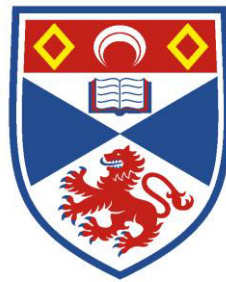


The “Sailor Prince” in the Age of Empire:
Creating a monarchical brand in nineteenth-century
Europe

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University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

16.12.2016

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Abstract

This study examines the systemic function and public role of “Sailor Princes” within the context of the nineteenth-century revival of monarchy. It explores how, between 1850 and 1914, the reigning families of Britain, Denmark, Germany and Greece chose to educate their younger sons in the navy and thereby created powerful links with a mythically invested symbol of national identity and modernity, of bourgeois virtue, imperial integration and exotic adventure. All four countries perceived themselves as maritime powers defined by their long seafaring traditions and/or great hopes for a naval future, by their possession of (in)formal seaborne colonial empires and/or by their substantial imperial ambitions. By latching onto the prominent trend of the nineteenth-century lure of the sea and of naval enthusiasm, the dynasties of Saxe-Coburg, Glücksborg and Hohenzollern were able to adapt these mental geographies for their own purposes and thus to generate an appealing brand image for the emerging political mass market. Prince Alfred of Britain (1844-1900), Prince Heinrich of Prussia (1862-1929), Prince Valdemar of Denmark (1858-1939) and Prince Georgios of Greece (1869-1957) all became powerful personality brands of their respective monarchies. This study investigates the mechanisms and the agents responsible for their success. It examines the role of the sea and of maritime imageries in nineteenth-century national identities; the myths and realities of naval education and naval professionalism; the processes by which seaborne colonial empires and diaspora communities were integrated into larger imperial units and represented to each other via interimperial diplomacy; as well as the public reception, appropriation and recreation of the “Sailor Prince” brand in various popular media, e.g. family magazines, adventure fiction and consumer goods.

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The completion of a doctoral thesis is like a long sea journey. Although you may, at times, feel all by yourself, steering your tiny nutshell through storm and bad weather, you are really surrounded by ever so many good forces working towards a safe passage. It is with these few lines that I would like to give them my heartfelt thanks.

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Finally, I would like to use the opportunity to think of all those good souls who have supported this thesis simply by being there for me: My family, particularly my parents, my twin-sister and my husband – whom I all love dearly.

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Segelschiffe

Sie haben das mächtige Meer unterm Bauch
Und über sich Wolken und Sterne.
Sie lassen sich fahren vom himmlischen Hauch
mit Herrenblick in die Ferne.

Sie schaukeln kokett in des Schicksals Hand
Wie trunkene Schmetterlinge.
Aber sie tragen von Land zu Land
Fürsorglich wertvolle Dinge.

Wie das im Wind liegt und sich wiegt,
Tauwebüberspannt durch die Wogen,
Da ist eine Kunst, die friedlich siegt,
Und ihr Fleiß ist nicht verlogen.

Es rauscht wie Freiheit. Es riecht wie Welt. –
Natur gewordene Planken
Sind Segelschiffe. – Ihr Anblick erhellt
Und weitet unsre Gedanken.

Joachim Ringelnatz

Some notes on translations

If not indicated otherwise, all passages in this thesis which were not originally in English have been translated by me. Apart from the obvious candidates, the sources which were also written mainly in English include:

- The correspondence between Prince Heinrich of Prussia and his mother, Crown Princess Victoria of Prussia, the later Empress Frederick;
- The correspondence between Prince George of Greece and his grandparents, Queen Louise and King Christian IX of Denmark.

Explanation of abbreviated names in the footnotes

In the footnotes, the principal protagonists are abbreviated as follows:

PA Prince Alfred of Britain

PG Prince Georgios of Greece

PH Prince Heinrich of Prussia

PV Prince Valdemar of Denmark

CPFW Crown Prince Frederick William of Prussia

CPV Crown Princess Victoria of Prussia

DE Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha

KCIX King Christian IX of Denmark

KG King George I of Greece

PAI Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha

QL Queen Louise of Denmark

QV / QVJ Queen Victoria / Queen Victoria's Journals

Introduction: A royal Prince who is also a Sailor

On Saturday 4 July 1868, London's Crystal Palace, that giant glass-and-iron edifice which had hosted the Great Exhibition of 1851, was brimming with life. A staggering 30,496 people had gathered to welcome back Queen Victoria's second son. Prince Alfred, a captain in the Royal Navy, had just returned from the initial part of what was effectively the first royal tour of the British Empire. His cruise aboard HMS *Galatea* had been cut short by an assassination attempt. At Clontarf, Australia Alfred had been shot in the back by Henry O'Farrell, a mentally unstable Irishman harbouring anti-monarchical and anti-British beliefs. As a result, the festivities, comprising the delights of an opera concert, a fountain display and magnificent fireworks, were characterized by more than simple rejoicing. The enthusiasm was extraordinary and reached its climax when a popular song was performed: "God bless our Sailor Prince". At the first bar, the audience rose to their feet, and when the final chorus was sung, the entire giant hall was alive with cheers, with the clapping of hands, the stamping of feet and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs.¹

Such a scene of mass rejoicing might come as a surprise to the reader well-acquainted with the mid-Victorian period. The 1860s have, after all, been associated with a general decline in the public approval of the monarchy. Queen Victoria's extended seclusion following the death of her husband Prince Albert in 1861, the scandal-ridden behaviour of the Prince of Wales and the Queen's efforts to secure large allowances for her younger children have all been said to have strengthened anti-monarchical sentiment in the period. Only after 1871, so the accepted view, did the near-death of the Prince of Wales from typhoid fever, the re-invention of public royal ritual during Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilees, and the Crown's association with reawakened interest in the British Empire bring about a revival of popular enthusiasm for the monarchy.² Yet, here was Prince Alfred in 1868, hailed in a public mass festival, in popular songs and newspaper articles. Where did all that enthusiasm come from?

Some might argue that the prince, just like the Prince of Wales would three years later, had won the public's sympathies by narrowly avoiding death. In early 1869, however, the *Dublin University Magazine*, in a review article assessing the media hype surrounding Prince Alfred, provided a broader explanation of his success. "[A] royal Prince, who is

¹ 'The Crystal Palace Festival', Illustrated London News (11.7.1868); 'Welcome at the Crystal Palace', Penny Illustrated Paper (11.7.1868).

² Prochaska, Frank, *The republic of Britain, 1760-2000* (London, 2000), 99-114, 121-41.

also a Sailor”, it remarked, “[...] is sure to command the sympathies of his countrymen”.³ Far from being a mere lucky coincidence, the prince’s survival was interpreted by many observers as part of his generally exciting life as a professional naval officer. “Young, brave, and true/he wears the blue/his courage to evince,/the pride, the ‘darling of his crew’/God bless our Sailor Prince!” went one stanza of the popular song which sent London’s citizens into raptures. The Crystal Palace Festival thus merely provided a stage for a dazzling, multi-faceted public persona of widespread appeal which Alfred had adopted some time ago and which arguably contributed to the revival of the British monarchy long before 1871.

This study probes deeper into the popular phenomenon of the “Sailor Prince” and into the role it played within Europe’s monarchies in the nineteenth century. Not just in Britain, but all across Europe the Age of Empire witnessed the emergence of a very specific public persona which, by combining the aura exuded by a prince of the blood with the cultural mystique of the sailor, became what one might call a powerful monarchical brand. In the four decades following Prince Alfred’s grandiose welcome, a wide range of princes would follow in his footsteps. Their popular choice of profession would turn them into darlings of the public and the media. And they would all enjoy their own moments of fame. In December 1898, to mention just one event, the Greeks enthusiastically cheered Prince Georgios of Greece as he set sail for the Island of Crete. Thousands of spectators lined the shores, as the young admiral arrived at Souda Bay, with their “Flags and branches of laurel, myrtle, and lemon” forming one “green forest at the water’s edge”.⁴ On 22 July 1901, to cite another example, the famous Copenhagen promenades of *Langelinje* and *Toldboden* were thronged with an unheard-of number of thousands of onlookers as Prince Valdemar of Denmark returned from a two-year cruise to the Far East aboard HMS *Valkyrie*. The majority of the crowd were ladies who, in their light dresses, hats and parasols, gave the impression of a vast field of lilies dotting the waterside.⁵ On 15 February 1900, finally, the inhabitants of the German harbour city Kiel staged a festive procession consisting of 18,000 participants in honour of Prince Heinrich of Prussia’s return from the East Asia Station. Tens of thousands of spectators formed a giant ceremonial pathway as the parade moved towards their “Prince-Admiral’s” city palace.⁶

³ The cruise of the *Galatea*, Dublin University Magazine, 73 (January 1869).

⁴ Prevelakis, Pandelis, *The Cretan* (Minneapolis, 1991), 308-11.

⁵ Cavling, Henrik, ‘*Valkyriens Hjemkomst*’, *Politiken* (22.7.1901).

⁶ StdtA Kiel, Akten der Stadverwaltung Nr.1534.

Though very specific in their contexts and meanings, all of these events illustrate the striking popularity of the public persona “Sailor Prince” in the long nineteenth century. This study aims to unravel, on the one hand, the various myths and ideas on which this concept was constructed on and from which it took its popularity. On the other hand, it examines the mechanisms by which this popularity helped a number of Europe’s royal houses to stabilize their positions within various contexts of institutional contestation, national conflict and international challenges.

In doing so, this study contributes to a wider scholarly discourse on the curious survival or even revival of monarchy across the long nineteenth century. Over the last thirty years, historians have been struck by the fact that, despite the overarching narratives of this century as an age of revolution and popular sovereignty, the overwhelming majority of European countries were still ruled by dynastically legitimated monarchs. Confronted by a variety of serious challenges to its authority (such as increasing democratization, secularization, nationalism or the rise of the middle classes to socioeconomic, political and normative power) the institution of monarchy remained remarkably intact. Not only did most ancient monarchies (for example those of Denmark and Britain) emerge surprisingly unscathed or even reinvigorated from the challenges posed by the French Revolution, the liberal-national movements of the 1830s-1840s, as well as a series of other armed and constitutional conflicts. Almost all the newly independent or unified states created as a result of the national movements of the age (for instance Greece or Germany) similarly and lastingly adopted monarchical forms of government.⁷ Moreover, even though monarchs such as Queen Victoria, King Christian IX of Denmark, King George I of Greece, or Emperor William II all at some point committed serious mistakes in their political judgement or public self-representation, republican movements did not take root before 1918. Rather, the last decades before the outbreak of the First World War were characterized by a succession of major royal events which, judging from the popular attendance and media attention they received, were able to garner widespread support for the monarchy in an age when the media and mass politics dramatically changed the public sphere.⁸ Far from heading to their natural demise, Europe’s monarchies seemed remarkably alive by 1914.

⁷ Mayer, Arno, *The persistence of the Old Régime* (New York, 1981); Osterhammel, Jürgen, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2009), 828-848.

⁸ E.g. Arnstein, Walter, ‘Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee’, *The American Scholar*, 66 (1997), 591-97; Vikelas, Dimitrios, ‘Vingt-cinq années de règne constitutionnel en Grèce’, *La Nouvelle Revue* (1889), 492-519.

There has been a growing body of original research aiming to resolve the conundrum of how this was possible. Most scholars have tended to subscribe to a model of “institutional modernization” or “re-invention”. They either explicitly or implicitly refer to the monarchy as an institution challenged to position itself in what has been termed the emerging “political mass market”⁹. As electorates expanded and the powerful mass media reached ever wider circles of readers, as political parties evolved and new political creeds gained ground, Europe’s governing elites and ruling houses increasingly had to compete with all sorts of contenders for the once taken-for-granted attention and loyalty of their critical subjects-turned-consumers. To sell themselves to their audience in a political system which very much resembled the competitive economic market, they resorted to the new marketing techniques of the “Age of Advertising”.¹⁰

Scholars have pointed to a range of strategies through which sovereigns adapted to change, re-invented their brand images and thus, by winning the affection and “brand loyalty” of their people as a new form of legitimacy, actively contributed to the stabilization of the monarchical system. These strategies included the acceptance of constitutional frameworks restricting the governing power of single monarchs; the representation of royal families as symbols of the nation and as allies of the middle-classes living bourgeois lives; the performance of welfare work in accordance with the prevalent spirit of Christian virtue and social reform; the re-invention of splendid royal ritual as an attraction unifying the nation; or the adoption of all kinds of proactive attitudes towards modern media and consumer culture.¹¹

⁹ A term originally coined by: Rosenberg, Hans, *Große Depression und Bismarckzeit: Wirtschaftsablauf, Gesellschaft und Politik in Mitteleuropa* (Berlin, 1967), chapter 4.

¹⁰ Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*, 3d ed. (London, 1994), 105-107.

¹¹ For a summary: Kroll, Frank-Lothar, *Zwischen europäischem Bewusstsein und nationaler Identität: Legitimationsstrategien monarchischer Eliten im Europa des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*, *Historische Zeitschrift*, Beiheft 44 (2007), 353-374; Sellin, Volker, *Gewalt und Legitimität: Die europäische Monarchie im Zeitalter der Revolutionen* (Munich, 2011). For individual examples: Kirsch, Martin, ‘Wie der konstitutionelle Monarch zum europäischen Phänomen wurde’, in: Jussen, Bernd (ed.), *Die Macht des Königs: Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit* (München, 2005), 350-65; Colley, Linda, ‘The apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, royalty and the British nation 1760-1820’, *Past and Present* (1984), 94-129; Dollinger, Heinz, ‘Das Leitbild des “Bürgerkönigtums” in der europäischen Monarchie des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in Werner, Karl (ed.), *Hof, Kultur und Politik im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1985); Cannadine, ‘The context, performing and meaning of ritual: The British monarchy c. 1820-1977’, in: Hobsbawm, Eric/Ranger, Terence (eds), *The Invention of tradition* (New York, 2010), 101-64; Kroll, Frank-L. et al. (eds), *Inszenierung oder Legitimation?/ Monarchy and the art of representation* (Berlin, 2015); Prochaska, Frank, *Royal bounty: The making of a welfare monarchy* (New Haven, 1995); Plunkett, John, *Queen Victoria: First media monarch* (Oxford, 2003); Kohlrausch, Martin, *Der Monarch im Skandal: Die Logik der Massenmedien und die Transformation der wilhelminischen Monarchie* (Berlin, 2005); Giloi, Eva, *Monarchy, myth and material culture in Germany, 1750-1950* (Cambridge, 2011).

While this study builds and expands on all of the mentioned themes, it chooses a new prism through which it examines the monarchy's remarkable revival in the political mass market. Rather than examining the entire corporate brand or its principal CEOs, it focuses on one particular personality brand fashioned by the monarchy and the brand messages it conveyed to its consumers.¹² In examining the "Sailor Prince" it combines two categories of analysis which have been largely neglected in the study of modern monarchy: the dynasty and the sea.

First, this investigation offers a more comprehensive approach to the institution of monarchy by enquiring not only into the agency of single monarchs, but by exploring the functions of the dynastic personnel that surrounded them. While it has been recognized that the concept of dynasty could be part of the challenge that many monarchies faced in the nineteenth century – in the shape, for example, of the highly un-meritocratic, undemocratic and widely criticized principle of hereditary rule or of costly allowances for useless younger princes – few scholars have acknowledged that this seeming relic from pre-modern times could also be part of the solution. Only recently, Frank Lorenz Müller and Heidi Mehrkens have edited a number of insightful investigations into the political roles and soft-power strategies of a variety of Europe's heirs to the throne.¹³ Few other research projects have so far systematically studied the public functions of non-reigning members of a dynasty, particularly those who were not first-in-line.

Yet, this study argues that these dynasts, diverse in outlook, age and training, but bound by family law and loyalty, provided their sovereign relations with a unique supporting cast. Focusing on four "Sailor Princes" from four different countries, the investigation demonstrates how the flexibly deployable second and third sons of Europe's sovereigns were able to take on a range of popular roles from the royal book of re-invention which the main characters of their dynasties could never have performed themselves. At a time when sovereigns like Queen Victoria were mainly static residents of baroque royal palaces, were sometimes of foreign dynastic origin and often caught up in daily routine, these princes were presented as middle-class professionals and global empire roamers with an aura of romantic adventure and national momentum. Thus, they represented an

¹² Balmer, John/Geyser, Stephen/Urde, Mats, 'The monarchy as a corporate brand: Some corporate communications dimensions', *European Journal of Marketing*, 40.7/8 (2006), 902-8.

¹³ Müller, Frank Lorenz/Mehrkens, Heidi (eds): *Sons and Heirs: Succession and political culture in nineteenth-century Europe* (Basingstoke, 2015); Id. (eds), *Royal heirs and the uses of soft power in nineteenth-century Europe* (Basingstoke, 2016).

important product brand of the corporate brand monarchy, epitomizing a range of appealing ideas that their dynasties stood for.

The one magic connection which enabled the princes to embody all of these different ideas was their naval profession. Today we would probably expect a royal football player, a royal rocket scientist or *Medicin sans Frontières* to be a more popular choice. In the nineteenth century, however, so the second main argument of this study, the naval officer was a myth-invested public persona which aligned the monarchy with a complex of vital – though as yet underexplored – contemporary trends: popular naval-imperial enthusiasm and what Alain Corbin has termed the “lure of the sea”.¹⁴

Maybe somewhat surprising to our twenty-first-century sky- and space-bound, “sea-blind”¹⁵ eyes, the period between approximately 1780 and 1914 has been characterized as “the grand culminating point of the European maritime experience”.¹⁶ It was the last era in which the sea was still considered “one of modernity’s most dynamic frontiers”. For centuries, shipbuilders and explorers, merchants and governments had exerted themselves in their quest to master the elements, to map the unknown, span trading networks across the globe and gain dominion of overseas territories.¹⁷ In the course of the nineteenth century, naval technology was completely transformed and Europe’s scientific, mercantile and colonial expansion was accelerated. Yet, while the world would soon be heading towards new frontiers, this was also an era in which the maritime sphere, both as a physical and as an imagined space, gained as universal and captivated an audience in Europe as it had never done before and would never do again.

A fundamental shift in perceptions of beauty and health during the Romantic period, as well as the spread of the railways, the expansion of the tourism industry and the printing revolution in the industrial age meant that the sea and its inhabitants (ships and sailors) became almost ubiquitous “cultural presences”¹⁸ in popular culture. On the one hand, Europe’s urban middle-classes were increasingly able to stream to the coast to enjoy seaside holidays, sea bathing and idyllic sea views. On the other hand, maritime imageries such as “sublime” scenes of windswept seas, ships in distress and shipwrecked sailors,

¹⁴ Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the sea: The discovery of the seaside in the western world, 1750-1840*, trans. by Jocelyn Phelps, 2nd ed. (London, 1995).

¹⁵ Redford, Duncan, ‘The Royal Navy, sea blindness and British national identity’, in: Id. (ed.), *Maritime history and identity: The sea and culture in the modern world* (London, 2014), 61-78.

¹⁶ Kirby, David G./Hinkkanen-Lievonen, Merja L., *The Baltic and the North Seas* (London, 2000), 2.

¹⁷ Cohen, Margaret, *The novel and the sea* (Princeton/NJ, 2010), 3.

