Erhöhung*, 1913, p. 6.
40. *Deutsche Nachrichten* (5 January 1895); see Bay. HStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv, Presseausschnittsammlung der Königin Marie Therese, vol. XI.
41. *Fränkische Tagespost* (28 May 1900); *Münchner Post* (8 January 1905, 7 September 1910).
42. Blessing, 1979, p. 196; Pohl, 1992, p. 20.
43. Pohl, 1992, pp. 22, 25, 28–30; Naujoks, 1992, p. 410; Retallack, 2004.
44. Domann, 1974, p. 6.
45. Göhre, 1903, pp. 172–173, 174, 176–177.
46. Kringen, 1906, pp. 66–67.
47. Quessel, 1909, pp. 1255, 1262; Quessel, 1912, pp. 271, 273–274.
48. Naujoks, 1992, p. 413; Moser to Weizsäcker, 6 November 1913 (HStA Stuttgart, E50/05, Bü 237), quoted in: Zedler, 2013, p. 22.
49. Quessel, 1909, p. 1255.

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CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

Germany's wholesale de-monarchification in the autumn of 1918 suggests that, ultimately, the efforts made by and on behalf of the last heirs to succeed to the thrones of Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony were not crowned with success. The logic of hereditary monarchy dictates that Ludwig's, Wilhelm's and Friedrich August's performances first as heirs to the throne and then as monarchs must be judged according to whether or not they managed to secure the future rule of their dynasty. In November 1918 neither they nor the monarchical institutions around them seemed determined—let alone able—to take credible steps to effect this: proof, if proof were needed, it has been argued, that neither the German princes as individual actors nor the political systems centred on them were fit for purpose.

Their collective removal, though clearly triggered by the effects of the First World War, has been interpreted as the result of a decades-long malaise. This rigid system, headed by nonentities and inherently incapable of meaningful reform, had to fall sooner or later. In fact, the position championed by the eminent constitutional historian Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde in his controversy with Ernst Rudolf Huber, implied that the demise of Germany's monarchies was only ever a question of "when", not "if". Rather than achieving the status of a fully formed constitutional type, *Konstitutionalismus* was seen as little more than a protracted monarchical rear-guard action. A passing phenomenon thrown up by the transition from absolutism to parliamentary democracy, it slowed down the march of popular sovereignty, but, naturally, could not stop it in the end.[1]

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This investigation of the lives, roles and functions of three men preparing for their future as kings within this system has sought to offer a less deterministic appraisal. It opts for an interpretation that restores to the monarchies of late nineteenth-century Germany a more open, less moribund future. When viewed through the prism of succession and the experience of royal heirs, the monarchical systems in the smaller German kingdoms appear capable of and engaged in a fair degree of adaptation and development. Moreover, in the three cases examined here the institution of monarchy and the respective dynastic individual on whom its future pivoted were clearly participating in a constructive process of communication with their contexts: the moods, values and preferences of the day were perceived, acted upon and then relayed back to a variety of relevant audiences, via a range of different media. The system of monarchy was not enshrined in sepulchral stasis across the whole of Imperial Germany; it changed and was changed by recognisable forces and in a recognisable direction.

Naturally, this was not the result of an innate and altruistic desire to modernise and engage constructively with new political and social circumstances. It sprang from the wish to consolidate a version of the status quo through moderate accommodation. As the crises of and challenges to monarchy examined in the second chapter indicate, the smaller German kingdoms witnessed recurring misalignments between monarchical systems and the wider political and cultural contexts in the late nineteenth century. These were often the result of the continuation of traditional and increasingly anachronistic dynastic practices and could arise in a number of areas: when claims were made to access public funding in the shape of civil lists; when tensions arose between an heir's personal religious commitments and the need to discharge his future office in a confessionally neutral manner; when the obligation to comply—publicly—with middle-class norms for a happy and virtuous private family life could not be met. The significant public ructions caused by such clashes forced the future monarchs to react, comply and atone. The strength of the public opprobrium generated by such perceived transgressions and the future monarchs' general willingness to submit to public expectations point to the mutual adoption of a conditional, quasi-performance-related concept of monarchical loyalty.

