

Lucien Bely, Jim Collins, Robert von Friedeburg, Robert Frost, John Morrill

THE "NEW MONARCHY"

RETHINKING THE RELATIONS OF ELITES AND PRINCES
IN EUROPE'S IRON CENTURY (1590s–1720s)

Rotterdam, Netherlands, September 7–9, 2011

Maritime Museum, Zadkine Room

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Since the 1955 congress of European historians in Rome, the assumption of a completion of institutional absolutist state-building by the later seventeenth century has been steadily eroded. During the last fifty years, a large number of studies has emphasized that unprecedented wars and war related burdens were a major stimulus for crucial changes in the relation of regimes and elites during the seventeenth century, but that these changes should not be characterized primarily in terms of the building of a bureaucratic coercive tax state increasingly independent from society and its pressure groups. The actual early modern innovation was public debt on a hitherto unknown scale. Whatever relevance taxes had gained by 1500 (as in France, England or Castile), the exploding costs of the European arms- and war race severely qualified their contribution to paying overall cost; hence the fact of exploding public debt.

The new monarchies such as Valois and Bourbon France, Stuart Britain, Habsburg Spain or Vasa Sweden were rather characterized by participation in an unprecedented war- and arms race and the consequences of confessionalisation, subsequent unprecedented rise in public funds, mainly financed by unprecedented debt, and a whole range of new opportunities for profit and challenges for the preservation of status for new and old elites. Rather than experiencing the emancipation of an institutional bureaucratic state from its social and ecclesiastical elites by way of secure regular enforceable taxes, regimes became increasingly dependant on old and new elites to organize and broker public debt, farm taxes, and buy or pre-finance offices, while these elites became more dependant on the vagrancies on national politics to participate in new forms of income and protect their assets. As Lucien Bely put it with reference to Louis XIV, "les creanciers du roi sont des groupes financiers, et derriere

eux, la noblesse et la bourgeoisie qui pretent ses avoirs". While certain groups profited from these changes, others felt left behind. Jim Collins described for Brittany as Ronald Hutton for the officers of the royal army in the Civil War the emergence of new elites. Debates and struggles ensued among elites about the distribution of resources and privileges, about access to offices and spoils, about the best course in costly foreign wars and about the legitimacy of the whole process. In these debates, new modes of argument and ritual developed, such as national rhetoric and the imagery of monarchy as a whole.

The resulting new modes of government were determined by relations of the various units of the dynastic agglomerate whole with each other and by the new relations of regimes to old and new elites; they were neither characterized by the power of a bureaucratic state nor did they resemble late medieval relationships between crown, magnates and nobility; hence the focus of this conference to compare patterns of relations among regimes and elites across Europe during the crucial 'Iron Century'. The most important current collections of essays dealing with the relation of regimes and elites under the impact of war, various volumes of the ESF series on the origins of the modern state, cover in each volume the whole period from 1300 to 1800. Though their value is undisputed, they necessarily attempt to capture very general developments across many centuries and cannot pinpoint the precise impact of the unprecedented burden of war on European societies precisely in Europe's Iron Century. For example, since the overriding importance of public debt is freely acknowledged and documented for the later sixteenth and seventeenth century, the volumes do not draw conclusions from this but rather insist on the long term importance of state taxes over the whole period from 1300 to 1800.

Current research suggests three perspectives for the comparison here attempted, each to be approached via three topics.

A: Representation and Integration: Negotiating Allegiance. This perspective focuses on the strategies of regimes to integrate the elites of their agglomerate polities. The emphasis here is on the forging of the unity of the agglomerate polity by whatever means (including national rhetoric) and on the representation of the regime in relation to their various political nations. Issues include constitutional responses to crises of the agglomerate polity by improvising alleged fundamental laws and constitutions embedded in an alleged 'national' past, coins, paintings, flags, coronation rites as means of political integration, and the role of the court as points of contact.

B: Contemporary Analyses of the Agglomerate Polity. New kinds of analysis, in particular comparing the new regimes with the principate and emperorship of Rome, but also with the tyranny of Tiberius and the regime of favorites running illegitimate resources of power, attempted to come to terms with the new nature of politics under the pressure of war and the new needs for legitimacy and persuasion. Issues will be in particular Tacitism and Historiography and the new Political Theology.

C: Societal Architecture and Social Integration under Pressure of War: The conference will look at the societal architecture under the pressure of war, at the new service elites and the way in which both lower nobility and burgesses and the higher aristocracy and magnates adapted to the shifts in influence happening around them. It is now widely accepted that 'as public (i.e. princely) service became a decisive criterion for social status', nobilities ceased to be elites 'constituted by their own self-consciousness and by the comportment that authorized them', but became dependant on the 'military, ecclesiastical and civil offices and privileges of precedence granted by the ruler'. But while the ability and willingness of nobilities to exercise force with means independent of the crown had significantly shrunken by 1700, we also now know that this resulted in anything but centralized modern bureaucracies. Groups that will be addressed include new service elites such as financiers and officers in church, army, and administration; lower Gentry and 'Noblesse Seconde', Magnates and Higher Aristocracy.

DAY 1 • WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2011

09:30 A Word of Welcome

Setting the Agenda I: The Dynastic Agglomerate at War

Chair: Hamish Scott

09:45–10:25 Lucien Bely • The Two Major 'New Monarchies' at War. The Pursuit of War and the Stimulation of Rebellion in the Enemy's Backyard: Paris and Madrid, 1635–1658

10:25–11:10 John Morrill • Contemporary Analyses of the Agglomerate Polity

11:15–11:30 Coffee, tea

11:30–12:30 Debate

12:30–13:30 Lunch

Setting the Agenda II: Elites under the Pressure of Words and Wars

Chair: Ronald Asch

13:30–14:10 Robert Frost • Monarchy, Magnates and Service Elites: An Polish-Swedish Comparison

14:10–14:50 Jim Collins • The Rhetoric of *l'etat* and the Struggle for Influence among Elites

14:50–15:20 Coffee, tea

15:20–16:00 Robert von Friedeburg • The New Monarchy as 'Despotic' Beast: Resistance from the Petty Nobility and the Rhetoric of State

DAY 2 • THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2011

09:00–13:00 Representation and Integration

Chair: Lucien Bely

Bernardo Garcia Garcia • The Spanish Monarchy and Regional Elites

Jeroen Duindam • The Paris and Vienna Court

Kevin Sharpe • The Propaganda of the New Monarchy

13:00–14:00 Lunch

14:00–18:00 Tacitism and Political Theology

Chair: John Morrill

Sarah Mortimer • Political Theology

Charles Edouard Levillain • Tacitism to Understand the Prince's Interest in the
Netherlands, France, and Britain

Denis Crouzet • Le théologico-politique dans l'imaginaire des guerriers de Dieu dans
les dernières décennies du XVIe siècle français

Jan Waszink • Tacitism

DAY 3 • FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2011

09:00–13:00 Societal Architecture

Chair: Jim Collins

William O'Reilly • The Case of Ireland

Markku Peltonen • The Case of England

Claire Chatelain • The Case of France

Gunnar Lind • The Case of Denmark

14:00–18:00 Final Debate:

Chair: John Morrill

Reflections by Nicholas Canny, Heinz Schilling, and Geoffrey Parker

19:30–22:00 • Conference Dinner

Venue: Maritime Museum, Restaurant