¹⁸ Lincoln, Margarete, *Representing the Royal Navy: British sea power, 1750-1815* (Aldershot, 2002), ix.

grandiose naval paintings, exotic islands or the image of the romantic naval hero invaded popular print markets, bourgeois homes and the “imaginative landscapes” that were attached to them.¹⁹

At the same time, the ocean also rose to new prominence in political discourse. Spurred by romantic ideas of national origin, seafaring nations like Britain, Denmark or Greece rallied around their re-discovered or re-invented naval pasts. The most compelling motive to turn towards the sea, though, was the close connection made between the maritime sphere and the Empire as the one most characteristic political and cultural value of the time that gave the age its name. From the 1830s onwards, and then, with a particular verve, from the 1880s, many governments perceived the ability to build and maintain state-of-the-art navies capable of securing global trade or facilitating colonial expansion as a vital prerequisite for great-power status and, thus, ultimately, for national survival in a fierce global power struggle. The new schools of economic and strategic thought, combined with the ideologies of imperialism and sea power, turned even such classic land powers as Germany into avid participants of a veritable naval craze. Massive fleet-building programmes and a true “cult of the navy” ensued, which, again, manifested themselves in various aspects of popular culture.²⁰

All of these romantic imageries and power-political fantasies of the Age of Empire, that last maritime age, were encapsulated in the public persona of the sailor or naval officer – a myth-invested figure which itself underwent a major metamorphosis between 1780 and 1914: from dangerous outsider of society to modern professional, beloved adventure hero, national idol and empire-builder.²¹ In adapting this popular character for their sons, the dynasties examined in this study created a new composite myth or brand (the “Sailor Prince”) which spoke in a very direct language to both their contemporaries’ intellects and emotions. The people of London, Crete, Copenhagen or Kiel cheered the princes because every facet of their persona reflected the major ideas and dreams that they entertained for

¹⁹ Corbin, 137-45, 228-44; Sternberger, Dolf, ‘Hohe See und Schiffbruch, Zur Geschichte einer Allegorie’, in: *Vexierbilder des Menschen: Gesammelte Schriften*, 6 (1981), 229-45; Kirby, 45-49, 220-21; Mack, John, *The Sea: A cultural history* (London, 2011), 95-99, 101-103.

²⁰ Hobson, Rolf, *Imperialism at sea: Naval strategic thought, the ideology of sea power and the Tirpitz Plan, 1875-1914* (Leiden, 2002); Rüger, Jan, “In the imaginative fashion of Teutons”: Anglo-German history and the naval theatre’, in: Geppert, Dominik et al. (eds), *Wilhelmine Germany and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford, 2008), 411-18; Epkenhans, Michael, “‘Mund halten und Schiffe bauen’? Stapelläufe: Monarchische Repräsentation, politische Legitimation und öffentliches Fest’, in: Biefang, Andreas (ed.), *Das politische Zeremoniell im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Düsseldorf, 2008), 189-203.

²¹ Conley, Mary, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack: Representing naval manhood in the British Empire, 1870-1918* (Manchester, 2009); Heimerdinger, Timo, *Der Seemann: Ein Berufsstand und seine kulturelle Inszenierung, 1844-2003* (Köln, 2005).

their age as well as a powerful promise to realize them on the part of the monarchy. Partly, this happened intuitively, because the royal families and their advisors shared the cultural beliefs and practices of their age. Partly, however, Europe's dynasts also consciously adopted and encouraged popular naval enthusiasm and imperialism to enhance their own public profile. The "navalization" of monarchy, as one might call it, can therefore be classified as yet another strategy of monarchical re-invention among the many that scholars have identified so far.

In his study of "*The great naval game*" Jan Rüger has already examined how a monarchical alliance with the maritime sphere could be spelled out. Rüger examined how, between 1888 and 1914, Emperor William II and King George V used the "naval theatre" with its magnificent ship launches and fleet reviews to align themselves with an important source of national identity, imperial power and international prestige.²² This study aims to address three further important aspects.

First, although the "*Flottenkaiser*" and the "*Sailor King*" staged themselves as naval monarchs, there existed much more personal and authentic links with the navy than sporadic visits, the donning of uniforms or the titular assumption of supreme command positions. It was by educating their younger sons as professional naval officers rather than by mere grandiose ritual that some of Europe's leading dynasties built an enduring bridge to the navy as a symbol of national-imperial greatness, bourgeois values and adventurous dreams. One of the core assumptions which made "Sailor Princes" so widely popular in the nineteenth century – and one of the main criteria by which their success was measured – was that they did not only slip into the role of the naval officer symbolically, temporarily and superficially, but that they actually dedicated their lives to what was perceived as a demanding career profession in the service of national interest.

The deeper "navalization" of monarchy by way of educational programmes, secondly, was also a much older phenomenon than the maritime stagings described by Rüger as part of the Age of New Imperialism. Scholars of early modern history would probably refer to King Christian IV of Denmark who was legendarily wounded while commanding his fleet during the Battle of Colberger Heide (1644) or to King James II who started his career as a royal admiral. This study, however, focuses on the period between the Romantic Age and the First World War; and it argues that it was in this "long Age of Empire", as one

²² Rueger, Jan, *The great naval game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, 2007).

might call it, that a fundamental shift occurred in the monarchy's educational practices with regard to the navy.

Prior to the nineteenth century, royal commanders had essentially been amateurs. After 1780, however, Europe's royal families would increasingly choose to educate their younger sons according to the new professional standards of their time. The naval education of the later "*Sailor King*" William IV – the first prince to be semi-professionally trained in the navy, but who did not yet continue to become a proper officer – still represented a transition period. From the 1830s onwards, a new public persona would emerge which distinguished itself from its predecessors by four essential facts: (i) All "Sailor Princes" of the long Age of Empire were professionally trained naval officers; (ii) They pursued active careers in the navy even beyond their lieutenant's commission; (iii) They received a broad public recognition for this in the beginning mass media society which was even reflected in the coinage of a new compound in some languages: "Sailor Prince", "Sømandsprins", "Matrosenprinz"; (iv) Their professionalism and the global reach of the media enabled both the princes and their personae to travel huge distances and thus to be truly at home in the globalizing world of the Age of Empire.

The third aspect to complement Jan Rüger's study, finally, is that the conditions which led to the navalization of monarchy by way of maritime stagings or education were not unique to Britain and Germany. In fact, there were numerous nations which, due to their coastlines as well as their subscription to navalist assumptions defined themselves as maritime powers with formal or informal seaborne colonial empires or imperial ambitions embodied by their naval presence: France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands, but also Russia or Austria-Hungary, to name but a few. Most of the reigning dynasties of these countries would also produce princes destined to lead their naval forces, ranging from the Prince de Joinville in France to Archduke Maximilian in Austria-Hungary or the Duke of the Abruzzi in Italy.²³

This study focuses on four exemplary "Sailor Princes" from Britain, Denmark, Germany and Greece in order to get to the heart of the phenomenon. Prince Alfred, Prince Valdemar, Prince Heinrich and Prince Georgios were all "Sailor Princes" par excellence who lend themselves to a comparative approach. Their training and careers, despite a time span of thirty years between the years when the first and the last of them entered naval service, fell into the heyday of navalist and imperialist thought. This was the case both on a Europe-

²³ E.g. Lacaze, Admiral et al. (eds), *Le Prince de Joinville et la marine de son temps* (Paris, 1953).

wide level (1858-1914) and individually, with each prince starting his career at the start of a new phase of public debate and/or private initiative in his respective country. The geographical situation of their nations, moreover – three archipelagic kingdoms and one land empire located between the Atlantic, the Baltic and the Mediterranean Sea – were both similar enough to justify the application of a comparative frame and diverse enough to promise a nuanced and colourful end result.

At the same time, these four princes also allow for the comparison to be complemented by a transnational approach that investigates the movement of popular trends like the lure of the sea or of concepts like the “Sailor Prince” across national borders. They all belonged to a network of intimately interrelated dynasties within the wider European family of kings – the Saxe-Coburgs, Glücksborgs and Hohenzollerns – which all closely interacted with each other as well as exchanged their strategies and ideas. Prince Alfred was Prince Heinrich’s uncle and Prince Valdemar was Prince Georgios’s; Valdemar was Alfred’s and Heinrich was Georgios’s brother-in-law. This makes it easy to assume that the public personae represented by these princes were the products of multi-directional, intra-familial transfer processes just as much as they emerged from peculiar national settings. Dynastic relations were, moreover, accompanied by other imagined forms of kinship between the British, the Danes, the Germans and the Greeks, as well as by all sorts of cultural and political contacts connecting these coastal states, which allow for them to be assembled in one study.

What this investigation hopes to achieve by blending elements of comparative and transnational analysis is neither a simple comparison nor a history of relations, though. The study will neither sift its case studies through the filter of a comparative grid nor will it dissolve national borders as a category of analysis. Rather, it could be seen as a “panopticon” or “panorama” studying four interwoven prime examples of a wider phenomenon of the Age of Empire which can best be illustrated through its specific instantiations. The “Sailor Prince” is treated as a Europe-wide phenomenon which emerged from a variety of converging trends and as a dynastic response to a variety of contexts and challenges. Some of these were universal or indicating wider developments, others were more nation-specific, yet still often ‘comparable’. It is by taking a panoramic, birds’-eye view of these trends and themes, incorporating comparative, transnational and biographical nosedives, but ultimately paying tribute to the more chaotic, kaleidoscopic ways in which life and history present themselves, that this study hopes to do justice to its subject. It aims to examine a public persona which ultimately only existed as the sum of

many faces and thus also to the heart of some of the basic assumptions of an age which these many faces stood for.²⁴

To this end, the investigation will be divided into four thematically structured chapters centred on the ideas of (1) the national, (2) the middle-class, (3) the imperial and (4) the celebrity dimension that “Sailor Princes” added to the public portfolio of the monarchy.

The first chapter introduces all four “Sailor Princes” within the context of their peculiar national and dynastic environments. In four miniature studies paying tribute to the individuality of each case study, it maps out the “imaginative landscapes” that nineteenth-century Britons, Danes, Germans and Greeks associated with their respective maritime spheres; and it examines how, by locating themselves on mental timelines between great naval pasts and future naval greatness, the princes’ parents managed to anchor their often contested dynasties in national identity.

Following this introduction to the cultural-political setting, the second chapter probes more deeply into the myth of the “Sailor Prince” as a middle-class professional. It traces the princes’ inner journeys of initiation into the masculine, meritocratic world of the navy as well as their career path through the ranks; and it queries whether the princes were actually able to transcend the barriers of class, adopt the standards of modern professionalism and become true representatives of royal embourgeoisement as popular myth would have it.

From this rather intimate focus, the third chapter zooms out to follow the “Sailor Princes” on their travels through the wider world of oceanic empires. On the one hand, it conceives of them as mobile royal empire roamers and empire-builders who systematically visited the various provinces, colonies and diaspora communities that belonged to their respective nations and thus integrated them into tightly-knit imperial units. On the other hand, it examines their role as mobile royal diplomats in a globalizing world, querying whether they were cosmopolitan bridge-builders or rather chauvinist, racist representatives of their nations’ interests in a fierce international power struggle.

The fourth chapter, finally, brings us back to the metropolitan centre, enquiring into the public images that “Sailor Princes” enjoyed in the nineteenth-century mass media and consumer market. It examines how the princes, staged as a kind of modern adventure heroes by a range of “brand-designers”, provided an intriguing prism for the representation of naval, imperial and monarchical themes. As such they contributed to the dissemination

²⁴ Cf. Flacke, Monika (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen: Ein europäisches Panorama* (Munich, 1998); Campbell, Joseph, *The hero with a thousand faces*, 3d ed. (Novato/Calif., 2008).

of the navalist and imperialist ideologies as well as to the stabilization of the political order and monarchical system.

When the people of London cheered Prince Alfred during the Crystal Palace Festival, the prince merely sat in his royal box and bowed to the crowds. Prince Valdemar, in 1901, actually disappointed Copenhagen's citizens and humbly chose not to land before their eyes. Prince Heinrich, in 1900, merely featured at the very end of the Kiel procession when he received his well-wishers. One final question which pervades the whole study, but is particularly pronounced in the last chapter, therefore is that of agency. Who exactly created the monarchical brand "Sailor Prince"? Was it a start-finish-victory on the part of monarchies remarkably apt at spotting and bundling the trends of the age in one iconic persona? Or was this persona rather the result of the creative agency and self-confident projections of its audiences and consumers? While this study aims to answer this question, the ultimate genesis and success of the monarchical brand "Sailor Prince" may well prove as elusive and difficult to grasp as the magnificent fireworks that the pyrotechnicians of the Crystal Palace Company conjured onto the night sky of London on 4 July 1868.

1 Monarchy at sea: The maritime dimension of nationalization

In 1902, the Danish journalist Alexander Svedstrup published a lavishly illustrated travel account which opened with the following lines: “Denmark is small, but the sea is vast, and the sea has been Denmark’s friend from earliest ages”. The book was entitled “Path of the Dane” (*De Danskes Vej*) and its main subject was the cruise of the corvette *Valkyrie* to East Asia, famously undertaken by Prince Valdemar of Denmark in 1899-1901 to support Danish business interests abroad. By referring to the country’s ancient royal/naval anthem in the title and by summarizing Denmark’s seafaring past in his introduction, Svedstrup attempted to convince his readers that the *Valkyrie* represented a revival of the kingdom’s naval glory and a “good omen for the future”. As he argued, the “sea race” had almost forgotten the naval successes of their forefathers extolled in their anthem, resigning themselves instead to a status as a minor power. Yet, the sight of the *Valkyrie* “under the old split flag with the King’s son on-board” was to remind them that Denmark could be great again, out on the “rediscovered sea”.²⁵

What Svedstrup formulated here was a programme of national mission derived from a perceived national heritage which was common to many seafaring nations in the long nineteenth century. As they transformed from pre-modern political units to national communities bound together by common pasts, landscapes and mythscapes, Europe’s seafaring countries attached an increasing symbolic importance to their seas and naval traditions as “emotional foundations” of the nation.²⁶ Seen as a source of livelihood, a gateway to the world or a natural defence, the sea was believed to have shaped their coastlines, histories and culture and, therefore, formed an integral part of their national identities.²⁷ This was the gist of Svedstrup’s invocation of the “sea race”. At the same time, nineteenth-century nations also defined themselves by the goals that they derived from their heritage. Long before Alfred Thayer Mahan’s “Influence of Sea Power upon History” (1890) turned naval might into an irrational ideology, nationalist thinkers, political economists and military strategists across Europe were already inferring from the naval histories of their own countries – or from the history of other thalassocracies

²⁵ Svedstrup, Alexander, *De Danskes vej: Valkyrien’s togt til Østasien* (Copenhagen, 1902), 1-7.

²⁶ Francois, Etienne/Schulze, Hagen, ‘Das emotionale Fundament der Nationen’, in: Flacke (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen*, 17-32; Germer, Stefan, *Retrovision: Die rückblickende Erfindung der Nationen durch die Kunst*, in: *Ibd.*, 33-52.

²⁷ Kirby/Hinkkanen, 1; Quilley, Geoff, *Empire to nation: Art, history and the visualization of maritime Britain, 1768-1829* (New Haven/London, 2011), 7; Peck, John, *Maritime fiction: Sailors and the sea in British and American novels, 1719-1917* (Basingstoke/New York, 2001), 27.

– that the progress of a nation somehow depended on global or regional naval might.²⁸ Svedstrup therefore wanted to encourage his countrymen to build on their naval heritage and become a great trading nation again.

What is most intriguing about Svedstrup's account, though, is the way in which he put Prince Valdemar, the "King's son", at the centre of his programme. It suggests an intimate involvement of the Danish royal family in the discourse on national identity and national mission, which could only be beneficial to the monarchy. The emergence of nationalism as the predominant state ideology of the nineteenth century meant that Europe's royal houses had to reconfigure themselves: Formerly a-national networks of monarchs that used to rule over more or less disconnected territories by divine right had to transform into nationalized first families closely identified with their countries, loved by their people and perceived as relevant to their national goals. By educating their younger sons in their respective navies and thus forging a close personal alliance with some of the most culturally pervasive institutions of the century, dynasties like the Danish and Greek Glücksborgs, the British Saxe-Coburgs and the German Hohenzollerns were able to build and sustain images of themselves as deep-rooted, popular and relevant national institutions. Through the public persona "Sailor Prince", they appropriated a series of distinct national myths to create a new, composite myth which captured their people's intellects and emotions.²⁹

This chapter details how this emotive brand helped the monarchy to connect with the nation as a community of both common origin and common future.³⁰ For on the one hand, dynasties which were traditionally a-national or had been transplanted to foreign countries because of power-political considerations, could dock onto the notion of the ancientness of the sea and thus align themselves with their nations' sense of identity and national feeling. On the other hand, the association with the navy as an agent of modernity and projection space for future visions could contribute to the revitalization of the institution of monarchy, linking *ancien regimes* with a range of future projects of nation- and empire-building.

²⁸ E.g. Semmel, Bernard, *Liberalism and naval strategy: Ideology, interest and sea power during the 'Pax Britannica'* (Boston, 1986) 2-4.

²⁹ Becker, Frank, 'Begriff und Bedeutung des politischen Mythos', in: Stollberg-Rilinger, Barbara (ed.), *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?* (Berlin, 2005), 129-48, 135-36.

³⁰ Nipperdey, Thomas, 'In search of identity: Romantic nationalism, its intellectual, political and social background', in: Eade, J.C. (ed.), *Romantic Nationalism in Europe* (Canberra, 1983), 1-15.

This chapter examines how four dynasties – intuitively or consciously – learned to utilize the cultural phenomenon of the “lure of the sea” and their personal connection with the navy to stabilize their positions within various contexts of institutional contestation and national conflict. By tracing the role of the ocean and the navy in the national histories and mythscapes, debates on national defence and future projects of Britain, Denmark, Germany and Greece it breaks new ground. Especially where countries other than Britain are concerned, Duncan Redford recently observed, the role of “the maritime dimension” in shaping national identity has hardly “been given the prominence it deserves”.³¹

To arrive at a comprehensive assessment of this role, each section of this chapter is dedicated to one case study, highlighting the national peculiarities of the myths, dreams and hopes projected onto each prince. The individual sea views add up to suggest a pan-European, transnational maritime culture. As the overarching investigation into the royal reasoning behind the formation of the brand reveals, the “Sailor Prince” was a trademark that was used by various interconnected dynasties towards one, largely identical goal: to anchor themselves in national identity. As such, it travelled along the channels of dynastic relations from one corner of Europe to the other. It adapted to different water levels like in a system of locks, but ultimately it retained its core quality: the combination of ancient and modern, humble and noble, Sailor and Prince.

Prince Alfred and the “Island nation”

When Prince Alfred, one of the first fully-fledged “Sailor Princes” of the nineteenth century, opted for the naval service in 1858, Britain had been the world’s leading power for half a century. As most Britons were well aware, the country’s economic and world-political success had been facilitated by its unrivalled mastery of the sea. The maritime sphere, therefore, occupied a central place in British national history and identity. In the mid-Victorian era, memories of a glorious naval past, sentimental feelings about life on-board and a self-righteous belief in the morality of British sea power merged into a national mythology which pervaded popular culture. It provided a unique canvas for the monarchy to project on some vital messages about its national identity and commitment.

³¹ Redford, Duncan, ‘Introduction’, in: Id. (ed.), *Maritime history*, 1-10, 3-4.

These agendas were hardly ever explicitly put down in writing. Surviving records ascribe the motivation behind Prince Alfred's naval career almost entirely to the boy's own wishes. In 1855, Queen Victoria recorded in her journal that she and Prince Albert had decided to educate their second son in the Royal Navy "contrary to our original intention". They were giving in to "the spontaneous wish of a young spirit", as Albert assured his brother Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in 1857.³² But although these assertions should be regarded as more than a pretext or common trope, there are also serious reasons to believe that Alfred's step was not just a whim. Rather, it fitted neatly into a wider programme of re-invention that his parents were implementing; and it was approved of because the prince had been raised in a royal household which was just as steeped in the maritime culture of the age as the audience that it was addressing. Intuitive attraction, calculating strategy and the interpreting gaze of the public worked together to create, within a few short years, the curious phenomenon "Sailor Prince".

