



Ernst Schütz. *Die Gesandtschaft Großbritanniens am Immerwährenden Reichstag zu Regensburg und am kur(pfalz-)bayerischen Hof zu München 1683-1806.* Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 2007. Schriftenreihe zur bayerischen Landesgeschichte. lvii + 367 pp. ISBN 978-3-406-10749-8; EUR 32.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-406-10749-8.

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Diplomatic History in the Longue Durée

With this monograph, Ernst Schütz has provided a careful, thorough study of British diplomatic representation at the Regensburg Reichstag and the electoral court in Munich from 1683 to the dissolution of the Reich in 1806. The greatest strengths of the work are evident nearly at first glance: an ambitious, one might say audacious, chronological scope tracing the history of a diplomatic mission across well over a century (a rarity in a field often associated with minutiae-intensive case studies); and the truly impressive multi-archival research upon which this study is based, utilizing manuscript collections housed in no fewer than eleven countries (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Russia, Malta, and the United States), as well as a deep array of printed works. Schütz executes his task with consistency and competence, but without always capitalizing on the exciting opportunities his chronological and archival breadth have opened up.

Schütz's treatment of his material is straightforward and systematic. A clear introduction situates his work within newer currents of diplomatic history that focus less on high policy and more on diplomatic networks and the cultural aspects of interstate interaction. The chief theoretical direction he sets out to engage is that of the history of perceptions, a field diplomatic historians have begun to sample relatively recently. Through this lens, according to Schütz, diplomatic history can become a form of social and cultural history via the reconstruction of diplomats' views of the world, themselves, their diplomatic opposite numbers, and their host countries, as these developed throughout their diplomatic missions and through which they experienced and as-

essed their diplomatic activity. Schütz argues that penetrating to the level of perceptions is key to understanding an issue of great currency in the new diplomatic history, the role of diplomats as agents of intercultural transfer. The *longue durée* examination of British diplomats in Regensburg and Munich allows for the observation and comparison of British diplomatic perceptions of the Reichstag and of Bavarian politics and society over time, and for an analysis of the role these perceptions may have played in cultural transfer between southern Germany and the British Isles. This study simultaneously provides an extended examination of a set of diplomatic relations that have received scant attention in the historiographies of Britain, Bavaria, or the empire.

The first main section of the work provides a narrative history of the British diplomatic mission. After sporadic English presence at various imperial diets from the medieval period forward, the first English representative to the new "perpetual" Reichstag, Edmund Poley, arrived in Regensburg in January 1683. For the next several decades the English/British monarchs maintained a regular (if not quite continuous) diplomatic presence in Regensburg that could be considered an established element of the complex diplomatic landscape surrounding the diet that involved representatives of the emperor and the various imperial estates as well as many of the leading foreign powers of Europe. This pattern was broken in 1727 when, at a time of rising Austro-British tension, Emperor Karl VI was able to orchestrate the humiliating expulsion of the British minister Isaac LeHeup from Regensburg. The sting of this incident, as well as the larger course of continental and British politics, left Britain without long-term representation at

the Reichstag until the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. With the focus of British policy turning more heavily towards overseas interests, and with money to dedicate to diplomacy in short supply, George III decided in 1766 to take advantage of geographic proximity to kill two birds with one stone by creating a new diplomatic double post. In this position, a single man (who received a single salary) would be accredited both to the Reichstag and to the Bavarian (from the personal union of 1777 the Bavarian-Palatinate) court and would divide his time between Regensburg and Munich. This double post remained in place until 1804, with Munich rather than Regensburg forming the real heart of its activity until the British minister Francis Drake was driven from his position when his implication in supporting what he believed to be an anti-Napoleonic coup was revealed by the French double agent M  h  e de la Touche. A British representative remained at Regensburg, this time accredited to the Reichstag alone, until the end of the Reich in 1806.

Sch  tz discusses the activities of Poley and of each of his successors, describing the timing and circumstances of their missions, the main issues with which they dealt, and the relation of their activities to broader events in Britain, the empire, and Europe at large. Broadly speaking, British diplomats in Regensburg and Munich were asked to look after British dynastic concerns (including efforts to manage foreign reaction to the Glorious Revolution and the Hanoverian succession, and to combat the perpetual specter of Jacobite intrigue); religious matters (support for foreign Protestants and intercession for Protestant minorities); coalition politics (at times directed against the Habsburgs, but most frequently against France); and economic interests (including efforts to combat the Imperial Ostende Company, which was seen as a threat to British trade). The sections dealing with religious matters are particularly welcome, with Sch  tz showing a refreshing willingness to take seriously the prospect that religious motivations played a role in European diplomacy well into the eighteenth century, even if pragmatic political concerns often carried more heft in the end.