The notion that future monarchs sought to live up to the standards of a constructive, alert stewardship of the political system is further underpinned by instances when monarchical figures advocated progressive

change in questions that were not directly linked to their own role—like the backing Prince Wilhelm and Prince Ludwig gave to electoral and parliamentary reform. In his comments on the damage caused by the decision to retain the incapacitated Otto as the king of Bavaria, Ludwig Thoma formulated the wider requirement at play here very clearly: "For us, the people of today, the position of king is connected to notions of office and responsibility. The first servant of the state should be as capable of fulfilling his duties as the last."[2] The manner in which the successors to the Bavarian, Württemberg and Saxon crowns were prepared for their future office—and the attentiveness with which every stage of these preparations was communicated to their future subjects—illustrate the dynasties' growing acceptance of a discourse of royal competence and constitutional responsibility. Increasingly subjected to formalised educational regimens that were designed to echo middle-class notions of meritocracy, and combining this with both military training and varying degrees of active parliamentary engagement, Ludwig, Wilhelm and Friedrich August presaged a future of "functionalised" monarchy. It could reasonably be expected that, as kings, they would have internalised the duty to act within the applicable constitutional framework and acquired the expertise to fulfil their function with an acceptable degree of competence.

The three case studies investigated in this volume illustrate that the monarchical futures anticipated by the heirs to the thrones of Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony encompassed a range of monarchical functions. These reflected a convergence of tasks and styles brought about by responses to similar contextual forces. The steady advance of constitutionalism, the growing power of an enfranchised, literate and organised political public articulating largely middle-class preferences, the rise of the media—many instances of monarchical adaptation generated in response to these trends were characterised by a striking similarity. To twenty-first-century eyes the countless sepia photographs in which invariably bearded late nineteenth-century dynasts and various generations of their offspring strike stiff family poses for the benefit of contemporary collectors of *cartes de visite* look well-nigh indistinguishable. Nor were the different monarchical narratives, with their stock references to centuries of local rootedness, charitable philanthropy and care for the weal of the common people, examples of great originality.

Like so many other monarchical figures, Ludwig, Wilhelm and Friedrich August were centrally involved in the dissemination of long-standing narratives that generated, asserted and maintained the regional-monarchical

distinctiveness and collective identity of their "tribe". They picked up on the respective traditions of their dynasty and continued telling the well-worn story of their family's proud place in its region's history. Whether it was Wilhelm's embodying of ostensibly Swabian notions of down-to-earth kingship, constitutional affinity and matrimonial affection, or Ludwig's Bavarian Catholicism and emphatic profession of a Wittelsbach commitment to popular welfare and cultural patronage, or Friedrich August's quirky mixture of non-political affability, family life and soldierly prowess—inevitably delivered in a broad Saxon dialect: while seeking to anchor their rule deeply in local terrain all three future kings contributed to and benefited from strong sub-national group identities. While these messages did not, of course, connect with the entire population, they still provided millions of Germans with a welcome sense of belonging at a time of rapid and often disorientating change. The country's multiple monarchies thus helped to sustain—and were themselves sustained by—the subtle interplay between nation and narrower *Heimat* that characterised the Reich.

Royal heirs also had a function to fulfil with regard to the more narrowly political dimension of this complex of part-complementary, part-antagonistic identities. Their activities in this area show that—despite the wider phenomenon of monarchical convergence—there was room not only for representing regional-dynastic peculiarities, but also for expressing personalities as different as those of Prince Ludwig and Prince Friedrich August. In line with both their narrower fatherlands' different attitudes to a particularist policy within the Reich and coloured by their own beliefs, these royal heirs articulated what they regarded as the proper future role of their own distinct sub-national polity within the larger imperial nation state. They did so variously through silent acquiescence, calm intercession or noisy tub-thumping.

Unsurprisingly, the different standpoints taken in this respect by each respective future king—from Saxony's close alignment with the Prusso-German master narrative to the vigorous defence of Bavaria's distinct role within the Reich—tended to correspond with each prince's chosen style for discharging his future office. For this there was also a range of options that *Konstitutionalismus* could accommodate. On the one hand, Prince Ludwig envisioned an ambitious future role for an active, political monarch, respected for his professional expertise. The indications were that he would exercise his royal influence not only directly but also through and alongside a party—the Bavarian Centre Party—to which he had close ties and which eventually commanded a parliamentary majority. Such a

pseudo-parliamentary concept was only possible within a framework of Bavarian autonomy and distinctness. Saxony's inconspicuous, more seamlessly integrated role within the Reich, on the other hand, paralleled Friedrich August's almost complete withdrawal from the arena of contentious politics in favour of a more decorative, avuncular role as *Landesvater*. Prince Wilhelm occupied a middle position in both respects.