To date there have only been few examinations of the "cultural presence" of the maritime sphere in the public realm of mid-nineteenth-century Britain. Available studies mainly treat the period as the appendix, pre-history or contrasting foil of the era of the Napoleonic Wars or of New Imperialism, when public enthusiasm ran particularly high.³³ But even though its subdued coverage between 1820 and 1880 seems to signal a loss of importance of the Royal Navy, quite the opposite was the case. Scholars agree that, throughout the century, it was an established, if taken-for-granted national institution; and they argue that, while the enthusiasm of the French Wars or of the fin-de-siècle was a response to (perceived) crises, the public neglect of the mid-Victorian era was really a sign of a self-satisfied, sentimental complacency about Britain's uncontested naval supremacy.³⁴ Prince Alfred linked the monarchy to some of the most reassuringly British and romantically valued institutions of his time. As the *Dublin University Magazine* elaborated in 1869, he tapped into "the instinctive enthusiasm which all Englishmen feel for sailors. [...] we love the sea, and cherish, above all things, the remembrance of our naval heroes."³⁵

³² Queen Victoria's Journals (QVJ), 27.3.1855; Prince Albert (PAI) to Duke Ernst (DE), early 1857, in: Bolitho, Hector (ed.), *The Prince Consort and his brother* (London, 1933), 169f.

³³ E.g. Land, Isaac, *War, nationalism and the British sailor, 1750-1850* (Basingstoke, 2009); Rodger, N.A.M., 'The dark ages of the Admiralty, 1869-1885', *Mariner's Mirror*, 61-62 (1975-76).

³⁴ Lincoln, 189-202; Redford, 63-64; cf. Hamilton, Mark, *The nation and the navy: Methods and organization of British navalist propaganda, 1889-1914* (London, 1986), 355.

³⁵ *Dublin University Magazine* (1869).

The sea, the navy and the sailors were arguably at the core of British national identity. For one, the sea shaped the country's geography and culture and, therefore, was one of the defining features of nineteenth-century concepts of Britishness.³⁶ Located off the north-western coast of mainland Europe and surrounded by the rough waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and the English Channel, Britain – a conglomerate of two large and many small islands – was commonly conceptualized as an “island nation” inhabited by an “island race”.³⁷ This notion united the competing identities of the “four nations” (the Anglo-Saxon English and the Celtic Irish, Scots and Welsh) into one communal, maritime identity. The sea contributed to a sense of isolation, liberty and uniqueness. Simultaneously, it fostered fears of enemy invasion and served as a high road to the wider world of commercial and colonial enterprise, creating common challenges and common projects.³⁸ In Victorian poetry and prose, the British and their various ancestors were perceived as “natural-born sailors” whose innate nautical skills made the sea their “second home” and naval supremacy their natural birth-right.³⁹

The Royal Navy, actually founded in the sixteenth century, but often thought to be as old as the country itself, was the central facilitator and symbol of this dominant position.⁴⁰ Its “wooden walls” represented the protection of Britain's constitutional liberty, maritime trade and financial prosperity; and they played a pivotal role in the establishment, defence and integration of Britain's vast and steadily expanding empire, itself a conglomerate of “islands” connected by a network of sea routes.⁴¹ From the early eighteenth century onward, therefore, the navy became the centre of an emerging British nationalism.⁴² From 1815, moreover, it was believed to be a “moral force” deployed to establish and protect British liberal values across Europe and the world. The “Pax Britannica” involved the idea that Britain, a naval hegemon in possession of

³⁶ Rüger, Jan, *Nation, empire and navy: Identity politics in the United Kingdom, 1887-1914*, Past and Present, 185 (2004), 159-87, 183-86.

³⁷ Behrman, Cynthia, *Victorian myths of the sea* (Athens/Oh., 1977), 11-31, 38-45.

³⁸ Behrman, 38-45; Rüger, *Nation*, 159-172, 183-86; Quilley, 7-8.

³⁹ Behrman, 25-31.

⁴⁰ Behrman, 31; Parker, Joanne, ‘Ruling the waves: Saxons, Vikings and the sea in the formation of an Anglo-British identity in the 19th century’, in: Sobiecki, Sebastian (ed.), *The sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), 19-206.

⁴¹ Lincoln, 2; Rüger, *Naval game*, 3; Davey, James, ‘The naval hero and British national identity’, in: Redford (ed.), *Maritime history*, 13-37, 13-15; Philip, Mark, ‘Politics and memory: Nelson and Trafalgar in popular song’, in: Cannadine, David (ed.), *Trafalgar in history: A battle and its afterlife* (Basingstoke/New York, 2006), 93-120, 97. Cf. Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992).

⁴² Lincoln, 18.

countless naval stations, was using her dominant position like an impartial arbiter, to secure the freedom of the seas, international political stability and what one might call “human rights”. While standing armies were distrusted as instruments of absolutist power, the navy was regarded as a benign authority: It helped the self-declared policeman of the world to fight piracy and the slave trade; and its “cruiser diplomacy” protected liberal-national movements across Europe just as much as it furthered the country’s own commercial-colonial interests.⁴³

The men who had mastered the sea, built the navy, defended the nation and established the empire formed the principal themes of a national historiography which the Victorians were busily recycling and expanding. King Alfred the Great, who had built a couple of ships to fight the Vikings in 897, was re-invented as a prophet of naval might.⁴⁴ The defeat of the Spanish Armada by the numerically inferior English fleet in 1588 was commemorated as the starting point of God-sent British greatness. Elizabethan privateers such as Francis Drake or Walter Raleigh were romanticized as reckless patriots and pioneers of British maritime expansion.⁴⁵ The victorious commanders and intrepid explorers of the eighteenth century, men like Edward Vernon, George Anson or James Cook, who had established and defended Britain’s leading position against French and Spanish ambitions, were celebrated as true representatives of national character and superiority. The “shared culture” of maritime (consumer) patriotism created around these new-style naval heroes peaked during the Napoleonic Wars.⁴⁶ Through the multiplying, unifying power of cheap prints, popular ballads and commemorative pottery, admirals like Edward Pellew, Cuthbert Collingwood and the iconic Horatio Nelson achieved a mythical status which informed maritime imageries for years to come.⁴⁷ In the Victorian period, their pantheon was joined by the explorers of the Northwest Passage, John Ross, William Parry and the tragic John Franklin, who were all celebrated as examples of moral strength enduring the hardships of the cold to advance human knowledge.⁴⁸

The individual bravery of these commanders was complemented by the collective heroism of the naval officer and “Jack Tar”, the common sailor, who were both

⁴³ Behrman, 33; Hamilton, 355.

⁴⁴ Parker, 198-200.

⁴⁵ Behrman, 77-87.

⁴⁶ Davey, 21-32.

⁴⁷ Lincoln, 3, 19-20, 44, 101-3; Philip, 93-120; Lambert, Andrew, ‘The magic of Trafalgar: The nineteenth-century legacy’, in: Cannadine (ed.), *Trafalgar in history*, 155-74.

⁴⁸ Lincoln, 195; Land, 149ff; McGoogan, Ken, *Fatal passage* (London, 2002), 220-33.

increasingly thought to embody the best qualities of the nation at large.⁴⁹ Especially in the post-Napoleonic period, when Britain's aristocratic military elites were embroiled in scandals and the middle classes worried that the immorality and incompetence of their ruling classes might be the country's downfall, these two groups of professionals were re-evaluated. While the army was seen as a stronghold of the aristocracy where officers' commissions had to be purchased, the navy was conceptualized as a profession for the bourgeoisie governed by ideas of meritocracy. The young genre of naval romance, pioneered by authors such as Robert Southey and Captain Frederick Marryat, shone a new halo of heroism around the senior service by relocating chivalric ideals from the degenerate aristocracy to the navy's middle-class officers. Tapping into the cult of Nelson's navy, it celebrated the comradeship, resourcefulness and bravery of the gentleman hero at sea.⁵⁰ The adventure novels that took their rise from this shift also contributed to the slow rehabilitation and reintegration of the common sailor into mainstream culture. Up until the 1800s, "Jack Tar" had been notorious for being a drunk, dumb or vicious trouble-maker. The war effort, however, transformed his image into that of a simple, but brave fellow. Any remaining negative connotations vanished during Victoria's reign, when children's books, comic operas and advertisements all interlinked to idealize the "British blue-jacket" as a model of domesticated manliness.⁵¹

Prince Alfred's decision to enter the senior service enabled the Victorian monarchy to partake in these myths. Haunted by an un-English ancestry which was increasingly problematic in the age of nationalism, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were determined to distance themselves from the German heritage of their dynasty. Since their accession in 1714, the kings of the House of Hanover had repeatedly failed to ingratiate themselves with their British subjects by retaining their foreign mores, international lifestyles and unclear loyalties. Particularly King George IV and his brothers had been castigated for their licentious, corrupt lifestyles. In the first two years of her reign, young Victoria had herself managed to squander much of her initial popularity by becoming involved in several scandals. When she had decided to marry her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, in 1839 to improve her spoiled image, suspicions about his religious-political inclinations and clan-thinking had been rife

⁴⁹ Land, 9, 80.

⁵⁰ Fulford, Tim, 'Romanticizing the empire: The naval heroes of Southey, Coleridge, Austen and Marryat', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 60 (1999), 161-96; Dawson, Graham, *Soldier heroes: British adventure, empire and the imagining of masculinities* (London, 1994), 107-9.

⁵¹ Cf. Conley, 123-30; Marcombe, David, *The Victorian sailor* (Shire, 1985), 5-7.

once more. Following the advice of their confidant Baron Stockmar and paying heed to critical media voices, the royal couple therefore set to work on the reinvention of their public image according to the new, Europe-wide trend of the nationalized and bourgeois monarchy. Prince Alfred's career plans tied in with their intention of providing their offspring with a "truly moral and truly English education" to avoid "national prejudice".⁵²

Dynastic law would have it that the boy was destined to succeed his childless German uncle, Prince Albert's elder brother Ernst, as Duke of Saxe-Coburg. By giving in to his "spontaneous wish", his parents were killing two birds with one stone. On the one hand, this provided a convenient excuse not to send their son abroad for his education, a step which, as Prince Albert knew from his own experience, "would [...] have had the worst construction put upon it in the public mind".⁵³ On the other hand, they were actively aligning themselves with a national institution par excellence which also enjoyed a decidedly middle-class reputation.

The national-identity politics that they pursued had a precursor in the cultural engagement of Frederick Prince of Wales, the ill-fated eldest son of King George II. In August 1740, this visionary prince had staged a shadow play featuring the heroic exploits of King Alfred against the Vikings, which, by establishing a connection with the Anglo-Spanish War of 1739-1748, was meant to display the patriotic spirit of the Hanoverian monarchy. It would best be remembered by its closing hymn, "Rule Britannia", soon to become Britain's second national anthem celebrating her navy and all that it stood for.⁵⁴ When they sent a son named Alfred to sea, Victoria and Albert were following in the footsteps of Frederick and his son, George (III), who had been educated to become a "patriot king".

Both the English-born queen and the foreign prince knew about and shared the feelings of pride and enthusiasm that would overcome their subjects when they heard the line "Rule, Britannia! Britannia rule the waves! Britons never will be slaves." Victoria had first soaked up the sea air and the romantic emotions that her contemporaries attached to the "lure of the sea" during the few and carefree seaside holidays of her otherwise

⁵² Stockmar, Ernst (ed.), *Denkwürdigkeiten aus den Papieren des Freiherrn von Stockmar* (Braunschweig, 1872), 390ff; Anon., *Who should educate the Prince of Wales?* (London, 1843).

⁵³ Bennett, Daphne, *King without a crown: Albert, Prince Consort of England* (London, 1977), 331.

⁵⁴ Parker, 198ff; Keynes, Simon, 'The cult of King Alfred the Great', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 28 (1999), 225-356, 277-80; Cox, Oliver, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales and the first performance of "Rule Britannia"', *Historical Journal*, 56 (2013), 93-154.

unhappy childhood.⁵⁵ Driven by nostalgia and by Prince Albert's desire for a family retreat, the royal couple built Osborne House on the Isle of Wight as their seaside paradise, thereby popularizing the island and the yachting grounds of Cowes among the wider public.⁵⁶ Their sea cruises aboard the royal yacht "Victoria and Albert" fostered a fondness for "handy", "well-conducted" sailors in the queen.⁵⁷ She shared the sentimental hero-worship of her time, greatly enjoying Southey's "Life of Nelson", visiting the museum ship *Victory* and collecting Nelson souvenirs;⁵⁸ and she participated in the romantic fascination with the pleasant horrors of the trivialized sublime, taking both a humanitarian interest and a voyeuristic pleasure in the increasingly sensationalized news stories about tragic shipwrecks, noble rescues and the triumphs and disasters of Arctic exploration.⁵⁹ Prince Albert's curiosity, meanwhile, was directed towards developments in naval technology.

Together, the royal couple would reinvigorate the tradition of the naval review at Spithead near Portsmouth, turning the events into regular, increasingly public and publicized spectacles.⁶⁰ This was the result of both an instinctive and a conscious patriotism. Especially Prince Albert, the foreigner, who had been carefully briefed about his adopted home by the spin doctors of his clan, was aware of the central position that the navy occupied in British national identity. While the country's elites, complacent about their maritime supremacy, increased their efforts at naval commemoration only in response to the Anglo-French rivalry of the 1840s-1850s, the Prince Consort, anxious to identify with the national past, marched ahead of his time. In addition to insisting on attending naval events, in 1845 he purchased the coat that Nelson had worn at the battle of Trafalgar as a present to the Greenwich Hospital – a publicly acclaimed gesture. As Chair of the Fine Arts Commission for the interior decorations of the new Houses of Parliament he ordered two large paintings of the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Southall-Tooley, Sarah, *The personal life of Queen Victoria* (London, 1897), 25, 49-50.

⁵⁶ Corbin, 137-48, 174, 269-76; Knox-Johnston, Robin, *History of yachting* (Oxford, 1990), 44-5.

⁵⁷ E.g. QVJ, 31. 8.1842, 7. 7.1844, 21. and 22.08.1846.

⁵⁸ E.g. QVJ, 18.7.1833, 25.12.1833, 14.10.1853, 16.6.1844, 21.10.1844.

⁵⁹ For shipwrecks cf. Willis, Sam, *Shipwreck: A history of disasters at sea* (London, 2014); QVJ, 24.2.1841, 10.1.1852, 7.4.1852; PA to QV, 28.3.1858, RA VIC/ADDA20/1203. For arctic exploration cf. Potter, Russel, *Arctic spectacles: The frozen North in visual culture, 1818-1875* (Seattle/London, 2007), 113-115, 146; QVJ, 9.11.1853, 16.12.1856, 4.7.1857, 16.2.1864.

⁶⁰ Wade, George, *The wind of change: Naval reviews at Spithead, 1842-1856* (Portsmouth, 1987), 4-7, 10-11, 18-20.

⁶¹ Lambert, *Trafalgar*, 162-3.

If we trust Prince Alfred's biographers, his parents passed on their naval enthusiasm – and programme – to their second son by encouraging his predilection for practical handicrafts, geography and books about maritime history. They gave him ship's clocks and barometers as presents, and on his parting in 1858 handed him Southey's "Life of Nelson", a clear statement of the national role they had in mind for him.⁶² In 1846, the couple's famous idea of dressing the little Prince of Wales – and subsequently also Alfred – in a sailor suit met with wide applause, the sartorial innovation becoming an iconic trend in children's fashion.⁶³ Success was therefore guaranteed for the uniform the prince donned in 1858. As the *Times* assessed, "The strong heart of England warms to the seaman's blue jacket."⁶⁴ Just like the Spithead reviews, Alfred's naval rites of passage enabled his parents to stage a "naval monarchy". Their observers, perceiving this to be a natural response to Britain's reliance on her seaborne forces, willingly inserted the prince into their line of naval heroes. "Of Nelson, Hood, and Collingwood/our grandsires used to sing", went one song in 1869, "Our fathers had a toast as good,/they gave 'The Sailor King!'/ Now royal Alfred treads the deck/ his courage to evince;/ he braves the storm, nor fears the wreck./ God bless our Sailor Prince!"⁶⁵

While the Nelson connection was vital for the national image of the monarchy, though, the royal tradition referred to in this popular ditty was more problematic. The queen's uncle, "Sailor King" William IV, and other royals who had held military posts before, were essentially subject to the national discourse on the debauchery of the Hanoverian monarchy and the reviled system of "old corruption" from which Albert and Victoria wanted to distance themselves. Castigated for their aristocratic amateurism and alleged inability, they did not fit into the image of a modern, future-oriented bourgeois monarchy that the royal couple crafted in response to the emergence of the middle classes as a new socio-cultural and political force.⁶⁶ Prince Alfred's naval career, on the other hand, did. For the prince entered an institution which, following the modernization of naval education in 1837-1857, was regarded as a thoroughly meritocratic profession, where intellectual and physical abilities rather than purely financial criteria governed admission and advancement, and where all cadets, be they sons of aristocrats or

⁶² Van der Kiste, John/Jordaan, Bee, *Dearest Affie: Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Victoria's second son* (London, 1984), 17-25; QVJ, 26.10.1858.

⁶³ QVJ, 2.9.1846/6.8.1847; cf. <http://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/special/sailor-chic/the-exhibition/affluence-and-patriotism> (14.12.2016).

⁶⁴ 'An existence compounded of the two ideas', *The Times* (30.12.1858).

⁶⁵ Glover, Stephen, *God bless our sailor prince* (London, 1868).

⁶⁶ E.g. Rubinstein, William, 'The end of "Old Corruption" in Britain, 1780-1860', *Past & Present*, 101 (1983), 55-86.

tradesmen, received the same treatment. By subjecting their son to such a democratic training, Victoria and Albert demonstrated their determination to break with the *ancien-regime* past and embrace middle-class ideals like thrift, charitability, self-improvement and merit-based assessment.⁶⁷

More than a simple sign of royal embourgeoisement, though, Victoria's and Albert's approval of their son's career also highlighted their – and their nation's – fascination with the armed forces and their determination to influence current debates about national defence and imperial expansion.⁶⁸ Walter Arnstein has convincingly argued that Victoria, despite her civilian appearance, conceived of herself as a “Warrior Queen”. She proudly displayed her position as a female Commander-in-Chief, taking a keen interest in her soldiers. And she pursued an active political agenda of strengthening the (military) authority of the crown as well as Britain's (military) prestige in the world by regularly attending reviews and advocating national-defence issues.⁶⁹ Her military patriotism also extended to the navy. During her frequent visits to Spithead, Victoria would be thrilled with naval manoeuvres. “I think it is in these immense wooden walls that our real greatness exists”, she confided to her uncle, King Leopold of the Belgians, in 1842. And in 1856, having seen the fleet off to the Crimean, she raved “I may claim to be Queen of the Seas”.⁷⁰

The maintenance of the command of the ocean was by no means a self-runner, though. Throughout the 1840s-1850s, France was challenging British naval supremacy by rebuilding its fleet to the latest technological standards. The Crimean War would soon reveal the technological backwardness, manning problems and incompetent high command of a Royal Navy still stuck in the past.⁷¹ Victoria and Albert were therefore also taking active part in the ensuing debate about national-defence policy. They urged action to prevent Britain from “laps[ing] into a 2nd-rate power” and advocated a larger, more independent naval budget.⁷²

⁶⁷ Hobhouse, Hermione, ‘The monarchy and the middle classes: The role of Prince Albert’, in: Birke, Adolf et al. (eds), *Bürgertum, Adel und Monarchie* (Munich, 1989), 53-69;

⁶⁸ Myerly, Scott, “‘The eye must entrap the mind’”: Army spectacle and paradigm in 19th-century Britain’, *Journal of Social History*, 26.1 (1992), 105-31; Paris, Michael, *Warrior nation: Images of war in British popular culture, 1850-2000* (London, 2000).

