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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Making Sense of Constitutional Monarchism in Post-Napoleonic France and Germany by Prutsch

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devastation, by both victors and vanquished, changed the course of European history” (527). That “the strands that connected the regional struggles under one umbrella conflict produced [the] global struggle of immense proportions” (536) that we now call the Seven Years’ War is well illustrated by the contributions to this volume. But while it was never in doubt (not even among European historians) that to understand the full enormity of this war, the taking into consideration of developments in the rest of the world is essential, the volume’s rather ambitious agenda (stated in the introduction) to rethink “categories and basic concepts of war, peace, alliance, enmity and decision-making in early modern times” (lvii) has not been achieved, for all their high quality, by the essays of this collection. The Seven Years’ War remained a war among the European great powers, albeit with unprecedented global dimensions and with greater consequences than have generally been appreciated.

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Making Sense of Constitutional Monarchism in Post-Napoleonic France and Germany. By *Markus J. Prutsch*.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. viii+333. \$95.00.

In *Making Sense of Constitutional Monarchism*, Markus Prutsch traces the emergence of European constitutional monarchism within the spectrum of constitutional concepts and theories during the first decades of the nineteenth century. His transnational comparative study of France and the German states of Bavaria and Baden represents a successful case study of “new political” and “new constitutional” history, which explores constitutional origins and practices within the prevailing socioeconomic, cultural, and international climate that defined the charters. Prutsch presents the French Charte Constitutionnelle as a solution to and compromise between two divergent political cultures through its simultaneous retaining of monarchical legitimacy and providing of revolutionary innovations related to civil liberties and limited political representation. Prutsch suggest that this “top-down” model of constitutionalism, which seemed to reconcile and limit postrevolutionary society, had exceptional “export” value for other post-Napoleonic states seeking to safeguard state sovereignty and contain popular reform projects.

Following a detailed account of the establishment and provisions of the Charte Constitutionnelle, Prutsch explores the public opinions on and reception of constitutionalism in German Central Europe and the plausibility of transferring the model of the Charte to the German states of Bavaria and Baden. He provides a rich overview of constitutional perceptions prior to and after the revolutionary and Napoleonic era. Prior to 1789, public discussions and scholarly debates on natural law, constitutions, and fundamental rights focused on the English, American Federal, and Polish constitutions; the French Revolution and the Constitution of 1791 aroused broad public interest, and constitutional debate became increasingly polarized. Following the defeat of Napoleon, constitutional discussions and debates reappeared. Along with the English and American constitutions, the Spanish Constitution of 1812, the Swedish 1809 Constitution, the Norwegian “Eidsvoll” Constitution of 1814, and the Dutch Grondwet of 1815 provided constitutional models that coexisted with the Charte Constitutionnelle. Curiously, Prutsch’s study addresses neither constitutional reform in the Hanseatic cities nor the debates they generated. He points out that German translations of the Charte were available immediately after its proclamation

in 1814 and suggests it served as an inspiration for the constitutionalization of the German states. Yet would a document designed to overcome the political fragmentation of post-Napoleonic France and to represent a compromise between old and new French political cultures offer a pragmatic model for south German states?

Constitutionalism in the German states faced different challenges emerging from the Napoleonic wars. Along with a growing public desire for a constitution and reform, Bavaria and Baden shared the challenging Napoleonic legacy of territorial and social integration, financial crisis, and the safeguarding of state sovereignty within a new federal structure. As Prutsch details the origins, contributors, and texts of the constitutions that emerged in Bavaria and Baden in 1818, he demonstrates the combination of royal prerogative, government commissions, long-standing political traditions, and references to outside constitutional models central to this process. Indeed, he concludes that if the Bavarian and Badenese constitutions emulated the “monarchical-constitutional system” initiated by the Charte, they also represented a “patchwork of external and domestic, traditional and innovative elements” giving each of them a unique character (113). Prutsch gives more credit to the personalities and backgrounds of such key individuals as Georg Friedrich von Zentner in Bavaria and Karl Friedrich Nebenius in Baden for shaping each state’s constitution than to a specific constitutional “transfer.”