With the historical contours of the British mission mapped out, Sch  tz moves on to provide a systematic discussion of its operational and technical aspects, ranging from the processes through which diplomats were selected for their missions; their staffs, households, and finances; their legal rights and status; the forms and rhythms of their correspondence;

and the elaborate ceremonial demands that played such a central role in diplomatic life at the Reichstag in particular. Special attention is paid to the level of integration into local elite society that British diplomats were able to enjoy, an issue returned to in the book's final main section on the diplomats' perceptions as formed through their experiences at their posts. The volume concludes with a series of appendices that provide useful biographical information on each of the twenty-four British diplomats to be stationed at Regensburg and/or Munich during this time period; additional information on the secretaries, *charg  s d'affaires*, and correspondents who served in conjunction with (and sometimes independently of) the main embassies; lists of the (Palatinate-) Bavarian ambassadors to London and of the ambassadors of various other powers sent to the Reichstag and the Bavarian court; and a small selection of documents, the undisputed show-stealer of which is a colorful 1774 description of the personages (both foreign and domestic) at the Bavarian court, which demonstrates that diplomatic documents can be extremely entertaining as well as informative.

A chief piece of the perceptual analysis Sch  tz provides is the claim that British diplomats were nearly unanimous in considering their service in Regensburg and/or Munich to be slow-paced, uneventful, and of at best marginal utility to their masters, an assessment Sch  tz largely confirms. The legendary gridlock and procedural and ceremonial obsessiveness of the Reichstag, along with the weakness and inefficiency of the Bavarian government, made the prospects of getting anything of traditional diplomatic substance accomplished there minimal. The real payoffs to Britain in maintaining representation therefore lay elsewhere. First, the Reichstag continued to provide a unique opportunity to come into quick, unofficial contact with representatives of most German and European powers in one fell swoop and to gauge their stances on a variety of issues. Its role as political meeting ground and point of information transfer was not fatally weakened by its own declining political stature, and the British were loath to withdraw their eyes and ears from such a place. At the same time, the low-stakes but oddly cosmopolitan diplomatic atmosphere at Regensburg (and to a lesser extent in Munich) provided an ideal opportunity—in an era that still lacked any formalized system of diplomatic education or training—to break in young, inexperienced diplomats and allow them to meet representatives from a range of states without running the

risk of messing up anything truly serious. Indeed, in one of the book's more original claims, Schütz concludes that Britain's use of Regensburg/Munich as a training ground for rising generations of diplomats was unique in British diplomatic practice and perhaps in all of Europe.

Unfortunately, other claims advanced in the book—particularly in the realms of perception and cultural transfer that form the core of its theoretical ambitions—are rarely as bold. The conclusions we find feel quite familiar: British diplomats bemoaned the Reichstag as obscure, inefficient, obsessed with vain ceremony and procedure, and nearly totally ineffective; and criticized the Catholic Bavarians as backwards, unenlightened, superstitious, and bigoted. As Schütz himself notes, these views differed little from general British perceptions of Germany as expressed in travel literature, pamphlets, and encyclopedias. Nor (I would add) does this conclusion differ significantly from what we today would expect eighteenth-century Protestant British men to have thought. The generally negative impressions the diplomats held, especially of Bavaria, provided a disincentive for them to consider their host country as a source of things worth emulating, thus hindering productive cultural transfer. Furthermore, Schütz declares that the lasting impact of the embassies he describes on future diplomatic practice was small, as European diplomacy experienced a fundamental recalibration through institutional reform after 1815. The final conclusion offered by the book is that its contribution to our broader understandings of European history will be to help pull back the reins on the recent wave of *Reichseuphorie* that continues to see the dissolution of the Reich in 1806 as an epochal event. The book does this by showing the negative impressions British diplomats held of the empire and

the equanimity with which they observed its demise, a point that is worth pondering but that seems a surprisingly tepid punch to come out of so much original primary research in a field that the author correctly describes as underexploited.

The historical profession definitely preserves a place for solid historical work that examines and eventually confirms prevailing impressionistic assumptions by grounding them comfortably in extensive and proficient archival research while adding a handful of new twists to consider. Even so, one cannot help but feel that a study that draws upon such a mighty and unique array of archival *fonds* should be able to generate claims of greater force and creativity. Hosts of tantalizing nuggets calling for further examination are indeed sprinkled throughout this work. One is the suggestion that the monarchs of the Hanoverian line kept their British and Hanoverian representations separate in order to achieve a relative information advantage over their own ministers by having access to two independent flows of information, in a situation where the ministers in each respective government would have had but one. What might this strategy tell us about broader issues of British and Hanoverian history or of the Hanoverian kings' style of rule? Another is the claim that a diplomat's membership in a secret society—in this case Thomas Walpole's status among the *Illuminaten*—could condition the nature of the information he reported back home. What exciting questions about the interpenetration of private associations and the conduct of diplomacy might this tidbit suggest? These examples are only a few of the many avenues for thought that Schütz's work has opened up but not yet fully exploited. The field of diplomatic history can hope that he or others following his lead will carry them to the next level.

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