⁶⁹ Arnstein, Walter, ‘The Warrior Queen: Reflections on Victoria and her world’, *Albion*, 30.1 (1998), 1-28.

⁷⁰ QVJ, 18.8.1853 and 23.4.1856; second quote cited by Wade, 6.

⁷¹ Hobson, 24-26; Conley, 19-23; Wade, 3-4.

⁷² QVJ, 2.5.1858, 31.7.1858, 2.9.1858.

Prince Alfred's entry into the navy, occurring exactly at this moment, had to be understood as a declaration of faith supporting the royal couple's policy. Their relationship with the navy was one of give-and-take. On the one hand, they gained the opportunity to extend their influence on the military apparatus and to display their military commitment. On the other hand, they lent their prestige to the Admiralty in a time of transition, helping budget claims and reform measures. A *Punch* cartoon from 1859, depicting Prince Alfred in sailor's uniform and bearing the caption "Men for the Fleet! There, boys! There's an example for you" summed up the hoped-for effect that a royal sailor might have on recruitment numbers.⁷³ For the next two decades, the prince would be his mother's deputy for maritime patronage activities and a popular president of reform commissions. In an era when Europe's publics and dynasties became increasingly "militarized" both in their mentalities and outward trappings, he thus provided his mother with a navy-blue billboard.

The prince's naval cruises, most importantly the cruise of the *Galatea*, would equally help the monarchy to take an active stance in another debate about Britain's future. As will be detailed later, many liberals, following the Indian Mutiny of 1857, regarded the empire as a costly and dangerous enterprise. Albert and Victoria, however, according to Miles Taylor, were eager to give it a new constitution and thereby to "imperialize" the monarchy. By sending their son to visit Britain's disparate colonies, they united them behind the crown.⁷⁴

Other studies examining the role of the royal family as a "catalyst" and beneficiary of popular navalism or imperialism have largely neglected the period before 1870.⁷⁵ One could argue, however, that in the creation of the public persona "Sailor Prince" the monarchy was cultivating a proto-navalist and proto-imperialist programme as early as 1858. In their quest for re-invention, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert showed a remarkable knack for selecting symbols of national identity and strength to align with. They picked institutions which were widely present in British culture, but also could do with some media-effective royal promotion. In a self-reinforcing process, these institutions would then become vital stabilizers of monarchy.

⁷³ 'Men for the Fleet!', *Punch* (14.5.1859).

⁷⁴ Taylor, Miles, 'Prince Albert and the British Empire', in: Bosbach, Franz/Davis, John (eds), *Prinz Albert: Ein Wettiner in Großbritannien* (Munich, 2004), 75-82; Aronson, Theo, *Royal ambassadors: British royalties in Southern Africa, 1860-1947* (Cape Town, 1995), 103.

⁷⁵ Hamilton, 81-113.

Prince Valdemar and the “Sea folk”

Nineteenth-century Britons were convinced that their relationship with the sea was unique. There was probably only one other state which, in the public imagination, was readily conceded a comparable status as a maritime nation: Denmark (and with it Iceland and Norway). Inspired by Romantic medievalism some Victorian scholars and poets dug up their national past and discovered a racial heritage which they shared with their neighbours across the North Sea. Enthusiasm for everything Viking and the idea that Britain might owe her naval supremacy “to the seafaring instincts” of her Norse rather than Saxon forbears led to a new appreciation of the alleged closeness between Britons and Danes as “children of the sea”.⁷⁶

This perceived bond was cemented by a royal union in 1863, when Prince Alfred’s elder brother, Albert Edward, married Princess Alexandra, the daughter of Denmark’s future King Christian IX. An ode penned by the poet laureate Alfred Tennyson was symptomatic: referring to the old Viking chieftains, he welcomed Alexandra as a “Seaking’s daughter from over the sea”. The ocean was represented as a bridge between the two countries; and the British were proclaimed to be “each all Dane” for the day, happily acknowledging the Norse part of their racial identity. This was easily done since Denmark no longer posed a threat to British naval interests. In fact, the implicit idea of the poem was that the country’s glorious naval tradition had been passed on to a younger branch of the racial family tree, as Alexandra became the “Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea”.⁷⁷

While Britain’s naval dominance had grown during the Napoleonic Wars, 1860s Denmark had to grapple with having been reduced to a second-rate power. A series of major military and diplomatic defeats between 1801 and 1864 had left the once-famed Oldenburg monarchy a truncated state robbed of considerable parts of its naval force, manpower and financial resources. In the ensuing debates about defence policy, the navy, an institution that used to be taken for granted, was no longer as unchallenged as its British counterpart. As the national identity of the Danish core state was renegotiated, however, Denmark’s closeness to the sea, her ‘golden periods’ of naval warfare and maritime trade and her aspirations to continued regional influence and global commerce emerged as increasingly central points of reference. As late as 1956

⁷⁶ Wawn, Andrew, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the old North in nineteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge, 2000), 3-8, 117, 130; Parker, 203-4; Behrman, 28.

⁷⁷ Tennyson, Alfred, *A welcome to HRH the Princess of Wales* (London, 1863).

King Frederik IX coined the famous term “sea folk” (*“søens folk”*) to address the nation.⁷⁸ The belief that the Danes had been shaped by their special relationship with the sea was just as old as the British conviction. It also informed the representation and perception of Denmark’s first “Sailor Princes”, Alexandra’s younger brothers Vilhelm and Valdemar, who joined the navy in 1860 and 1875, respectively.

Just as in the British case, the evidence suggests that these princes freely chose the naval profession. As Vilhelm confided in his journal in 1859, his “[l]ove of the fatherland and passion for the sea” had “awakened within [him] the desire to enlist with the navy”.⁷⁹ In 1873, when Valdemar embarked on his first preparatory cruise, his father Christian wrote of his hope that “the path you have chosen for yourself will make you happy”.⁸⁰ We do not have reason to doubt the sincerity of these avowals. It would be naïve to believe, though, that there was only one set of motives behind such a significant step. For the myths surrounding the sea and the navy in the Danish popular imagination provided an important repository for the Glücksborg dynasty in its task of representing a nation which had yet to be redefined.

Surprisingly, the sea is largely absent from the rich scholarship on the formation of Danish national identity and the nineteenth-century re-invention of the Danish nation. Historians have been “landlocked”, focusing on the exchanges of political ideas and cultural trends which took place between Denmark and central Europe via the country’s narrow land-border with Germany.⁸¹ Assertions of the importance of the maritime sphere have been left to scholars of naval or economic history.⁸² Yet, Denmark’s geography, history and culture were obviously shaped by the ocean. Located at the northernmost end of mainland Europe and surrounded by the diverse waters of the North Sea, the Skagerrak, the Kattegat and the Baltic, the kingdom formed an archipelago consisting of one peninsula (Jutland) and countless islands (among them Zealand, Funen, Lolland and Falster as well as Iceland, Greenland and the Faroes). The sea connected these different provinces. The kingdom’s position at the juncture of the Danish Straits, moreover, gave it control of the gateway between the North and the Baltic Seas, a geostrategic advantage which it jealously guarded

⁷⁸ Møller, Jes Fabricius, *Dynastiet Glücksborg: En Danmarkshistorie* (Copenhagen, 2013), 222.

⁷⁹ Prince Vilhelm, 6.7.1859, King George of Greece’s Archives (KGA), Kongehusarkivet, pk.1.

⁸⁰ KCIX to PV, 17.10.1873, Prince Valdemar’s Archives (PVA), Kongehusarkivet, pk.9.1.

⁸¹ Kirby, 21. Cf. Feldbæk, Ole (ed.), *Dansk Identitetshistorie*, 4 vols. (Copenhagen, 1991-92); Adrian-sen, Inge, *Nationale symboler i det Danske Rige, 1830-2000* (Copenhagen, 2003).

⁸² Bjerg, Hands, *A history of the Royal Danish Navy, 1510-2010* (Copenhagen, 2010).

against its contestants throughout the centuries. The element which united the country, provided a livelihood for its large fishing communities and lent it “importance far in excess of its size” was naturally cherished.⁸³

The Danes’ self-conception as a seafaring nation and their increasingly romantically charged identification with a landscape characterized by long stretches of coast was echoed in the distinctive national literature.⁸⁴ In the civil national anthem, written by Adam Oehlenschläger (1818), Denmark was represented as “a lovely land/ with spreading, shady beeches/ near Baltic’s salty strand”.⁸⁵ In H.C. Andersen’s landmark fairy-tale “The little Mermaid” (1837), an entire parallel kingdom was dipped into the sea. And in 1877, Holger Drachmann, the country’s marine poet, in a collection of “Songs by the Sea” professed his profound love for “that land/ that island encircled by the ocean/ where every working man/ constantly has a view of the sea.”⁸⁶ He was one of several artists who, from the 1870s, became attracted to the seaside and settled in such archetypical fishing villages as Skagen. Following the Europe-wide trend of spa tourism, they popularized images of beach strolls and realistic fishermen scenes among the general Danish public.⁸⁷

For a country so intimately connected to the ocean, both the merchant marine and the navy enjoyed a high symbolic importance. In the nineteenth century, the Danes could look back on a long and glorious seafaring history. It had started in the eighth century when the Vikings conquered and colonized large territories in northern Europe. Even earlier than in Britain, Danish Romantics rediscovered these seaborne warriors in a cultural movement called the “Norse revival”. In order to recover and renew a purer Danish cultural identity, the representatives of this movement – Adam Oehlenschläger, N.F.S. Grundtvig – turned to Norse mythology as well as to Nordic pre-history and medieval history as their main sources of inspiration. Their works were particularly concerned with a period of coastal and seaborne warfare in the Baltic Sea: the Age of the Valdemars, which was explored most prominently in B.S. Ingemann’s popular epic

⁸³ Jones, Glyn, *Denmark: A modern history* (London, 1986), 1-5.

⁸⁴ Sørensen, Søren, *Danish literature and the Baltic* (2002), <http://www.balticsealibrary.info/> (last accessed 3.10.2016); Conrad, Flemming, ‘Konkurrencen 1818 om en Dansk nationalsang’, in: Feldbæk (ed.), *Dansk Identitetshistorie 2: Et yndigt land, 1789-1848* (Copenhagen, 1992), 150-252.

⁸⁵ Oehlenschläger, as cited by Sørensen.

⁸⁶ My translation. Cf. Sørensen; Gregersen, Hans, *Her går solen aldrig ned: Drachmann og Skagen* (Aalborg, 2013).

⁸⁷ Kent, Neill, *The soul of the north: A social, architectural and cultural history of the Nordic countries 1700-1940* (London, 2001), 176; Svanholm, Lise, *Northern light: The Skagen painters* (Copenhagen, 2003); Holm, Poul, *Kystfolk: Kontakter og sammenhænge over Kattegat og Skagerrak, 1550-1914* (Esbjerg, 1991), 275-94.

poems and historical novels. His eponymous heroes, King Valdemar the Great and Valdemar the Victorious, had defended thirteenth-century-Denmark against Wendic invasions, conquered parts of northern Germany and Estonia and achieved the kingdom's first golden age of Baltic dominance.⁸⁸

Throughout the following centuries, it had been the task of Denmark's Royal Navy, first founded by King Hans in the early 1400s, to defend, regain and expand this regional hegemony ("*dominium maris Baltici*") against the Hanseatic League, Sweden or the Netherlands. The naval force therefore became an important symbol of the country's aspirations to power and of the emerging nation-state.⁸⁹ This crucial status is reflected in Denmark's second national (or royal) anthem – "King Christian stood by the lofty mast" – which was first performed in a vaudeville play in 1780 and which celebrated the naval heroes who ushered in the kingdom's naval heyday in the seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries: the legendary King Christian IV, Denmark's most popular and myth-invested monarch, who had turned the country into a major sea power, as well as Niels Juel and Peter Wessel Tordenskjold, two naval reformers and legendary admirals of the Nordic Wars.⁹⁰

When the hymn invited theatre audiences to follow the example of this triumvirate of heroes on the "Path of the Dane to fame and might", Denmark's naval power had long faded. Her merchant marine, however, was just experiencing a golden age which would be nostalgically remembered for a long time to come. During the "*florissante Handelsperiode*" (c.1770-1800), Danish shipping and trade flourished and national prosperity grew as the country exploited its position as a neutral power amidst the French Wars. Only once Britain ordered a pre-emptive strike against the Danish fleet in 1801, did this glory fade. Together with the bombardment of Copenhagen (1807) and the loss of Norway and Heligoland in the Treaty of Kiel (1814), the catastrophe marked the end of the impressive seaborne colonial empire that had been the Oldenburg monarchy.⁹¹ It ushered in a period of international decline which

⁸⁸ Sørensen; Kent, 12, 57-62; Lundgren-Nielsen, Flemming, 'Grundtvig og Danskhed', in: Feldbæk (ed.), *Dansk Identitetshistorie 3: Folkets Danmark, 1848-1940* (Copenhagen, 1992), 9-187; Díaz-Andreu García, Margarita, *A world history of nineteenth-century archaeology: Nationalism, colonialism and the past* (Oxford, 2007), 324-5.

⁸⁹ Bjerg, 9-22, 187-190.

⁹⁰ Bjerg, 41-52, 52-72; Lockhart, Paul, *Denmark in the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648: King Christian IV and the decline of the Oldenburg state* (Selingsgrove/London, 1996).

⁹¹ Jones, 25-30; Eliassen, Finn, Peder Dahl in the Oldenburg Empire: The life, career and interests of a Norwegian shipmaster and merchant in the 1770s-80s, in: Heinzelmann, Eva et al. (eds), *Der dänische Gesamtstaat. Ein unterschätztes Weltreich* (Kiel, 2006), 51-71; Gøbel, Erik, Danish shipping and trade with Asia around 1800, in: *Ibid.*, 73-86.

thoroughly transformed Denmark's political culture and popular mentality. The country would gradually be degraded from a powerful composite monarchy to a humiliated, small nation-state. When attempts to integrate the North-German duchies Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg into the core state were thwarted by Austria and Prussia in 1864, this process was complete. In the following decades, public discourse revolved around the re-definition of a more introspective Danish national identity. It was centred on a veritable "cult of defeat" which celebrated the resistance of the small nation against its German neighbour, on the concept of the cultural nation united by language and custom and on the kingdom's archipelagian character.⁹²

Reflecting, as it did, the competing strands of Danish nationalism, the navy played a double-edged role in this scenario. On the one hand, it stood at the centre of decade-long debates about a national-defence policy designed to keep Germany at bay. As the country recovered from defeat and felt the shadow of the Wilhelmine Empire grow at its southern border, the question arose whether the reduced military budget should primarily be spent on the upkeep of a strong land force or a modernized navy. Debates became increasingly politicized in the 1880s-1890s, as the governing conservative (*Højre*) party favoured an aggressively nationalist, army-strategic solution focused on the costly fortification of Copenhagen, while the liberal opposition (*Venstre*) advocated a naval-strategic approach centred on a strong fleet able to bolster the nation's preferred policy of neutrality. Since the *Højre* government was backed by the king and the *Venstre* opposition were using their power to block legal initiatives as a form of protest against this unconstitutional practice, a stalemate ensued.⁹³

More than a contested instrument of military strategy, though, the navy also emerged as a symbol of peaceful prosperity and prestige as Denmark began to re-define herself as a proudly neutral country. While the "Norse revival" was linking back to Denmark's periods of Baltic supremacy⁹⁴, a complex of liberal entrepreneurs and opinion-makers towards the fin-de-siècle took another route: they tapped into the merchant tradition of the "*florissante periode*". Since it asserted Denmark's authority in her home waters,

⁹² Henningsen, Bernd, 1864: *Der lange dänische Weg der Niederlagen*, in: Jahnke, Carsten/Møller, Jes (eds), 1864 og historiens lange skygger (Husum, 2011), 121-42; Adriansen, Inge, 1864: *Nederlaget i erindringskulturen*, in: *Ibd.*, 89-120.

⁹³ Bjerg, 446; Bagge, Poul, *Nationalisme, antinationalisme og nationalfølelse i Danmark omkring 1900*, in: Feldbæk (ed.), *Dansk Identitetshistorie 3*, 443-67, 444-46; Lisberg Jensen, Ole, *I skyggen af Tyskland* (Copenhagen, 2005), 155-160, 189-192; Galster, Kjeld, *Protecting democracy: Danish defence debate in times of change* (Copenhagen, 2007).

⁹⁴ Henningsen, 136; Sørensen.

connected the archipelago with its remaining colonial possessions and safeguarded innovative commercial enterprises, the navy was hailed by them as a modern promise of future success.⁹⁵

By aligning themselves with this ideologically and emotionally charged institution, Princes Vilhelm and Valdemar helped the young Glücksborg dynasty to become rooted in the maimed nation into which dynastic politics had transplanted it. Their parents, Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderborg-Glücksborg and Louise of Hesse-Kassel had been selected as heirs to the childless King Frederick VII in 1853 because they combined the claims of two distant branches of the Danish royal house and thus appeared best equipped to secure the territorial integrity of the composite Oldenburg monarchy.⁹⁶ From the moment they succeeded to the throne, however, the couple, in the eyes of their fervently nationalist subjects, had been tainted by a “lack of Danishness”⁹⁷ manifest in their German accents and cosmopolitan habits. When, only months after his accession in 1863, Christian IX was forced to sign a new, nationalist constitution aiming to integrate the duchy of Schleswig into the Danish state, he sparked a nationalist counter-reaction in the North German provinces. The war that ensued was devastating, robbed the Danish kingdom of the very parts that had been Christian’s special responsibility and created a poisonous atmosphere in which he was reviled as a “German traitor”.⁹⁸ Inexperienced and reticent, he was initially unable to garner the kind of popularity that had bolstered the reign of his proto-Danish predecessor. Moreover, by stubbornly supporting a succession of *Højre* governments which only enjoyed the backing of the upper chamber of parliament he incurred the animosity of the growing liberal majority of the elected lower chamber in a constitutional crisis lasting until 1901.⁹⁹

The explanations for why the Glücksborg monarchy nevertheless eventually achieved a position of surprisingly unequivocal national esteem point to embourgeoisement and dynastic expansion. In Jes-Fabricius Møller’s view the a-political representation of the Glücksborgs as a closely-knit family gradually ingratiated them with their bourgeois

⁹⁵ Bjerg, 187ff; Nørby, Søren/Seerup, Jakob, *Den danske flåde, 1850-1943: Som fotograferne så den* (Copenhagen, 2007), 9-10, 218-22; Jensen, 125-30.

⁹⁶ Møller, *Dynastiet*, 42-61; Id., *Domesticating a German heir to the Danish throne*, in: Müller/Mehrkens (eds), *Sons and heirs*, 129-46.

⁹⁷ Olden-Jørgensen, Sebastian, *Prinsessen og det hele kongerige: Christian IX og det Glücksborgske Kongehus* (Copenhagen, 2003), 51.

⁹⁸ Madol, Hans Roger, *Christian IX* (Copenhagen, 1998), 95-98.