If conclusions about constitutional “reception and transfer” are limited, due to a dearth of hard evidence, an analysis of constitutional practice provides a range of insights into each state’s post-Napoleonic political systems. The chapter that outlines the “constitutional reality”—by which the author means the constitutional culture, the efforts of governments to strengthen public knowledge of their constitutions, and the tensions related to the limits of power between the executive branch and the parliament—is the longest and best in this thorough study. Although the south German royalty may have viewed constitutions as pragmatic necessity, Prutsch demonstrates how constitutions could be used to strengthen Bavarian or Badenese state consciousness as well as to foster expectations for a new kind of monarchy as traditional forms of legitimacy appeared worn and forgotten. In other words, these monarchical constitutions generated a complex and even contradictory legacy. In both Bavaria and Baden, collaboration between monarch and government broke down in response to controversial press edicts, parliamentary debates on the budget, conscription, and military spending. In France, the legitimacy of the Charte Constitutionnelle itself became central to royal-chamber contention following the death of the *Roi législateur*, Louis XVIII, as his successor, Charles X, alienated even conservatives in his efforts to undermine electoral law.

Constitutional systems gathered their own momentum, and attempts by monarchs and elites to counter growing political demands with constitutional manipulation were never wholly successful. The best example of the limits of authorities to manage political culture is the annual constitutional festival, starting in 1821 on the castle grounds of Gaibach in Franconia, designed to celebrate the constitution, the monarchy, and Bavarian national identity. By 1832, the official character of the *Verfassungsfeste*, attended by over five thousand people, was transformed from a celebration of the status quo to the expression of demands for a democratized political system.

Prutsch also includes a chapter on comparative political theory on constitutional monarchism in the early nineteenth century. He analyzes the views in France of Chateaubriand and Constant, who concurred more than they disagreed about the Charte. Prutsch also analyzes the constitutional commentary of Gentz, Aretin, Stahl, and Mohl in German Central Europe and concludes that despite the potential of constitutional practice to provide a progressive legislative framework, German constitutional theory collectively defined itself according to static conservative paradigms. Indeed, he argues that constitutional mon-

archism survived the longest in Germany and regained strength in “political and moral terms in the second half of the nineteenth century” (198).

Prutsch’s study clearly challenges any charge of post-Napoleonic “political hibernation” in German Central Europe. In both Bavaria and Baden, freedom of the press, political expression, and representation remained key public demands. Varied attempts by governments to confront public and parliamentary pressures also demonstrate nuanced experiments with state power. Prussian and Austrian cooperation to limit the sovereignty of member states of the German Confederation by minimizing south German constitutionalism through reactionary measures only emphasized the importance of state legitimacy after 1815. As Prutsch points out, in the end Confederal Articles widened the gap between governmental constitutional policies and public expectations for liberalization, fostering revolutionary frustration—the very thing the constitutions were meant to preclude.

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Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte: An American Aristocrat in the Early Republic.

By *Charlene M. Boyer Lewis*.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Pp. viii+280. \$34.95 (cloth); \$34.95 (e-book).

In this book, Charlene M. Boyer Lewis investigates the life of the beautiful and well-educated Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte, a member of an elite Baltimore family in the early years of the American republic. She was briefly the wife of Jerome Bonaparte, the unimpressive younger brother of the more famous Napoleon. Lewis recounts Elizabeth’s story against the backdrop of fluctuating gender roles and expectations in the first half of the nineteenth century, both in the young United States and in Napoleonic and Restoration France. This fits neatly into a current line of historiography that considers both gender roles and ideas about citizenship, national identity, and republicanism in flux during these post-revolutionary years. Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte embraced an aristocratic and cosmopolitan ethos, seeking a life that would remove her from what she saw as the stultifying society of early nineteenth-century Baltimore, and vocally rejected republican simplicity, domesticity, and middle-class values. Instead, she sought a European husband, a noble title, and a life of luxury and witty repartee among other *femmes d’esprit*. A woman whose deportment so explicitly contradicted the notions of republican motherhood and modest feminine conduct that dominated contemporary discussions of appropriate gender behavior offers a particularly fruitful case for analysis.

Lewis portrays Elizabeth as a transatlantic celebrity, a woman who consciously sought this status in the choices that she made: to marry the brother of the consul-turned-emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte (their romance began before Napoleon officially became emperor of France); to pursue recognition by the Bonaparte family, both of her marriage to Jerome and, subsequently, of their child, Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte; to seek a noble title and a pension from Emperor Napoleon; to live abroad as a fixture of elite society; and, finally, to try (unsuccessfully) to marry her son into the French aristocracy. Lewis argues that Elizabeth cultivated this celebrity status consciously, especially through her choice of clothing and companions. The author makes a good case that Elizabeth sought a cosmopolitan lifestyle and rejected republican ways, but it is never clear why celebrity status—defined here as “temporary, the cultivation of renown during one’s lifetime” (21)—was so important once her beauty and charm allowed her entry into Europe’s elite society. In spite of the