

Sonja Wimschulte, Die Jakobiten am Exil-Hof der Stuarts in Saint-Germain-en-Laye 1688/89 bis 1712. Migration, Exilerfahrung und Sinnstiftung, Göttingen (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht) 2018, 283 S., 7 Abb. (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, 244), ISBN 978-3-525-10148-3, EUR 59,99.

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The historical study of European courts was once confined to the interpretation of gossip-laden aristocratic memoirs and the meticulous chronicling of princely artistic patronage. In recent decades, however, courts have become lively topics again, due in large part to the work of sociologists like Norbert Elias, Pierre Bourdieu and Clifford Geertz. They suggested that courts were social institutions with their own rules of hierarchy and distinction, as well as their own means of ritual communication. A growing number of early modern European historians, among them John Adamson, Ronald G. Asch, Jeroen Duindam, Robert Oresko, David Starkey and Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, have studied courts as centers of political organization and as the engines of princely publicity. We now know a great deal about the staging of court festivals, about the strictures of etiquette and about the spread of court fashions.

The court of the exiled Stuart monarchs has not escaped this attention. It existed because of the flight of the Catholic King James II (James VII in Scotland) from his kingdoms after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. At the invitation of Louis XIV of France, James took up residence at the palace of Saint-Germain near Paris, which became a magnet for English, Scottish and Irish Jacobites fleeing from the new regime – the term »Jacobite« referred to the supporters of James (*Iacobus* in Latin). Until his death in 1701, James II plotted to return to his kingdoms, but was thwarted by the fortunes of war and the vigilance of the English government. His son, James III (James VIII in Scotland), remained at Saint-Germain until 1712, when Louis XIV was obliged by the Treaty of Utrecht to expel him. While his mother, Mary of Modena, continued to reside at Saint-Germain until her death in 1718, James III was forced to set up his own court at Bar-le-Duc in Lorraine, then at Avignon, Urbino and finally Rome.

The Stuart court at Saint-Germain has already attracted researchers, foremost among them Edward Corp and Nathalie Genet-Rouffiac. Corp organized a major conference held at Saint-Germain in 1992, accompanied by an exhibition of Stuart artefacts in the surviving part of the palace. He went on to publish, with the collaboration of Edward Gregg and Howard Erskine-Hill, the first



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major academic study of the Stuart court in France¹. It determined the layout and personnel of the palace of Saint-Germain, and established its importance as a center for music, poetry and Catholic devotion.

The early work of Genet-Rouffiac concentrated not on the court itself, but on those Jacobite exiles who lived on its peripheries, in Saint-Germain and in Paris. Most of them were Irish, unlike the senior household staff, and lived in impoverished circumstances. Many were connected with the »wild geese« regiments that had fought for James II in Ireland and later joined the French army. Genet-Rouffiac has since published important studies of these Irish Jacobite troops who served the Bourbons for more than a century.

Sonja Wimschulte's newly published book on the court of Saint-Germain is deeply indebted to the researches of Corp and Genet-Rouffiac, although it moves into some new areas as well. The only work available on the subject in German, it began as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Tübingen. The book still bears the marks of its origins, in sections devoted to methodology and sources as well as in chapter summaries that tend to repeat points already made in the main text. In spite of these academic devices, however, the book is written in a clear and readable style that will not alienate general readers. For those who lack a knowledge of German, a short English summary of the author's main conclusions is provided.

Wimschulte focuses on the exiled court as a destination for migration or diaspora. She points out, convincingly, that the Jacobite migration was not fully comparable to the Huguenot diaspora from France after the 1685 revocation of the Edict of Nantes, because it was not primarily driven by religion. The Jacobites were mostly Catholics, but they did not leave their homelands solely for confessional reasons – political and economic factors were also important in making the decision to migrate. Although her analysis does not look beyond the court, Wimschulte's conclusion can be extended to the wider sphere of Catholic Jacobite exiles in Europe after 1688. They migrated in part because their religion was sporadically persecuted in the British Isles.

Yet they also left in order to enter monasteries and nunneries, to take up military or diplomatic service for Catholic monarchs and to set up commercial enterprises abroad – in other words, to pursue career paths that were not fully open to them in the lands of their birth. The Stuart court at Saint-Germain was predominantly comprised of English rather than Irish or Scottish Catholics, but they too were motivated to migrate by a mixture of reasons: religion, loyalty to the monarch, previous household service.

The most original material in Wimschulte's book concerns the means by which Jacobite exiles left for France, and how some of them eventually returned to Britain or Ireland. She takes into account the smuggling network in southern England, the significance of religious institutions in giving shelter to exiles, and



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¹ Edward Corp (ed.) A court in exile. The Stuarts in France, 1689–1718, Cambridge, New York (NY), Dehli et al. 2004.

the changing administrative requirements for travel between the British Isles and France. She rightly emphasizes the international dimensions of British and Irish Catholicism, which made migration easier. Her book also includes a useful list of individuals who held court appointments at Saint-Germain between 1689 and 1712, which goes beyond the senior household servants identified by Corp.

Wimschulte enters into an insightful discussion of the changes in policy that took place during the regency of Mary of Modena between 1701 and 1706, for which she credits the dowager Queen. Otherwise, however, her book does not add much to our understanding of the complicated politics of the Stuart court, or of the conspiracies that were fomented by it in England and Scotland. While the recent studies of gift-giving and ceremonial at European courts by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger are cited here, these subjects could have been given more attention. Music, poetry and painting are hardly mentioned. Nevertheless, this book provides both a well-informed general introduction in German to the complicated history of the exiled Stuart court and a valuable addition to the English and French literature already devoted to the topic.



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