In the context of the range of ambitions, tasks and practices associated with these three royal heirs' future role as constitutional monarch Joseph Nye's analysis of the interplay of different forms of power provides an interesting suggestion: the notion of "smart power". Nye uses this term to capture "strategies that successfully combine hard and soft power resources in differing contexts".[3] The rather supple concept of kingship that would fit the anticipated roles of Ludwig, Wilhelm and Friedrich August combines—in different and fluid ratios—a mixture of powers: monarchical hard powers retained or regained and new forms of soft power deployed to win over audiences and attract goodwill. It seems plausible that this notion—rather than interpretations of the trajectory of nineteenth-century monarchy that privilege narratives of steady decline, insincere self-embourgeoisement or rigid persistence—provides a better understanding of the future viability of constitutional monarchy in the Reich.

This analysis of the political roles played and styles preferred by the royal heirs accords them a reasonable degree of agency and thus supports an observation recently made by Matthias Stickler. Having compared the potential for political modernisation in the *Konstitutionalismus* of nineteenth-century Bavaria and Württemberg, Stickler has concluded that the extent to which the power wielded by the different constitutional organs—crown, government or parliament—changed "depended to a large degree on the personality of the respective ruler". Where—as in the case of Prince Wilhelm—such a ruler had what a conservative critic called "unfortunate democratic proclivities", the future of the monarchy could easily hold the promise (or spectre) of a "Royal Republic of Württemberg".[4]

In the kingdoms of Bavaria and Württemberg, the possibility of such a development had the potential to generate an additional source of support for the monarchy. It is hardly surprising that politically, religiously, culturally and socially conservative forces would endorse the monarchical status quo as a matter of course—especially if the monarchical leadership promised to fulfil the consolidating and steadying functions allocated

to it competently. Monarchy could also expect to benefit from collective attitudes that cherished separate local identities or were fuelled by nostalgic, confessional or emotional forms of attachment to the dynasty. It is interesting to note, though, that beyond these core forms of support, some monarchical figures, like Prince Wilhelm and Prince Ludwig, could attract a measure of endorsement even from basically anti-monarchical, progressive voices of the political left whose willingness to buy into the traditional monarchical narrative would have been very limited. This made the German experience part of a wider European development. In 1900 the leading Dutch liberal Willem Hendrik de Beaufort penned a diary entry in which he reflected on the state of Europe's monarchies. "One used to think or fear that the constitutional-parliamentary form of monarchy could only be a transitional step towards the republic, but now one can say that constitutional monarchy has a firm place", he concluded and insisted that "the democrats, apart from a few Socialists, do not want to change that either".[5]

However, the kind of left-wing approval of monarchical figures offered by German Social Democrats like August Bebel, Wilhelm Keil or Ludwig Quessel was strictly tied to these princes' moving in a progressive direction and sticking to a path of unblemished constitutional propriety. The very existence of this attitude nevertheless contains two significant findings about what contemporaries thought about the future of Germany's monarchy. There were some Social Democrats—like Ludwig Quessel—who considered the entire system of constitutional monarchy, even its Prussian, Wilhelmine manifestation, fundamentally capable of undergoing reform in a popular, progressive direction. More tangibly and less optimistically though, Social Democrat praise for specific crowned heads highlighted the different situation in the smaller German monarchies—like the kingdoms of Bavaria and Württemberg. Here, where the monarchical system was characterised by a more constitutionally committed practice of kingship that was embedded in a more liberal political culture, monarchs could fulfil a twin function that even Social Democrats could applaud: holding at bay the political intrusion of a reactionary and reviled Prussian other, while providing an example that better forms of monarchy were possible than that personified by Kaiser Wilhelm. As a result, the Social Democrats' occasional warm words for certain monarchs tended to be accompanied by a sharp anti-Kaiser sting in the tail. When the *Münchner Post* observed in 1905 that Prince Ludwig usually made his point "more deftly than what one is used to from crowned heads" and did not resort to "brash guff"

(*schnoddrige Redensarten*), everyone knew who was being praised and who was being criticised. Wilhelm Keil's famous tribute to King Wilhelm of Württemberg—that he had furthered the development of the constitution and had always shown the discretion one would expect from the first servant of the state—was equally double-edged. One Wilhelm had, another one had not.[6]

Amazingly, in the autumn of 1918 even the dying embers of the Social Democrat notion that a reformed constitutional monarchy could constitute a viable option for Germany's future still contained some warmth. "I am in favour of keeping the German monarchy", Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the moderate Majority Social Democrats, declared on 31 October 1918. "Germany is not ready for the republic." He was clear that both the Kaiser and the "justly unpopular" crown prince had to go. "The firm, though, can and must be preserved." Wolfgang Pyta has recently argued that a prompt abdication by the Kaiser could have given the German crowns another lease of life by swiftly introducing fully parliamentary systems for both the separate German monarchies and the Reich as a whole.[7] Though this intriguing counter-factual is not implausible, it is worth remembering that not only the much-hated German emperor had to go in November 1918, but also monarchs whose erstwhile popularity and political track records should have offered them more protection.