⁹⁹ Møller, *Dynastiet*, 106-21; Olden-Jørgensen, 55-70.

subjects. Meanwhile, Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen has argued that the Danes, after a chain of misfortunes, were happy to identify with the old-fashioned dynastic successes of their royal family whose offspring came to occupy the thrones of many European countries. Princess Alexandra's marriage to the Prince of Wales in 1863 started this policy; during the festivities, Prince Vilhelm's selection as King of the Hellenes was negotiated; and in 1866, Queen Louise's matchmaking skills culminated in Princess Dagmar's betrothal to the Russian Tsarevich Alexander (III).¹⁰⁰

The seafaring career of Prince Valdemar was part of the bourgeois and dynastic strategies adopted by the Glücksborgs. It projected yet another powerful middle-class image onto the monarchy – that of the naval officer. Besides, it equipped Danish citizens with one of the most straightforward means of accessing the world of international high politics that had been re-opened to them through their royal great-power connections – overseas naval activities. Most importantly, however, the concept of the “Sailor Prince” was closely linked with a third royal strategy whose seeming absence inspired scholars like Møller and Olden-Jørgensen to develop their intricate explanations in the first place: the nationalization of dynasty. So far, no one has taken a closer look at how the Glücksborgs adapted to Danish nationalism and to contemporary ideas of what it meant to be Danish. Yet, one could argue that it was Prince Valdemar, who, by training for the navy, provided his father, the German successor to the “sea-king's” throne, with a national anchorage.

In September 1885, an article in the family magazine “*Illustreret Tidende*” declared that this prince had “joined a union with the people which the Danish navy has a lot to tell about”.¹⁰¹ Even before his momentous decision Valdemar had already been a truly national prince. In 1858, he had been the first baby in half a century to be born a Prince of Denmark.¹⁰² Elected heir presumptive in 1853, his father, moreover, had conferred an auspicious name upon his son. While Christian's first three children bore common German names (Frederick, Alexandra, Vilhelm), his three younger ones were christened according to the nationalist fashion of the Norse revival: the daughters' names, Dagmar and Thyra, linked back to two of the most popular medieval Danish queens, Dagmar and Thyra Dannebrod; the youngest son was named Valdemar after the great thirteenth-century kings who meant so much to the Danish romantics.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Møller, *Dynastiet*, 88-96; Olden-Jørgensen, 52-55, 71-75, 102-108.

¹⁰¹ ‘Prins Valdemar og Prinsesse Marie’, *Illustreret Tidende* (6.9 1885).

¹⁰² Madol, Christian IX, 69.

¹⁰³ Sørensen; Wawn, 218-9.

The national promise encapsulated in this unusual choice came true when the prince joined the naval forces. Both the navy and the naval academy were revered national institutions whose physical presence in the centre of Copenhagen made them an integral part of everyday life.¹⁰⁴ The gist of *Illustreret Tidende's* eulogy in 1885 was that by entering this service, by going through his training together with all the other cadets recruited from the middle-class heart of Danish society, Prince Valdemar had connected with the Danish people.¹⁰⁵ From the 1860s, continuous political efforts had been made to democratize the naval officer corps by making it accessible to talented boys from wider parts of society through reduced training periods and free boarding for first-years.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, the navy acquired the image of an institution not only rooted in national tradition, but in the nation as such. Even though he would travel the world as a naval officer, by doing so under the Danish flag Prince Valdemar conveyed a message about his dynasty which was unavailable to most of his siblings: an unqualified loyalty to Denmark. While the Danes could take pride in their family of kings spreading all over Europe, they soon developed a special fondness for their 'stay-at-home' prince. As one anonymous author remarked when Valdemar rejected the Bulgarian crown in 1886: he "preferred a good Danish pancake to the tastiest delicacies" and "his own ship's deck to the most gorgeous halls".¹⁰⁷

Valdemar's love of the seafaring life had developed quite early and independently, if we are to trust his correspondence with his father.¹⁰⁸ Life in Copenhagen with its many harbours and canals leading out to the Sound seemed almost designed to give the boy the travel bug. Amalienborg Palace, the royal family's main residence, was practically facing the water and only a few minutes away from *Langelinie*, the famous pier walk where throughout the nineteenth century, Denmark's kings would mingle with their promenading subjects. Royal guests usually arrived in the well-known white barques (*chalupper*) and Valdemar's family frequently travelled in the royal yachts *Slesvig* or *Dannebrog*.¹⁰⁹ As a young prince, Christian had himself felt the "lure of the sea" and wished to become a naval officer, but his guardian Frederick VII had made him take

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Seerup, Jakob, 'The Royal Danish Naval Academy in the Age of Enlightenment', *Mariner's Mirror*, 93.3 (2007), 327-34.

¹⁰⁵ *Illustreret Tidende* (6.9.1885). Cf. Lisberg Jensen, *Skyggen*, 234.

¹⁰⁶ Steensen, Steen, *Søofficersskolen gennem 250 år: 1701-1951* (Copenhagen, 1951), 276-79, Seerup, *Naval academy*, 329.

¹⁰⁷ Anon, *Fredensborg: Det danske Kongehus og dets slægt* (Copenhagen, 1896), 32.

¹⁰⁸ PV to KCIX, 17.6.1877, PVA, *Kongehusarkivet*, pk.8.2.

¹⁰⁹ Nørby/Seerup, 146.

the more traditional path of an army education.¹¹⁰ When his sons, first Vilhelm and then Valdemar, also displayed a naval predilection, Christian did not dissuade them, although it meant that the doting father would often be worried about his travelling sons.

After the loss of the German duchies and in the context of the national-defence debate, this parental decision amounted to a clear manifesto of identification with Denmark's maritime self-conception. It also showed that the monarchy had clear visions for the future. On the one hand, King Christian, in keeping with his original mission and compensating for early failures, was dedicated to holding together the remaining parts of the commonwealth. As will be detailed later, he acquired a charismatic imperial envoy in his sailor son. On the other hand, Valdemar's choice of profession could be read as an active participation in the defence debate which highlighted the continued relevance of the navy and shed a new, more favourable light on the king's controversial role in the constitutional conflict.

Throughout the 1850s-1890s, Christian backed the conservative government of J.B.S. Estrup, which was generally associated with the army camp and favoured the reduction of the naval budget. The navy and its personnel, meanwhile, were counted as belonging to the liberal camp, which linked its fight for constitutional reform and the principle of majority government with a naval-strategic defence policy. In this situation, Valdemar, by associating with the liberal force of the sea, built a bridge which eased his father's commitment to an entrenched position. Particularly once he had married the mesmerizing Marie of Orléans in 1885, he would become the centre of a more liberal court faction surrounded by a network of entrepreneurs, journalists and politicians with close *Venstre* ties. This "Yellow Palace" clique (named after the couple's Copenhagen residence) formed a think tank which envisioned a new role for the Danish navy, for the merchant marine and for Denmark as a small power taking advantage of friendly niches in a globalizing world of trade. The foundation of the *East Asiatic Company (EAC)* in 1897 and Prince Valdemar's famous *Valkyrie* cruise in 1898-1901 formed the culmination of their endeavours.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Steensen, 246.

¹¹¹ Olden-Jørgensen, 79-84; Klausen, Inger-Lise/Rosvall, Ted, Marie: A French princess in Denmark (Falkoping, 2012), 107; Larsen, Hans, Det nationale synspunkt på den økonomiske udvikling, 1888-1914, in: Feldbæk (ed.), Dansk Identitæts Historie 3, 494-95.

The initiative was interpreted by contemporaries such as Alexander Svedstrup as a modern take on the seaborne “Path of the Dane” famously extolled in the last stanza of Denmark’s royal anthem.¹¹² Christian IX, the defeated king of 1864, participated in this counter-narrative of economic modernization. On the occasion of his son’s successful return from Siam, the usually taciturn king even gave one of his longest and most momentous speeches which pointed to a significant change in his policy. He spoke of his conviction that the cruise had demonstrated that “the navy, under peaceful conditions, can carry out tasks from which the entire Fatherland will benefit.” Therefore, he hoped that “Parliament will grant the necessary funding for this development.”¹¹³ The very year in which this speech was given also witnessed the famous “system shift”, when the king entrusted J.H. Deunzter, a professor connected to both the EAC and the *Venstre* party, with the formation of government and thus ushered in a new phase in the political modernization of the country. Within the next six years, a defence policy was negotiated which strengthened the Royal Navy.¹¹⁴ As their adopted country rose from the humiliation of defeat to a new self-awareness, the Danish Glücksborgs had also left the stigma of being an un-Danish dynasty. One of the reasons for their success was that they had kept a close eye on the process by which national identity was redefined, had taken an active part in it and had focused on a somewhat contested, though ultimately redeemed national symbol: the navy.

Prince Heinrich and the “Window out to the sea”

Both Britain and Denmark were essentially surrounded by water. Early nineteenth-century Britons or Danes who travelled to Germany were therefore often surprised by the landlocked character of the country. In 1863, the journalist Harriet Martineau bemoaned Prince Alfred’s fate: destined to become the “sovereign of a country [Coburg] which has never smelt the sea”.¹¹⁵ Yet, although Germany was a land power rooted in central Europe, growing sections of German society would literally and figuratively speaking look out to sea in the course of the century. By the 1890s, the unified German Empire would be perceived as a growing threat by its Danish neighbours and British competitors since it had spread to the coast and developed a naval presence of its own.

¹¹² Muusmann, Carl, *Da København blev voksen: Levende billeder fra århundredets start* (Copenhagen/Oslo, 1939), 37.

¹¹³ Henningsen, 137; Muusmann, 38; Olden-Jørgensen, 103.

¹¹⁴ Lisberg Jensen, 189; Madol, 154.

¹¹⁵ Martineau, Harriet, ‘Prince Alfred’s Romance’, *Once a week* (24.1.1863).

Denmark's loss in this was Germany's gain. For the German Empire reached the seaside via the stepping stones Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg. The idea that the annexation of Jutland might remedy the country's geostrategic weakness by providing a strong naval base in the Baltic dated back to the Thirty Years' War.¹¹⁶ In the 1830s-1840s, it became an additional driving force for Germany's liberal-national movement. German nationalists in South Jutland fighting for their freedom from Danish centralism joined forces with their southern compatriots, who regarded the region as Germany's northernmost outpost and a possible "window out to the sea". The second Schleswig War (1864) eventually extracted Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark and made it a Prussian province.¹¹⁷ The creation of the Imperial German Navy, the establishment of the North-Sea port of Wilhelmshaven and the Baltic port of Kiel and the construction of the Emperor-William-Canal connecting both finally laid the foundations for a powerful naval presence.

As a result, the Imperial House of Hohenzollern was naturally disliked by the Danish Glücksborgs. Its ties with the British royal family, however, were strong despite nascent rivalries. The love-match and "dynastic project"¹¹⁸ between Crown Prince Frederick William of Prussia, only son of Emperor William I, and Victoria, Princess Royal, eldest daughter of Queen Victoria, has even been characterized as a "franchise" of the British monarchy. In Karina Urbach's view, the princely couple, in their quest to fashion a pan-German, bourgeois, popular image for their dynasty, adopted many of the innovative strategies applied by the princess's inventive parents.¹¹⁹ The naval career of their second son Heinrich could be regarded as an example of this franchising strategy. The evidence, again, suggests that the boy followed his own "passion for the seaman's profession".¹²⁰ There was also a distinct hope perceivable, though, that the brand import from Britain, if cleverly localized in the German political market, might provide the Prussian Hohenzollerns with a myth transcending the cultural-political divides of a young empire that was by then only incompletely integrated.

¹¹⁶ Bjerg, 45-50, 131.

¹¹⁷ Bjerg, 127-35; Geisthövel, Alexa, *Eigentümlichkeit und Macht: Deutscher Nationalismus, 1830-51: Der Fall Schleswig-Holstein* (Stuttgart, 2003), 159-180.

¹¹⁸ Müller, Frank Lorenz, *Our Fritz: Emperor Frederick III and the political culture of Imperial Germany* (Cambridge/Mass., 2011), 139.

¹¹⁹ Urbach, Karina, *Die inszenierte Idylle: Legitimationsstrategien Queen Victorias und Prinz Alberts*, in: Kroll, Frank-Lothar et al. (eds), *Inszenierung oder Legitimation?*, 23-33, 23.

¹²⁰ CPFW to Charles of Romania, 22.11.1877, cited in: Poschinger, Margaretha von, *Kaiser Friedrich in neuer quellenmäßiger Darstellung*, vol.3 (Berlin, 1900), 226.

That a nation-state where most people lived far away from the sea and had little benefit from the navy should be united by a maritime project was by no means a matter of course. The question of how naval enthusiasm nevertheless became a major force in Wilhelmine Germany has occupied many researchers. The German Empire was essentially a continental power. Its federal states, first among them the Kingdom of Prussia, looked back on an impressive military history, but not to a naval tradition worth mentioning. Prussia covered a considerable stretch of coastal territory, but it remained bottled into the Baltic until the acquisition of Schleswig-Holstein and Hanover (1864-1866). The coastal regions of North and East Frisia and the Hanseatic ports of Bremen, Hamburg etc. were undoubtedly steeped in an old seafaring culture of fishermen and merchants. For more than two thirds of the German population, however, the only purpose of a ship they could witness in person prior to 1871 was inland navigation. Some members of the Frankfurt Parliament had suggested the creation of a pan-German fleet in 1848 to counter Danish assaults against the German coast. The plans were soon abandoned, though, and in the wars of unification not even the Prussian navy as the last remnant of the idea played a significant role. The Imperial German Navy practically had to be built from scratch.¹²¹

In the interpretation of Eckart Kehr and Volker Berghahn, the spread of navalist feeling across the entire Empire particularly after 1888 was therefore the fabricated result of a massive propaganda initiative. Within a few short years, an autocratic regime rallied the Germans behind a fleet-building programme designed to distract them from a delayed political modernization process.¹²² Recent research suggests a more complex picture, though. It relocates the growing fascination with the maritime sphere and with related colonial projects to the *Vormärz* and *Gründerzeit* and, far from being engineered from above, sees it as the result of the activity of various agents, among them both the crown and the national-liberal middle classes.¹²³

As a cultural and political force, the “lure of the sea” needed little factual basis to unfold its full effect on nineteenth-century imaginations. The further people’s

¹²¹ Sondhaus, Laurence, “‘The spirit of the army’ at sea: The Prussian-German naval officer corps, 1847-1897”, *International History Review*, 17.3 (1995), 459-484, 461-71.

¹²² Kehr, Eckart, *Schlachtflottenbau und Parteipolitik, 1894-1901* (Berlin, 1930); Berghahn, Volker, *Der Tirpitz-Plan: Genesis und Verfall einer innenpolitischen Krisenstrategie* (Düsseldorf, 1971).

¹²³ E.g. Fitzpatrick, Matthew, *Liberal Imperialism in Germany: Expansionism and nationalism, 1848-1884* (New York, 2008); Müller, Frank L., *Der Traum von der Weltmacht: Imperialistische Ziele in der deutschen Nationalbewegung*, *Jahrbuch der Hambach-Gesellschaft*, 6 (1996), 99-183; Fenske, Hans, ‘Imperialistische Tendenzen in Deutschland vor 1866: Auswanderung, überseeische Bestrebungen, Weltmachtträume’, *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 97/98 (1978), 363-83.

everyday lives were removed from it, and the later they became acquainted with it, the stronger was their fascination and their belief in the prestige that a navy could buy. Thus, the poetry and prose of 1820s-to-1860s-Germany was already filled with maritime imageries and expressions of seaborne wanderlust. The regional dialect and mystic sea stories of authors such as Klaus Groth from Schleswig-Holstein or the North-Sea poet Theodor Storm were popular across the entire country. Romantic and *Vormärz* writers from across Germany discovered the ocean as a metaphor for their inner feelings and political dreams. In 1826/7, Heinrich Heine penned a cycle of poems about the North Sea in which visions of the sublime vastness of the ocean merged with memories of ancient Greek and Norse myth. In the 1840s, liberal-national bards such as Ferdinand Freiligrath or Georg Herwegh celebrated the “sea of liberty”. Many contemporaries were enthusiastic about the idea of creating a German navy as the foundation on which a powerful united nation could be built and as a power-political tool in global politics.¹²⁴ The popular renderings of the works of Daniel Defoe, James Fennimore Cooper or Jules Verne and the adventure fiction of their German imitators Friedrich Gerstäcker or Charles Sealesfield acquainted wide sections of society with naval and colonial fantasies long before these became viable options. It was within this imaginative landscape that the Imperial Navy was created.

As an idea which had fired imaginations before, but was ‘pastless’ as an institution, the navy posed an ideal symbol for a young nation and a welcome partner for a dynasty ‘with a past’. In the first few years of its existence, the German Empire lacked unifying institutions which could represent the nation as a whole and which were not compromised by their pre-history. While the army was split into federal contingents representing the independent traditions and particularistic identities of 25 constituent states, the navy, officially founded in 1871, was one such genuinely national institution. It operated under the supreme command of the Emperor; the Imperial Admiralty and its successor institutions were all *Reich*-ministries; and, unlike the army, which was identified with Prussian *Junkertum*, it was meant to draw men from every part of Germany and every stratum of society.¹²⁵ As one popular children’s book about Prince Heinrich described it, sailors on home-leave would stream out “one to

¹²⁴ Müller, Traum, 129-32.

¹²⁵ Steinberg, Jonathan, ‘The Kaiser’s navy and German society’, Past and Present, 28 (1964), 102-110, 103-105; Eberspächer, Cord et al. (eds), Wilhelm II. und Wilhelmshaven: Zur Topographie einer wilhelminischen Stadt (Wilhelmshaven, 2003), 42-3; Rüger, Naval game, 3-4, 93-94, 144-146; Clark, Christopher, Iron kingdom: The rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947 (London, 2007), 602.

Prussia, the other to Bavaria, one to the East, the other to the West. For the entire German Fatherland provides homes for the German bluejackets at sea.”¹²⁶ This image of the navy as a “floating symbol of unity and national identification”¹²⁷ was consciously used by the monarchy, another would-be national institution.

Following the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, the newly-created Emperor William I and his dynasty needed to develop a new profile for themselves as a national-minded imperial family appealing to the entire nation. This was a balancing act. On the one hand, they had to create integrative myths which could foster a sense of loyalty and love for dynasty and fatherland in their subjects without infringing on their regional identities. On the other hand, the Hohenzollern legacy was problematic as it was one-sidedly Prussian, Protestant and associated with both ruthless power politics and authoritarianism. Studies examining the integrative effect of the myths employed by William I and William II (the Queen-Louise and William-the-Great myths, the official cult of the nation propagated through monuments, public holidays and memorabilia) have attested that the Hohenzollerns were not particularly inventive in their attempts at winning support outside core Prussia.¹²⁸

What has often been overlooked was the role of Crown Prince Frederick William as a dynastic myth-maker – and the naval dimension. As Frank Lorenz Müller has demonstrated, the later Emperor Frederick III, by fashioning the public persona “Our Fritz” (a combination of the halo of the military hero with the ordinary folksiness of a bourgeois family father) became himself a popular national icon in *Gründerzeit*-Germany. Unlike his staunchly Prussian father, he was a strong believer in the imperial idea. His romantically motivated support of a centralized, integrated state overcoming petty particularisms and his conviction of the central authority of the imperial crown even resulted in several dynastic nation-building projects. Museal and architectural schemes such as the Hohenzollern crypt were meant to inform the broader public and inspire love for a dynasty represented as inextricably intertwined with the history and future of the *Reich*.¹²⁹ By educating his second son in the navy instead of the army, Frederick took another important step stressing the national outlook of the Hohenzollerns and their integrative potential.

¹²⁶ Elster, Otto, Klaus Erichsen: *Prinz Heinrichs Schiffsjunge* (Berlin, 1890), 177.

¹²⁷ Rüger, *Naval game*, 3.

¹²⁸ E.g. Giloi, *Monarchy*, 13-16, 294, 314-315; Green, Abigail, *Fatherlands: State-building and nationhood in nineteenth-century Germany* (Cambridge, 2001), 315, 355.

¹²⁹ Müller, *Our Fritz*, 105-148.