The vulnerability even of monarchs as unobjectionable as Wilhelm of Württemberg at the end of the First World War points to more than the dramatic effects of the conflict and the experience of defeat on the political situation in the German Reich. It also reinforces that for the future viability of the non-Prussian monarchies two factors remained crucially important: the existence of a reactionary Prussian threat and the other states'—at least partial—resistance to it. The years since 1914 had effectively removed both. Under the conditions of the war, the Reich effectively turned into a centralised state, with the Bundesrat busily issuing emergency decrees and acting as a quasi-government. Nor did the non-Prussian monarchs offer a positive deviation from the rapacious all-German norm in the war aims debate. On the contrary, the deplorable contributions by some of the German monarchies—above all Ludwig III's Bavaria, but also Württemberg and Saxony—ended up making the monarchs appear complicit in the prolongation of the conflict. Their demands for future territorial gains may have had a valid constitutional basis, but they were badly ill-timed. The princes' attempts to "use warlike conquests to enhance the prestige of their houses" were, according to

Karl-Heinz Janßen, immediately perceived as "anachronistic, fantastical and grotesque".[8]

In a cruelly ironic twist it was that inveterate particularist, Ludwig of Bavaria, of all people, who was most scurrilously attacked for the perceived fusing together of the leadership of wartime Germany into a single Prussian-dominated elite. A—wholly untrue—rumour developed that from his model farm at Leutstetten the "Dairy-Farmer", as the king became known, was supplying milk to the Prussians, while Bavarian children had to go hungry. Satirical cartoons published immediately after the king's fall attacked "Ludwig of Leutstetten, Dairy Farmer" for having been a "former supplier to the Prussian court". The story of Ludwig's alleged services to Prussia gained traction because the Bavarian population considered itself unfairly treated by the all-German authorities in charge of food distribution and agricultural planning. With their king at the very least powerless to protect his own people against Prussian discrimination—if not actively engaged in securing the North Germans' reportedly preferential treatment—even the once loyal Bavarians turned away from the Wittelsbachs. The opinion was gaining ground, Crown Prince Rupprecht wrote to the Bavarian minister-president Georg von Hertling in July 1917, that "our government was nothing but superfluous and costly ballast, since everything was decided in Berlin". The fact that the member states of the Reich had handed over many of their competencies to the Reich for the duration of the war had "strengthened existing centralist tendencies", the heir to the Bavarian throne observed and warned that these would "eventually end up delivering a more or less republican form of the state".[9]

The war had thus put an end to the non-Prussian monarchies' ability to "tame the centralising dynamic that emanated from the young nation state"[10] and turned them into what Wilhelm Keil had warned against in 1913: "*de facto* provinces of the Reich" that had no recognisable anti-Prussian effect. This redundancy was even more pronounced after the end of the Hohenzollerns' rule in Berlin had removed the threat from a reactionary Prussian other. A substantial element of the function that the monarchical future presaged by the heirs to the thrones of the smaller German kingdoms had promised to fulfil thus appeared to have become irrelevant.

The monarchies' removal in 1918 has made it impossible to test the veracity of a further counter-factual: Dieter Langewiesche's suggestion that the existence of parliamentary monarchies in Germany would have

prevented the complete destruction of the institutional separation of powers within the state and would thus have denied the basic condition for the National Socialist regime. That this suggestion is merely a counter-factual and that the ability of the institution to show resilience against this kind of threat was never tested may well be the truly tragic coda to the history of the future of monarchy in nineteenth-century Germany.[11]

Notes

1. Grothe, 2005, pp. 270–286, 380–384; Kirsch, 1999, pp. 57–65.
2. Thoma, 1968, p. 451.
3. Nye, 2013, p. 565.
4. Stickler, 2015, p. 64; Kiderlen (private letter), 20 February 1885 (AA, R3375).
5. Tamse, 1993, p. 125.
6. *Münchner Post* (8 January 1905); *Schwäbische Tagwacht* (5 October 1916).
7. Pyta, 2010, pp. 364, 367; see also: Machtan, 2015, pp. 263–279.
8. Boldt, 1992, p. 96; Janßen, 1965, p. 92 and Janßen, 1963, p. 11; for Bavarian war aims and foreign policy see also: Hetzer, 2010, pp. 50–56.
9. Beckenbauer, 1987, pp. 206–210; Rupprecht to Hertling (19 July 1917), in: Bayern, 1929, p. 18.
10. Langewiesche, 2006, p. 32.
11. Langewiesche, 2006, p. 36; *Die Erhöhung*, 1913, p. 6.

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