A product of unification and a projection space for national dreams ever since 1848, the Imperial Navy was “a central site for the display of German unity”. As Jan Rüger has outlined, turn-of-the-century ship launches and fleet reviews would be used to evoke a sense of national belonging in fascinated audiences. Cruisers named after national or regional royalties, federal states and cities would embody the “imperial mosaic” in steel.¹³⁰ Long before William II and his navalist advisors sought to popularize a grandiose fleet-building project, his father had already prepared the way. Media-savvy and obsessive about ceremonial details, he staged Prince Heinrich’s embarkations as popular giving-away ceremonies where the imperial boat would sail close to promenades lined with spectators and the imperial ensign would be meaningfully hoisted aboard his son’s ships. The imagery would then be replicated in official paintings and semi-official newspaper articles.

While the Hohenzollern monarchy profited from the ‘pastlessness’ of the navy, it also contributed to the invention of a Prussian-German naval tradition, though, which could legitimize both the young navy and the young dynasty. From 1871 onwards, the German Admiralty and its staff of naval writers compiled a continuous narrative going back as far as the Germanic tribes and the Hanseatic League. Unencumbered as they were by the existence of real naval heroes, the myth-makers fell back on a succession of Hohenzollern visionaries, happily weaving together dynastic, Prussian and national history.¹³¹ The Great Elector of Brandenburg-Prussia was celebrated as the father of all fleet dreams, as he had built a short-lived fleet to assist him in his conflicts with Sweden.¹³² Prince Adalbert of Prussia was styled “founding father of the German naval tradition”, since the infantry general had been put in charge of the commission for building a German navy in 1848. The dynasty’s motto “From rock to sea”, finally, originally coined in reference to their journey from southern-German nobility to Prussian kings, was reinterpreted as a prophecy of the nation’s naval destiny.¹³³

Prince Heinrich’s career choice was generally represented as the culminating point of this tradition and as the starting point of something new. Books about German naval

¹³⁰ Rüger, *Naval game*, 144-46; Epkenhans, 192.

¹³¹ Eberspächer, 27-29; Deist, Wilhelm, *Flottenpolitik und Flottenpropaganda: Das Nachrichtenbureau des Reichsmarineamtes, 1897-1914* (Stuttgart, 1976), 42; Sieg, Dirk, *Die Ära Stosch: Die Marine im Spannungsfeld der deutschen Politik, 1872-1883* (Bochum, 2005), 45.

¹³² Eberspächer, 27-28; Herwig, Holger, *The German naval officer corps: A social and political history, 1890-1918* (Oxford, 1973), 1-3.

¹³³ Eberspächer, 28-30.

history would usually conclude with a reference to “the Hohenzollern prince at sea”.¹³⁴ Popular songs depicted him as a “scion of the Zollerns” who “ventured to sea” under his “forefathers’ blessing gaze from heaven”.¹³⁵ And when he went on a two-year world cruise in 1878, the frigate *Sedan* was tellingly rechristened *Prinz Adalbert*.¹³⁶ In official speeches given by his father and the Chief of the Admiralty, the conspicuous fact that Heinrich was actually the first Prussian prince to be trained in the navy was brushed over with a continuity of a different kind: by proving true to the Zollern virtue of doing one’s duty, he would contribute to the glory of his fatherland, strengthening the young navy just as other princes before him had served the army.¹³⁷

The alliance between the dynasty and the Imperial German Navy was thus a mutually supportive relationship. While the monarchy profited from the link with an unsullied national symbol, the navy benefited from dynastic promotion. In the first few years of its existence, it lacked social status and prestige. Without a glorious tradition and without established educational courses, it was unable to attract the sons of Germany’s elites. Its personnel was mainly recruited from merchant families and its command positions were held by army officers. Frederick William’s decision to educate his son in the navy instead of choosing the traditional path of the Prussian aristocracy had to be understood as an act of support.¹³⁸ It was meant to inspire other well-off youths to follow his example and form a new naval elite. Moreover, it amounted to a vote of confidence for the controversial Chief of the Admiralty, Albrecht von Stosch.

When, in 1872, the ten-year-old Prince Heinrich was appointed premier lieutenant, his father wrote to Stosch: “The Navy rightfully sees in [...this] a proof of my active devotion to our naval service; it is [...] but a new proof, though, for I do not doubt that my sentiments have long been known.”¹³⁹ The two men shared a political friendship and Heinrich’s naval career was their common project. Both were Prussian army officers to the core and veterans of the wars of unification. What they also had in common, though, was that some of the most decisive features of their political creeds and hopes for Germany’s future pointed towards the sea. For both Frederick William and Stosch were

¹³⁴ E.g. Müller-Angelo, Adolf, *Deutschland zur See* (Dresden, 1894), 51; Wislicenus, Georg, *Deutschlands Seemacht sonst und jetzt* (Leipzig, 1896), 75-76, Langguth, Adolf, *Prinz Heinrich von Preußen: Ein seemännisches Lebensbild* (Halle, 1892), 429-433.

¹³⁵ Pothenberg, F., *Zum Meere zog der Zollernsproß* (c.1900).

¹³⁶ Langguth, 29ff, 43; Boeck, Carl von der, *Prinz Heinrich in Central-Amerika* (Berlin, 1885), 148f.

¹³⁷ E.g. speeches cited in Langguth, 26-27; *Provinzial Correspondenz*, 42 (13.10.1880).

¹³⁸ Steinberg, 104-106; Sondhaus, 461-71; Eberspächer, 31; Sieg, 54.

¹³⁹ CPFW to Stosch, 17.9.1872, cited in: Baumgart, Winfried (ed.), *General Albrecht von Stosch: Politische Korrespondenz, 1871-1896* (Munich, 2014), 82.

considered liberals by their contemporaries. Stosch, intimately acquainted with a range of important figures from the national-liberal and progress party, was even whispered about as a possible successor to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck for a while. Frederick and his left-liberal English wife were also associated with this opposition camp. A single act of rebellion against Bismarck's reactionary politics in 1863 had condemned the crown-princely couple to a life on the political side-lines. Thereafter, Stosch, whose nomination as the first Chief of the Admiralty had been supported by the crown prince, was one of the few men in power who continued to update him on current affairs. Prince Heinrich's entry into the navy represented a rare political statement against Bismarck's attempts to oust Stosch from power.¹⁴⁰ And it subtly promoted the liberal programme.

Ever since 1848, the navy had been associated with the liberal-national movement and its twin aims of liberal reform and national unity.¹⁴¹ This image remained even when German unification was achieved by means of "blood and iron" instead of political fusion. In the eyes of many liberals, the army – though narrated as the "nation in arms" after the successes of 1864-1871 – was also indelibly linked with the bloody suppression of political protest in 1848/9. The naval forces, on the other hand, though they had hardly featured in the unification process, would forever hark back to the vigorous national spirit of the Frankfurt Parliament and its forward-thinking dreams: maritime commerce, overseas colonies and naval armament as vital sources of prosperity and power.¹⁴²

This image was reinforced by recruitment patterns. While the army-officer corps, after 1871, returned to becoming an exclusive stronghold of the aristocracy steeped in conservative traditions, the navy drew its men from the middle classes and thus became a reservoir of liberal ideologies. Bourgeois families chose the naval profession for their sons because it promised equal career opportunities and required, above all, a high standard of formal education, the mainstay of bourgeois upward mobility.¹⁴³ Right until the 1900s, German naval officers would thus be disassociated from the negative image of their army colleagues, embodying military expertise, social skills and cosmopolitanism instead of the narrow-minded *Pickelhauben* militarism often featured in political satire.¹⁴⁴ By educating

¹⁴⁰ Hollyday, Frederick, Bismarck's rival: A political biography of General and Admiral Albrecht von Stosch (Durrham/NC, 1960), 7, 283-4; Baumgart, 23-31; Sieg, 14, 22-25; Müller, Our Fritz, 149-90.

¹⁴¹ Müller, Traum, 129-32.

¹⁴² Steinberg, 103-4; Sieg, 47; Langguth, 429-32.

¹⁴³ Herwig, 39-44; Steinberg, 105ff; Sondhaus, 472-84; Mayer, 181-84; cf. Malinowski, Stephan, Vom König zum Führer: Sozialer Niedergang und politische Radikalisierung im deutschen Adel zwischen Kaiserreich und NS-Staat (Berlin, 2003), 72-80.

¹⁴⁴ Christadler, Marieluise, Kriegserziehung im Jugendbuch: Literarische Mobilmachung in Deutschland und Frankreich vor 1914 (Frankfurt/M., 1978), 149-50.

their son in the navy, Prince Heinrich's parents provided a proof of their bourgeois, liberal attitude in a manner nicely aligned with their general representation as an approachable 'middle-class' family.

As several scholars have recently stressed, though, the middle classes of nineteenth-century Germany, the navy and Frederick William were not just liberal in that they advocated liberty, equality, democracy and the free market. They were also liberal in the aggressively nationalistic, chauvinistic sense encapsulated in the term "liberal imperialism". While the Frankfurt Parliament campaigned for domestic reform, its foreign policy and fleet-building project were guided by "national hubris" and an aggressive imperial expansionism.¹⁴⁵ This imperialist spirit was still alive in the 1870s-1890s, when, as Jonathan Steinberg argued, it was the "expansive ideology of the *Bürgertum*" rather than "Prussian militarism" which turned the German navy into a symbol of meritocratic advancement opportunities as well as Social Darwinist power struggles.¹⁴⁶

In this scenario, Prince Heinrich's naval education, more than shining a liberal ray of hope on German political culture, was also an expression of his father's wish for a strong monarchical executive controlling all military branches.¹⁴⁷ And it reflected Frederick William's role as one of the most prominent adherents of *Gründerzeit* colonial fantasies. As Hermann Hiery noted, the crown prince's romantic nostalgia for the Old Empire and his belief in the new imperial idea went hand in hand with a commitment to furthering the nation's international prestige and a yearning for colonial expansion.¹⁴⁸ As Queen Victoria's son-in-law, he always had before his eyes the glorious example of the British Empire. His son's naval education and world tours enabled the "landlubber of a father"¹⁴⁹ – and with him many other German landlubbers with a penchant for the sea – to participate vicariously in the adventure of maritime travel and to project their visions of future imperial greatness onto a suitable canvas. In 1884, the retired Stosch told Prince Heinrich that his journeys allowed him, the armchair sailor, to "construct ever-increasing achievements [for the navy] in [his] mind, to build castles in the air which adorn Germany's possessions in faraway seas".¹⁵⁰ As will be addressed later, Heinrich's

¹⁴⁵ Müller, Traum, 99-133; Hiery, Hermann, 'Der Kaiser, das Reich und der Kolonialismus: Anmerkungen zur Entstehung des deutschen Imperialismus im 19. Jahrhundert', in: Id/Bosbach, Franz (eds), *Imperium-Empire-Reich: Ein Konzept politischer Herrschaft im deutsch-britischen Vergleich* (Munich, 1999), 155-66, 157-59. Cf. Fitzpatrick, Liberal imperialism.

¹⁴⁶ Steinberg, 102-10.

¹⁴⁷ Müller, 72, 81-87.

¹⁴⁸ Hiery, 162-5.

¹⁴⁹ CPFW to Stosch, 10.11.1879, in: Baumgart, 236-40.

¹⁵⁰ Stosch to PH, 24.3.1884, LASH (Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein) Abt.395 Nr.4.

publicized service cruises would indeed help to visualize and expand a competitive virtual empire called the “wider Fatherland”.

Heinrich and his elder brother William were products and heirs of all their parents’ interest in naval matters, just as their generation inherited the fleet dreams and colonial fantasies of the *Vormärz* and *Gründerzeit*. During their holidays in England, particularly on the Isle of Wight, the princes frequently visited sea ports. In their early youth, a boatswain was engaged to instruct them in practical seamanship in Potsdam. Later, they would enjoy rowing on the *Jungfernsee* close to their family farm Bornstedt or sailing on the frigate *Royal Louise*. This early acquaintance with the “lure of the sea” laid the foundations of a life-long passion in both boys.¹⁵¹ While the younger was destined for the navy, though, and every part of his training directed towards the requirements of his future profession, the older had to undergo the exacting education of a Prussian heir to the throne and eventually could act out his maritime passion only as an increasingly politicized hobby.

Once Emperor, William would use his brother as his “operating hand at sea” and as the public face of his naval policy.¹⁵² Conveniently stationed at the sea port Kiel in Schleswig-Holstein, Heinrich became the dynastic embodiment of Imperial Germany’s firm position at the once contested “window out to the sea”. His public marketing as “the Kaiser’s Admiral” and the diplomatic missions he carried out around 1900, demonstrate how William, who is generally regarded as the complete opposite of his father, actually took up Frederick William’s dynastic nation-building project.¹⁵³ The late Wilhelmine obsession with sea power as a prerequisite of world power, though more extreme and irrational in the assumptions it made about the survival of states, was not far removed from the liberal-national logics of commercial and territorial expansion.¹⁵⁴ It was arguably this alignment with the dreams, fantasies and possible futures of their time, all encapsulated in the navy that accounts for the astonishing approval that the Hohenzollerns achieved with at least their middle-class subjects in the years preceding 1914.

¹⁵¹ Eschenburg, Harald, *Prinz Heinrich: Der Großadmiral im Schatten des Kaisers* (Heide, 1989), 19-23; Langguth, 31; Kürschner, J., *Kaiser Wilhelm als Soldat und Seemann* (Berlin, 1902), 85.

¹⁵² Eschenburg, 192; Mirbach, Ernst von, *Prinz Heinrich von Preußen: Eine Biographie des Kaiserbruders* (Köln, 2013), 176, 183, 291-300.

¹⁵³ Eberspächer, 32; Müller, 271-74.

¹⁵⁴ Bönker, Dirk, *Militarism in a global age: Naval ambitions in Germany and the United States before World War I* (Ithaca/ NY, 2012), 23-30.

Prince Georgios and the “Greeks of the sea”

Britain, Denmark and Germany were all united in their fascination for the sublime seascapes of the Atlantic Ocean characterized by heavy swells and the mystical aura of the North. However, throughout the nineteenth century, the ancient lore surrounding the calm blue Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the maritime imagery, marine Olympus and Odyssean plots of Greek and Roman literature provided an equally potent imaginative prism through which oceans were perceived. “Thalatta! Thalatta! Hail to thee, thou eternal sea!” was how the German bard Heinrich Heine, referring to Xenophon’s ancient Greek novel *Anabasis*, addressed the North Sea in 1826/7.¹⁵⁵ In an act of both physical invasion (through cultural tourism) and mental appropriation (through classical education) the elites of Western Europe took possession of the classical heritage, the landscapes and mythscapes of Italy and Greece, which they regarded as the cradles of European civilization.¹⁵⁶ Poseidon’s realm, in this scenario, was turned into a common good. All across Europe, ships bore the names of ancient mythical figures. Liberals reaching out for the “sea of liberty” ultimately referred to the Gulf of Aegina famously described by Thucydides as the marine gateway which had turned the Athenian city-state into an open, democratic society. States aspiring to naval dominance, meanwhile, claimed the legitimizing heritage of the famed thalassocracy of the Athenian Empire.¹⁵⁷

As a young and aspiring nation-state amidst the political turmoil of the Balkans, modern Greece profited from this popularity. It was the attractive idea that the nineteenth-century Greeks struggling to throw off the yoke of Ottoman rule were the direct descendants of the forefathers of European civilization which inspired first individual Philhellenes and then the great powers to intervene in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1832). For decades, the country’s epic past, its picturesque ruins and landscapes would be its best assets in the fight for international recognition.¹⁵⁸ As they built their nation, though, the Hellenes were also eager to emancipate themselves from the political-cultural tutelage of the West, to reclaim their past and pursue their own agendas. While ruins had to be

¹⁵⁵ Heine, Heinrich, Meergruß, transl. in: *The German Classics of the 19th-20th centuries*, vol.6 (New York, 1913).

¹⁵⁶ Corbin, 129-31; Kirby, 42, 45-49; Morris, Ian Macgregor, “‘Shrines of the mighty’: Rediscovering the battlefields of the Persian Wars’, in: Bridges, Emma et al. (eds), *Cultural responses to the Persian wars* (Oxford, 2007), 231-64, 231-33, 253-63; Mack, 28-29, 95-96; Díaz-Andreu García, 99-128.

¹⁵⁷ Díaz-Andreu García, 100-101; Hall, Edith, *Introducing the ancient Greeks: From Bronze Age seafarers to navigators of the Western mind* (New York, 2014), 128; Semmel, 2; Behrman, 33.

¹⁵⁸ Hamilakis, Yannis, *The nation and its ruins: Antiquity, archaeology, and national imagination in Greece* (Oxford/New York, 2007), 77-82; Díaz-Andreu García, 129-30; Etienne, Roland and Francois, *The search for ancient Greece* (New York, 1992), 108-9.

excavated and traditions re-invented, one source of national pride, which could also be traced back to the ancients, but had remained central to the Greeks' self-conception throughout the ages, was their belief in their special relationship with the ocean. As late as 2014, a panoramic documentary entitled "Greeks of the sea" celebrated "the world's most acclaimed mariners".¹⁵⁹ In the nineteenth century, this proud maritime identity and the wish to re-establish the seaborne empires of Athens/Byzantium served as mainsprings of the *Megali idea*. The nation's great goal was to incorporate all Greek-inhabited areas of the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans peninsula into their state. Disappointed by the lack of support from the European concert, the Hellenes would come to rely on military expansion. The assertion of naval dominance in their home waters was one of the central strategies through which they meant to achieve their goal.

Elected to succeed Greece's first king, Otto I, in 1863, King George I of the Hellenes had no choice but to align himself with his adopted country's national identity and future project. A harmless princeling from Denmark, he followed a Bavarian would-be autocrat on the throne who had come to Greece full of philhellenic passion. Having failed to ingratiate himself with his subjects, though, Otto was eventually ousted. Eager to anchor his dynasty more securely in Greek national waters, George, himself a "Sailor Prince", resorted to a strategic tool of the Danish Glücksborgs and sent his second son Georgios to Denmark to be trained in the navy.

As in all other case studies, this decision was retrospectively interpreted as a natural choice. According to one loyal biographer Georgios was not yet fifteen when in April 1884, his father asked him: "Would you like to become a seaman?" "Indeed, I would", the prince replied, thrilled by the thought of a life at sea. "Well then", George said, "you will have to get ready within the week to go to Denmark for your education."¹⁶⁰ More than in any other case study, though, we can assume, that, far from being a childhood dream, Georgios's career was part of a carefully devised agenda. As George wrote to his father, King Christian, in April 1889, when the boy was due to return from the Danish naval academy: "Here, the whole navy waits for him with indescribable impatience."¹⁶¹ Georgios had a mission: it was to help create a powerful naval force which would bolster the Greek claim to regional power and thus save the Glücksborgs from the fate of Otto I.

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.greeksofthesea.com/#!the-series/c2141>.

¹⁶⁰ Skandamis, A.S., Πριγκιψ Γεωργιος (Athens, 1954), 24.

¹⁶¹ KG to KCIX, 2.4.1889, KGA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.20.

Studies examining Greek maritime history rightly note that the country always has been inseparably associated with the ocean.¹⁶² Located at the southernmost end of the Balkans and nestled between the Aegean and the Ionian Seas, the Greek state, even at its smallest extent in 1832, encompassed two peninsulas (the Peloponnese and the Chalcidice) and countless small islands (among them the Cyclades and the Dodecanese). In pursuit of the *Megali Idea*, it would expand further along the Aegean coast as well as acquire the Ionian Islands and Crete. The scattered nature of these realms meant that from earliest times the Greeks had been forced to travel by boat. They made a living from fishing, diving and maritime trade.¹⁶³ Their relationship with the sea was therefore perceived as so intimate and pervasive that according to myth they were “born with salty blood”.¹⁶⁴

The long seafaring tradition that the modern Hellenes could look back to or re-invented started in antiquity. The ancient Greek city-states had been maritime societies averse to settling far from the coast. Their mythology was pervaded by marine deities and sea creatures. Their literature was steeped in maritime imageries such as those of Homer’s seminal epic *Odyssee*. Their histories, most of all the works of Herodotus and Thucydides, were fundamentally concerned with themes such as the build-up of the Athenian navy under Themistocles, the land and sea encounters of the Persian Wars, the zenith of the seaborne Athenian Empire under Pericles or its subsequent demise in the Peloponnesian War.¹⁶⁵ This was the legitimizing heritage on which the independence fighters of 1821-32 and later the political leaders of the independent Greek state could capitalize. Eager to build a modern, secular nation and keen to win the support of the great powers for their national aspirations, they projected a cultural link with classical antiquity. Parallels were drawn between, on the one hand, the Greek fight against the Ottoman Empire and, on the other, the Persian Wars – when the Greek city-states, embodying Western liberty, had warded off the Persian forces, representing oriental despotism. Taking the analogy further, the independence fighters would adopt ancient names for themselves and their war ships as well as use the countenances of great warriors such as Themistocles or Leonidas as their figureheads.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² E.g. Chrysos, Evangelos, *Griechenland und das Meer* (Mannheim, 1999), 11.

¹⁶³ Lemos, Andreas, *The Greeks and the sea* (London, 1970), ix; Vryonis, Speros (ed.), *The Greeks and the sea* (New Rochelle/New York, 1993), 1-15.

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.greeksofthesea.com/#!the-series/c2141>.

¹⁶⁵ Vryonis, 3-15; Hall, 1-4; Ceccarelli, Paola, ‘Naming the Aegean Sea’, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 27.128 (2012), 25-49, 26-28.

¹⁶⁶ Clogg, Richard, *A short history of Modern Greece* (Cambridge, 1979), 36-38; Hamilakis, 77-78; Zervas, Ted, *The making of a modern Greek identity: Education, nationalism, and the teaching of a Greek national past* (New York, 2012), 105-110.

The success of their merchant marine emerged as a second source of national identity and pride for the modern Hellenes. In a pamphlet published in 1905, Admiral Perikles Argyropoulos remarked that it was not only the memory of the heroic exploits of the ancients which inspired the “justified love of the Greeks for their valued element, the sea”, but the fact that their ancestors had become rich in shipping and trade. The “enriching ocean”¹⁶⁷ had produced a prosperous class of merchants, ship-owners and captains operating within the Ottoman Empire. Wealthy, confident and often settled in the important commercial and intellectual centres of the West, this mercantile diaspora served as the financial and ideological backbone of the nascent Greek state.¹⁶⁸ The proudest moment of the merchant marine came when, in the absence of anything resembling a regular navy, it successfully engaged in naval warfare during the independence fight. Particularly the wealthy ship-owners and sailors from the “Nautical Islands” of the Aegean (Hydra, Psara and Spetsai) would make a decisive contribution to the war effort.¹⁶⁹

Although it was the combined intervention of the great powers in the Battle of Navarino (1827) which saved their revolt in the end, the Hellenes celebrated their navy as the main source of their independence.¹⁷⁰ A vigorous mythscape emerged around the heroes of 1821-1832 which greatly contributed to the nation-building process. While the illiterate mass of Greek people had little connection with the classical heritage embraced by the Western-oriented intelligentsia, they were receptive to the emotional appeal of the revolution. Greek popular literature was filled with heroic war scenes.¹⁷¹ Though ambivalent in their treatment of the veteran warlords, the political elites also utilized these soldiers’ larger-than-life myths to create a sense of nationhood among the people. In history lessons and children’s books Greek children read detailed portraits of the revolutionary “fathers” and “mothers” of the nation.¹⁷² Just as the freedom fighters had given their ships ancient Greek names, so the modern Hellenic

¹⁶⁷ Argyropoulos, Perikles, *To Ναυτικόν της Ελλάδος πρόγραμμα* (Athens, 1905), 2.

¹⁶⁸ Clogg, 33-37; Yapp, Malcolm, *The making of the modern Near East, 1792-1923* (London, 1991), 59; Fotakis, Zisis, *Greek naval strategy and policy, 1910-1919* (London, 2005), 1.

¹⁶⁹ Koliopoulos, John/Veremis, Thanos. *Modern Greece: A history since 1821* (Malden, 2009), 4-5; Clogg, 33-4; <http://www.nhmuseum.gr> (accessed 14.12.2016).

¹⁷⁰ E.g. Koulouriotes, 36.

¹⁷¹ Delivoria, Yanna, ‘The notion of nation: The emergence of a national ideal in the narratives of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ Greeks in the nineteenth century’, in: Beaton, Roderick/Ricks, David (eds), *The making of Modern Greece* (Ashgate, 2009), 109-21, 114; Clogg, 37; Koliopoulos/Veremis, 6; Beaton, Roderick, *An introduction to modern Greek literature* (Oxford, 1994), 30-45.

¹⁷² Zervas, 88f, 97f, 111f; Id., ‘Informal learning in late 19th- and early 20th-century Greece: Greek children’s literature in historical and political contexts’, *American Educational History Journal*, 40 (2013), 207-219.

Navy would pay tribute to a row of adored naval commanders: Between 1879 and 1890, one sail cruiser, one torpedo boat and one steamer would be named after Admiral Constantine Kanaris from Psara, Admiral Andreas Miaoulis from Hydra, and Laskarina Bouboulina from Spetsai, respectively, while three ironclads paid tribute to the three nautical islands.¹⁷³

The commission of all these vessels fell into a period when Greek politicians began to resort to naval power as a possible means to achieve the *Megali Idea*. Dissatisfied with the extent of their independent kingdom, the Greeks increasingly pursued an irredentist foreign policy aimed at reclaiming “Greater Greece” from the Ottomans and other emerging Balkans nations.¹⁷⁴ As the hope for the support of Europe’s great powers faded, war became a more likely option. Just as in Denmark, the role of the Royal Hellenic Navy within this was contested. Periods when the build-up of a land-army operating in the North against the Ottomans and the Bulgarians stood in the foreground alternated with periods when most hope was placed on the water. Following the Russo-Turkish War (1876-78), the moderate Prime Minister Charilaos Trikoupis ushered in a programme of naval build-up and reform which aimed at the command of the Aegean Sea against the declining Ottoman fleet. In response to opposition calls for a stronger naval presence, he invited a French mission. It resulted in the reorganization of officer education, the technological modernization of the country’s naval bases and the procurement of new warships.¹⁷⁵

The high expectations that “ever-excitable Greek public opinion”¹⁷⁶, fuelled by the nationalist rhetoric of Trikoupis’ opponent Theodoros Deligiannis, set on the promises of naval power, were soon thwarted. The Greco-Turkish War of 1897 ended in disaster, despite the achievement of naval dominance in the Aegean Sea. After a period of debate about their role in Greek defence policy, the naval forces resumed their central place in the public’s imagination and national consciousness, though.¹⁷⁷ From 1904, the building of the fleet would even be financed by the national lottery, which so far had solely benefitted the Archaeological Society of Greece – a sign of how the naval

¹⁷³ Varfis, Konstantinos, ‘Andreas Miaoulis: From pirate to admiral’, in: Sweetman, Jack (ed.), *The great admirals: Command at sea, 1587-1945* (Annapolis, Maryland, 1997), 216-40; Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, Helen, ‘Women in the Greek War of Independence’, in: Mazower, Mark (ed.), *Networks of power in modern Greece* (New York, 2008), 45-68.

¹⁷⁴ Zervas, 119-22; Fotakis, 3.

¹⁷⁵ Argyropoulos, 1-5; Fotakis, 5-11; Skandamis, 30-31.

¹⁷⁶ Fotakis, 13.

¹⁷⁷ Fotakis, 14-15; Argyropoulos; Oikonomou, Dimitrios, ‘Η Α.Β.Υ. ο Πρίγκηψ Γεώργιος και το ναυτικόν πρόγραμμα της χώρας’, *Ναυτική Επιθεώρησις*, 231 (1952), 100-138.

future of the country was increasingly considered as central to Greek national consciousness as the ancient past.¹⁷⁸ The partial withdrawal of Britain's Royal Navy from the Mediterranean finally meant that Greece, suddenly the valued and supported partner of the allied forces in the region, would indeed become an Aegean naval power of consequence in the 1910s.¹⁷⁹

King George's decision to educate his son Georgios in the navy was a direct response to the discourse on national identity and the *Megali idea*. Transplanted to the radically democratic "crowned republic" of Greece at the tender age of seventeen, his fate and that of his dynasty rested to a large extent on their ability openly to identify with the Greeks' self-image and national cause. While George proved a shrewd advocate of Greek interests on the international stage and thereby earned the respect of his notoriously critical people, he was not particularly adept at winning their affection. Accused of unconstitutional practices early in his reign, he would later be criticized for his prolonged absences from Athens, his cosmopolitan lifestyle and his passivity in domestic politics.¹⁸⁰ What the father lacked in charisma, 'Greekness' and national fervour, though, was compensated for by the second generation of his dynasty: a phalanx of five athletic sons and three beautiful daughters who were reared in the Orthodox faith and Greek language. They formed exactly the naturalized dynasty that the childless Otto I would have needed to stay in power.¹⁸¹ "Sailor Prince" Georgios contributed to their success by connecting the monarchy to a strong emblem of national identity intimately involved in the future project of the *Megali Idea*.

In May 1891, the newspaper *Asty* wrote that the tall and brave Prince Georgios spoke "directly to the imagination and to the hearts of the people".¹⁸² By choosing to embody the Greek sailor type, Georgios had become a popular figure. That the concept of the "Sailor Prince" had a special appeal for the "Greeks of the sea" had already been demonstrated before. Following King Otto's departure, Prince Alfred had been the first

¹⁷⁸ Díaz-Andreu García, 106; Etienne, 108-9.

¹⁷⁹ Fotakis, 25ff; Holland, Robert/Weston Markides, Diana, *The British and the Hellenes: Struggles for mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1850-1960* (Oxford, 2008), 8.

¹⁸⁰ Hering, Gunnar, *Die Politischen Parteien in Griechenland, 1821-1936*, vol.1 (Munich, 1992), 434-478, 381; Markopoulos, George, 'King George I and the expansion of Greece', *Balkan studies*, 9 (1968), 21-40; Vikelas, 'Vingt-cinq années, 492-519. Cf. PA AA (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes), RZ 201, R7472-7484.

¹⁸¹ Miller, William, *Travels and politics in the East* (New York, 1898), 279-80; Binder-Iijima, Edda/Kraft, Ekkehard, 'Making of states: Constitutional monarchies in the Balkans', in: Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina et al. (eds), *Ottomans into Europeans: State and institution-building in South Eastern Europe* (London, 2010), 1-29; Britsch, 201.

¹⁸² 'Prince Georgios', *Asty* (6.5.1891).

choice for the Hellenic throne.¹⁸³ As one Athenian remarked, this “English prince, who has styled himself the Mariner of England” would have made a perfect “Sailor King” for the merchant nation Greece.¹⁸⁴ Obviously, nothing came of the idea. When the lot finally fell to Prince Vilhelm of Denmark, though, the Greeks, in the words of a British diplomat, had again picked a man who “is like Prince Alfred a Sailor”.¹⁸⁵ Only months after his accession, the “crowned middy” proved how his sailor’s identity matched the maritime nature of this archipelagian kingdom by undertaking a lengthy tour of his realm. It culminated in a sea journey during which he formally took possession of the Ionian Islands (Paxos, Ithaca and Corfu) – a dowry conceded to him from Britain.¹⁸⁶

Unfortunately, George would only once and rather late in his life repeat the success of this initial royal progress. He continued to visit Corfu each year during Eastertide, though.¹⁸⁷ Enamoured with the beauty of the Ionian Sea, which also fascinated other European royals, he chose the palace of *Mon Repos* as his holiday residence. It was here, close by the waters which one American novelist described as of “the bluest blue you know” that Prince Georgios was born in June 1869.¹⁸⁸ This young boy took up where his father had left off and became a “Sailor Prince” close to the Greek heart. According to his biographer, he “felt drawn to the sea rather than the mainland” from the earliest age, enjoying playing with his boat at the beach of Phaleron Bay. As Athens grew in size, this bathing resort outside the city attracted increasing parts of fashionable society. Of an ordinary summer afternoon, the royal couple would be seen driving along their favourite carriage promenade, while most Athenians arrived by tram or later by steam railway. All would then mingle at the beach, with King George frequently walking his dogs among his subjects.¹⁸⁹ From the bustling, steadily growing port of Piraeus nearby, the royal yacht *Amphitrite* would leave for summer cruises. On-board, little “Georgy”, “electrified” by the lure of the sea, would soak up the stories of the naval officers or pester the helmsman with nautical questions.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ Holland/Weston-Markides, 55-60; TNA (The National Archives), PRO 30/22/64.

¹⁸⁴ Koulouriotes, A.J., *Greece: Her past condition under King Otho, her present requirements and tendencies, and her future prospects* (London, 1863), 40.

¹⁸⁵ Lord Cowley to Lord Russel, 21.3.1863, TNA, PRO 30/22/105.

¹⁸⁶ Rumbold, 126, 136-42; Holland, 71-80.

¹⁸⁷ Rumbold, Horace, *Final recollections of a diplomatist* (London, 1905), 13.

¹⁸⁸ Woolson, Constance, *Mentone, Cairo and Corfu* (New York, 1896); Dierichs, Angelika, *Korfu-Kerkyra: Grüne Insel im ionischen Meer* (Mainz, 2004).

¹⁸⁹ Skandamis, 23-24; Llewellyn-Smith, Michael, *Olympics in Athens 1896: The invention of the Modern Olympic Games* (London, 2004), 142.

¹⁹⁰ Skandamis, 24.

Once the boy had completed his training in Denmark and subsequently joined the Hellenic Navy, he was adopted by the Greeks as one of their own, a mariner with “salty blood”. The 1891 article from *Asty* celebrated him as an “ephebe” toughened up by the “looming dangers of the ocean”. Tall as a tower, “with the arm of Heracles [...] and a body evoking a race of Giants” he allegedly took his descent directly from the “tree of the people”.¹⁹¹ Throughout his life, a myth would surround the “Sailor Prince” that by his acquaintance with Greek seamen he had learned to love the ordinary life of the Greeks from which his cosmopolitan dynasty was rather removed. He was said to frequent the taverns of Athens, drinking retsina and eating sardines.¹⁹² As a result, the prince, for much of his tumultuous life, was far more popular than the other members of his family. In August 1890, the newspaper *Ephimeris*, contrasting him with his elder brother, remarked how he had won “the general admiration and love of the nation” by his diligent work. Shortly after, he was made honorary citizen of the islands of Hydra and Spetsai, because he was a sailor like the islanders.¹⁹³

One reason why Georgios enjoyed such popularity was because high hopes were set on him as a future leader of the Hellenic Navy in the struggle for expansion.¹⁹⁴ In response to the news of his naval training in Denmark, the newspaper *Asty* predicted as early as 1885 that, on his return, the “Sailor Prince” would “raise the morale of our brave seamen”.¹⁹⁵ King George was aware of these hopes and had even reckoned with them. A momentous speech which he gave at the old harbour of Ermoupolis on the island of Syros on 24 April 1888 can be read in direct relation to the national mission he envisioned for his son. Unveiling a statue of Admiral Andreas Miaoulis in the city square, the king invoked the memory of Greece’s “heroic naval warriors” to inspire his compatriots with similar feelings of “love for the fatherland” and with the readiness to repeat their “deeds”. Addressing his sailors, he exclaimed: “Strive, toil, do your duty at every moment; everything is easy if the goal is the wellbeing of the fatherland and the progress of our Hellenic Navy, the guardian and glory of the fatherland.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ *Asty* (6.5.1891).

¹⁹² Skandamis, 29, 33; ‘From the life of the deceased prince’, *Athenaiki* (4.12.1957).

¹⁹³ ‘Honorary Colonel’, *Ephimeris* (10/22.8.1890); PG to QL, 7/25.11.1890, King Christian and Queen Louise’s Archives (KCQLA), Kongehusarkivet, pk.12/59; ‘The Panhellenic inclinations of Prince Georgios’, *Empros* (5.2.1897); Britsch, *La jeune Athenes*, 209.

¹⁹⁴ Skandamis, 27.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Prince Georgios’, *Asty* (8.12.1885).

¹⁹⁶ ‘The unveiling of the statue of Miaoulis’, *Palingenesia* (24.4.1888); Argyropoulos, 1.

These words were enthusiastically received. Although they “electrified every heart”, the newspaper *Asty* ironically remarked a few days later that a mild reprimand could be made: “The impression made by the speech and the enthusiasm that it engendered would have been infinitely greater, if [the king] had used the first instead of the second person plural.”¹⁹⁷ This rebuke referred to a frequent reproach flung at George: that he did not care enough about his royal duties and only rarely inspected the navy. Once the constitutional conflict that had characterized his early reign had been resolved in favour of the government-by-majority principle in 1875, George became too much of a model constitutional monarch for Greek tastes. There were frequent calls for a more involved king who would fight corruption within and the enemy without.¹⁹⁸

Prince Georgios’s re-appearance as a Danish-trained naval officer less than one year after the king’s speech thus filled a void: It represented the first-person-plural devotion of the Glücksborg dynasty to the naval build-up. King George used all of his sons as his deputies in the armed forces to strengthen his remaining prerogatives and create a strong support base in Greece. Although often criticized as a form of clientelism, their employment in a force whose ultimate goal was the establishment of Greater Greece also frequently caused upsurges in the dynasty’s popularity. As the newspaper *Ephimeris* remarked in 1890, the nation, “monarchically minded” and “feeling as one with the dynasty” demanded “that the royal family live amongst the people, serve their interests, keep up their traditions and take part in their aspirations and struggles”. Georgios, in the opinion of the author, fulfilled this ideal.¹⁹⁹

From the moment he returned to Greece as a lieutenant in December 1889, the prince was directly involved in the naval build-up. Trained in the cutting-edge science of torpedo ballistics, he was almost immediately charged with the command of the mobile defence and thus with the establishment of a torpedo school.²⁰⁰ His contribution to the irredentist cause was even more striking. At the beginning of the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 he was dispatched to the conflict-stricken island of Crete as the commander of an entire torpedo-boat flotilla to support an insurrection against the Ottoman Sultan. Following the humiliating defeat by the Ottoman forces and the semi-autonomy of

¹⁹⁷ ‘Echo of the festivities in Syros’, *Asty* (30.4.1888).

¹⁹⁸ E.g. Report 8.3.1896, PA AA, RZ 201, R7478; Gounaris, Basil, ‘Model nation and caricature state: Competing Greek perspectives on the Balkans and Hellas, 1797-1896’, in: Beaton/Ricks (eds), *Modern Greece*, 137-50, 142.

¹⁹⁹ *Ephimeris* (10/22.8.1890).

²⁰⁰ *Oikonomou*, 103; *Skandamis*, 31-33.

Crete in 1898, the prince was elected High Commissioner of the Cretan state, hailed “as the “Messianic angel of God’s great will” by the Cretans.²⁰¹ The mission would fail in 1906. Georgios, however, though temporarily seeking exile in Denmark and France, would continue to play a role in the defence debate and remained a comparative darling of the Greeks.²⁰² In the concept of the “Sailor Prince”, appealing to the “salty blood” and great dreams of the Hellenes, the Glücksborgs had probably found the most stable and popular token of their devotion to Greek national identity and the Greater Greek cause.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how, between 1850 and 1914, several major dynasties entered the maritime sphere to close ranks with the imagined community of the nation. The sea and all the institutions attached to it exerted a strong fascination on European societies in the Age of Empire. Through the public persona “Sailor Prince” monarchies could profit from this “lure of the sea” in both its general and nation-specific forms.

So how exactly did this lure spell out? Considered alongside each other, the four case studies reveal that what has been said about national myths in general, also applies to the role of the maritime dimension in national identity: claims of exceptionality and peculiarity were accompanied by striking structural similarities.²⁰³ Thus, nations as diverse as Britain, Denmark or Greece all defined themselves by their geographical position (the “island race”), by their special relationship with the sea (their “salty blood”) and by their long seafaring traditions (“path of the Dane”). Deriving their national missions and future projects from their ‘heroic ages’ of naval dominance (the Athenian Empire, the Age of the Valdemars, the Napoleonic Wars), these countries also placed great importance on the navy and the command of the sea in debates about national defence or foreign policy. The all-pervasive nature of nineteenth-century maritime culture, moreover, its assumptions about geostrategy, political economy and the evolving ideology of sea power meant that even traditional land powers such as Germany could join the ranks of the sea-loving nations. In various contexts of international decline (Denmark), power preservation (Britain) or aspiration (Germany,

²⁰¹ Bien, Peter (ed.), *The selected letters of Nikos Kazantzakis* (Princeton, 2012), 27; Markopoulos, George, ‘The selection of Prince George of Greece as High Commissioner in Crete’, *Balkan Studies*, 10 (1969), 335-50, 335-36. Cf. report 9.2.1897, PA AA, RZ 201, R7479.

²⁰² Oikonomou, 104-106.

²⁰³ Germer, 32.

Greece), the future was seen “lying on the water”. On closer inspection, the invention of tradition which followed from this in post-1871 Germany (applying the regional history of the North to the entire nation) was only gradually different from the re-invention of tradition discernible in Denmark and Britain (where the Vikings were rediscovered) or Greece (where a link with antiquity was projected). The idea of the chronological succession of thalassocracies virulent in the period even meant that any nation with sea access could potentially tap into the mythologies of naval might.

A myth as powerful as this was a vital tool for Europe’s monarchies in their quest to nationalize their public image and thus gain new legitimacy. By aligning themselves with their countries’ maritime identities and sending their sons to join the prestigious naval forces, dynasties originating from outside the nation or criticized for their unclear loyalties (the German Saxe-Coburgs and Glücksborgs in Britain and Denmark, the Danish Glücksborgs in Greece, the Prussian Hohenzollerns in the German Empire) inserted themselves into a timeline of national descent and destiny. They showed their commitment to the nation’s perceived traditions, tapped into a pool of national myths or became themselves symbols of national unity. Simultaneously, they presented themselves as integrally connected to the nation’s future by accessing the sea as a “frontier of modernity” and the navy as an instrument of future (imperial) greatness.

In doing so, the dynasties not only gained symbolic relevance and influence. They also managed to take an active stance in a variety of public debates. Public gestures, naval rituals, speeches etc. combined to create a platform for monarchical involvement in current affairs in countries as radically ‘democratic’ as Greece or Britain or as ambivalently ‘autocratic’ as Germany or Denmark. Naval build-ups, budget claims and imperial expansion programmes were supported in all four countries; naval recruitment was enhanced in Britain, Germany and Greece; the liberal chief of the Admiralty was defended in Germany; and in Denmark, a semi-private business corporation was successfully launched.

Given the lack of explicit ego-documents, it would be presumptuous to project too much intentionality onto these developments. The functions performed by “Sailor Princes”, and the success they met with, could hardly have been anticipated. What has been demonstrated, though, is that their naval careers were more than the result of youthful whims. All royal parents shared in the rich maritime cultures of their age. They had at least an intuitive grasp of what might be popular among their countrymen.

Being initially foreigners to their nations, dynasts such as Prince Albert or King Christian even had a heightened sense of awareness concerning the defining characteristics of their compatriots. Combining their insights with the models they knew from the transnational network of kings, they devised a remarkably adaptive approach. As the phenomenon spread via dynastic channels and across generations, moreover, the motivations increasingly shifted from intuition to strategy. Whether precursors like Christian IV or William IV were decisive role models for Prince Alfred and Prince Valdemar, can only be a matter of speculation. Prince Heinrich's and Prince Georgios's careers, however, were without doubt moulded upon those of their British and Danish uncles.

As the princes were trained in the navy and enhanced the nationalized image of the monarchy, though, they increasingly left the very context of dynastic internationalism from which their brand originated.²⁰⁴ Their popular attraction, to a large extent, rested on the assumption that they became national (rather than international) princes in their own self-understanding as well as that of others. The "Sailor Prince" brand connected the monarchy with the nation by symbolically locating it on a horizontal timeline between naval past and naval future, tradition and modernity. But it also repositioned it on a vertical, social scale: Instead of being above the nation, the monarchy had to become of the nation. How this was achieved – if at all – will be the subject of the next chapter.

²⁰⁴ Paulmann, Johannes, 'Searching for a Royal International', in: Id./Geyer, Martin (eds), *The mechanics of internationalism* (Oxford, 2001), 145-76.

2 Princes in disguise: The myths of equality and professionalism

Disguise stories were a recurring theme in the public representation of “Sailor Princes”. An anecdote from one of Prince Valdemar’ first sea cruises focused on the notables of the Danish town Assens, who were dumbfounded when they were welcomed by the prince who had freshly emerged from the boiler room with a face “black as a chimney sweep”.²⁰⁵ In another episode, this time drawn from Prince Heinrich’s second world tour, two dignitaries from the Brazilian province of Pernambuco asked to meet the prince only to discover that he was the very same officer who had escorted them on-board.²⁰⁶ During Prince Alfred’s journey to the Cape in 1860, finally, an African tribal chief reportedly observed the prince scrub the deck of his ship, barefooted amidst his comrades. Wondering how “the son of England’s great Queen” and “the sons of England’s chiefs” could stoop so low and “endure hardships and sufferings”, he eventually concluded that this very readiness to serve and learn was the reason “why the English are a great and mighty nation.”²⁰⁷

What were the myths and assumptions at the heart of these disguise stories? This is one of the two principal questions of this chapter. As will be seen, there were three interconnected myths encapsulated in the above narratives. On a first level, all stories revolved around the idea that by joining the navy “Sailor Princes” not only connected the monarchy with an emotive symbol that stood for (the past and future of) the nation, thus taking on a new national identity. They also came to embody the norms and values of contemporary society, adopting a second social identity. In the popular imagination, the navy was associated with notions of equality and regarded as a levelling institution. In view of the dangers of the deep, every cadet had to undergo the same exacting training. Midshipman, boatswain or captain: all had to live within the same narrow confines of the ship. By entering this microcosm with its hard living conditions, “Sailor Princes” enacted a popular prince-and-pauper story. They were supposed to transcend the barriers between crown and people, aristocrat and commoner. More than that: They were incorporated into larger military bodies sometimes even regarded as model nuclear nations.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Fredensborg, 5-6.

²⁰⁶ Boeck, Central-Amerika, 141.

²⁰⁷ Tappan, Eva, *In the days of Queen Victoria* (Boston, 1903), 227.

²⁰⁸ Daley, Jennifer, *Uniforms, the British Royal Navy and the cultural construction of naval identities* (unpubl. PhD, King’s College London, 2013); Becker, Frank, ‘Synthetischer Militarismus: Die Einigungskriege und der Stellenwert des Militärischen in der deutschen Gesellschaft’, in: Epkenhans, Michael/Gross, Gerhard (eds), *Das Militär und der Aufbruch in die Moderne* (Munich, 2003), 125-42.

In 1885, the Danish weekly *Illustreret Tidende* conceptualized Prince Valdemar as a modern Prince Charming with his uniform working as a sort of invisibility cloak. “The King’s son”, it declared, “wanders amongst us in disguise, sharing people’s fate and circumstances”.²⁰⁹ No longer recognizable as royals, with their faces tanned by the weather or blackened by coal dust, “Sailor Princes” supposedly became one with their people. In the age of the social question and of mass democratization, they thus formed part of a wider monarchical narrative which projected a class-transcending link or direct conduit of communication between crown and people or even ascribed a class-integrating role to the monarchy.²¹⁰ In 1891, the Greek journal *Asty* remarked that Prince Georgios, though “born in crimson”, was part of the “tree of the people” and that his “blue blood” had been “transubstantiated” into the “presence of the people’s spirit”.²¹¹

On closer inspection, though, the myths surrounding the navy did not connect the monarchy equally with all social classes. Rather, they favoured one particular class. Naval service was considered a middle-class profession requiring solid educational backgrounds, demanding, discipline-specific training and adherence to ordered career paths. It embodied the middle-class values of individual achievement, self-improvement and meritocracy. In the popular imagination, promotions in the service were based on skill and talent rather than social status.²¹² By entering this meritocratic arena, “Sailor Princes” became living embodiments of their monarchies’ projected “embourgeoisement”.²¹³ They became go-betweens of their dynasties forging a mutually supportive union with the socio-economically dominant middle classes. In 1885, *Illustreret Tidende*, a mouthpiece of the Danish bourgeoisie, praised the way in which Prince Valdemar had fought “his way up the ranks”, completed “the roughest sailor’s work” and “endure[d] the torments of examination”, thus “gain[ing] experience and acquir[ing] skills which otherwise would never have crossed his horizon”.²¹⁴ What the paper was really celebrating, though, were the values that had been adopted by the monarchy and thus ultimately its own middle-class creed.

²⁰⁹ *Illustreret Tidende* (6.9.1885).

²¹⁰ E.g. Plunkett, 113-19; Olechnowicz, Andrzej, ‘Historians and the modern British monarchy’, in: Id. (ed.), *The monarchy and the British nation* (Cambridge, 2007), 6-45, 17.

²¹¹ *Asty* (6.5.1891).

²¹² Stoneman, Mark, ‘Bürgerliche und adelige Krieger: Zum Verhältnis von sozialer Herkunft und Berufskultur im wilhelminischen Armee-Offizierskorps’, in: Reif, Heinz (ed.), *Adel und Bürgertum in Deutschland*, vol.2 (Berlin, 2001), 38-51; Wilson, Evan, ‘The careers of James, Lord de Saumarez and Cuthbert, Lord Collingwood, 1748-1836’ (unpubl. MPhil, Cambridge, 2008), 3-4; Conley, 102-114.

²¹³ E.g. Kroll, 357-60; Hobhouse, 59-61.

²¹⁴ *Illustreret Tidende* (6.9.1885).

Self-congratulation was also at the heart of the third and final level of meaning of royal disguise stories. For the narratives of deck-scrubbing princes implied clear statements about the nature of Western European constitutional monarchy in general and about the political cultures within which it operated. As societies modernized and politics was democratized, royal families increasingly had to revise their representation strategies and demonstrate “civic publicness”. They were meant to be visible among their subjects, but abandoning ostentatious ceremony in favour of more intimate encounters where their citizens could freely express their approval.²¹⁵ “Sailor Princes” embodied this new simplicity. Their “civic publicness”, moreover, shone a favourable light on the democratic societies they lived in. In public discourse, the monarchies of civilized Western Europe, which could “afford to dispense with the parade of State”²¹⁶, were often contrasted with the presumed backwardness of the pomp and circumstance of autocratic or oriental rule. An anecdote about Prince Valdemar recorded that his cousin, the Russian Tsarevich Nicholas, on visiting the officer’s mess of his ship in 1875, offended the proud young midshipman by proclaiming “What a nasty stinking hole!”²¹⁷ Prince Alfred, in 1859, was likewise contrasted with Touson Pasha, the six-year-old son of the Egyptian Viceroy, who strutted about the deck of HMS *Euryalus* expressing feelings of disgust at the “middies’ cabin”.²¹⁸ In the middle-class discourse of countries such as Denmark or Britain, the willingness of royal families to adopt their values and professions was ultimately interpreted as a potent dramatization of the benign power of Western civilization and democracy.

So much for the myths; but were the disguise stories true? Or, more precisely, were the common, bourgeois and civic identities that “Sailor Princes” were supposed to embody anything more than a pleasing mask which antiquated institutions adopted to play at being modern? To address this second question, the curricula and careers of royal princes as well as their (self-)perception need to be explored. How professional were their education, training and careers compared to the standards of their time? How equal was their treatment on-board? Did their careers follow the regular career path of the middle-class

²¹⁵ Plunkett, 48-52; McCreery, Cindy, ‘A British prince and a transnational life: Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh’s visit to Australia, 1867-68’, in: Woollacott, Angela/Deacon, Desley/Russell, Penny (eds), *Transnational ties: Australian lives in the world* (Canberra, 2008), 57-74, 58.

²¹⁶ ‘A royal visit for Australia’, *Hobart Mercury* (17.1.1861).

²¹⁷ Fredensborg, 5.

²¹⁸ ‘Prince Alfred in Egypt’, *The Times* (1.3.1859); *Morning Post* (2.3.1859).

professional or were they accelerated as a result of pre-modern forms of royal patronage? And what was their eventual role in the military apparatus?

By examining the professionalism of “Sailor Princes”, this chapter contributes to debates about the modernization of monarchy in the nineteenth century. In the past decades, the projected “embourgeoisement” of monarchy has been challenged by a variety of historians: It was called a personal, a-political lifestyle at best or an empty representative strategy at worst.²¹⁹ Some even argued that proto-bourgeois monarchs such as Queen Victoria were really “snobbish” at heart, opposed the rise of the middle classes or contributed to the “aristocratization” of the bourgeoisie.²²⁰ Investigations into the educational concepts behind naval careers and into the everyday practices of royal life at sea can illuminate the question of how ready Europe’s royal families really were to adopt and enact middle-class values.

Examining the role of monarchs within the promotion process also allows for conclusions to be drawn about the extent of the “constitutionalization” of monarchy. Was the entry of royal princes into the navy really an expression of “civic publicness” and a tribute to the democratic values of Western civilization? Or was it rather a strategic tool used by essentially *ancien regimes* to tighten the grip on royal privilege? Over recent years, the narrative that Europe’s monarchies gradually gave up their political power in return for a new and emotional hold on their people’s loyalties has been balanced by a more nuanced approach: It investigates whether monarchs gave up their power to go with the times – or whether they went with the times to retain or increase their power, albeit in a somewhat transformed shape.²²¹ The public persona “Sailor Prince”, located between the ancient warrior tradition of the prince and the modern middle-class professionalism of the sailor, embedded into the myths of naval meritocracy and invested with the aura of the aristocrat, provides an intriguing prism for the investigation of the “constitutional role, political power and social character”²²² of nineteenth-century monarchies.

²¹⁹ Kroll, 357; Schama, Simon, ‘The domestication of majesty: Royal family portraiture, 1500-1850’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 17.1 (1986), 155-83, 157.

²²⁰ Olechnowicz, 12-17; Kuhn, William, *Democratic royalism: The transformation of the British monarchy, 1861-1914* (Basingstoke, 1996), 2; Cannadine, David, ‘The last Hanoverian sovereign? The Victorian monarchy in historical perspective, 1688-1988’, in Id./Beier, A.L./Rosenheim, James (eds), *The first modern society* (Cambridge, 1989), 127-66; Mayer, 5-13.

²²¹ E.g. Cannadine, *Last Hanoverian*.

²²² Olechnowicz, 9.

Educations in transition

However professional the eventual education and careers of “Sailor Princes” may have been, one thing seems certain: They were never originally or primarily intended to become middle-class professionals in the modern sense. As has already been demonstrated, the very concept of the “Sailor Prince” did not emerge as a carefully planned strategy, but as the result of personal inclinations, dynastic considerations and public preferences. This was even more the case with respect to the royal absorption of middle-class and professional values. David Cannadine has long warned historians not to overestimate the “premature modernity” of nineteenth-century monarchy. As he outlined for the British case, Queen Victoria’s and Prince Albert’s rejection of the social, cultural and political mores and convictions of their Hanoverian predecessors was far from complete. Even where they subscribed to the middle-class ideals of domesticity, meritocracy and constitutionalism, they did so with a view to increasing the reputation and ultimately the governing power of the sovereign.²²³ All royal houses, the logics of hereditary rule dictated that, saw much more in the raising of their offspring than a middle-class avenue for advancement through education and performance. Ambitious royal parents such as Prince Albert felt that it was the status of the dynasty, the future of monarchy and the “well-being of the world” that was at stake.²²⁴ Royal education was meant to prepare princes for their arduous tasks.

This was where naval training fitted into the substantial princely curriculum. Apart from providing a quintessentially national field of activity, it could toughen up royal bodies, acquaint princes with the armed forces or introduce them to less privileged lives. The toil of a seafarer was a temporary school where highborn children could prove to themselves and to their critical middle-class observers that they were able to justify through merit the exalted positions that they held by birth.²²⁵ Once they had slipped on their new identity, though, it was hard to remove it again, as both the princes and their audience grew accustomed to it.

Middle-class as it might seem, a basic naval training could be comfortably integrated into traditional concepts of aristocratic education. It was entirely along these lines that

²²³ Cannadine, *Last Hanoverian*, 128-30, 135, 139-148.

²²⁴ Prince Albert, 10.4.1849, in: Jagow, Kurt (ed.), *Prinzgemahl Albert: Ein Leben am Throne: Eigenhändige Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, 1831-1861* (Berlin 1937), 195. Cf. Martin, Theodore, *The life of HRH the Prince Consort*, vol.2 (London, 1877), 174-175.

²²⁵ Schneider, Miriam, *Zwischen Dynastie und Nation: Die deutsch-britischen Universitätsstudien des Prinzen Alfred von Großbritannien* (unpubl. MA, University of Bayreuth, 2012).

Prince Albert argued in 1857, when he tried to explain to his brother, Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg, why the latter's potential heir, Prince Alfred, should join the seemingly un-aristocratic and decidedly British profession of the naval officer. "In this service", the Prince Consort assured his brother, "he will become acquainted with all the parts of the world, and he will have become more generally competent than in a life here or in Germany. The service, with its strict discipline, and the early responsibility he will have as an officer, will be a very good school for him."²²⁶ Albert focused on typically aristocratic educational goals: the acquisition of leadership skills and a thorough knowledge of the world, discipline and character formation.²²⁷ In a similar vein, Crown Prince Frederick William justified the decision to have Prince Heinrich join the navy to his sceptical father, William I, by pointing to the Prussian military paradigm: he was to acquire "a serious consciousness of his duties, strictly military views, self-reliance" and "a full understanding of discipline and obedience".²²⁸

Apart from the general idea that helmsmanship might be an attractive accomplishment for princes, it was especially the physical toughening-up entailed by the rough life at sea that suggested aristocratic forays into naval training. Though usually associated with the middle-class ideals of the gymnastic movement, the sports-focused public-school ethos or the belief in the sanative effect of sea air, the exposure to the weather and the strengthening training on-board also appealed to noble parents. There was an anti-intellectual "cult of character and body", of dash and dare prevailing in aristocratic education which made the navy with its simple life and exacting open-air exercises appear an attractive school for princes.²²⁹ "The body weary of [...] mental work lives in vigour and health here", Prince Heinrich's governor reported home from the cadet ship *Niobe* in 1877.²³⁰

Even irrespective of its educational aspects, the navy, as an increasingly important branch of the armed forces, was not an unlikely career choice for princes. Throughout the nineteenth century, the military remained a traditional avenue for the sons of the higher nobility because it provided them with the attire and habitus deemed worthy of their station. It enabled them to live up to the chivalric ideal, which experienced a revival in the romantic period. And it associated the monarchy with a waning, though still symbolically relevant source of legitimacy: the defence of the nation. Royal heirs and spares were

²²⁶ PAI to DE, early 1857/17.3.1857, in Bolitho, 169-71.

²²⁷ Malinowski, 73ff.

²²⁸ Memorandum, September 1878, BArch-MA RM2/397.

²²⁹ Malinowski, 73f; Behrman, 69.

²³⁰ Seckendorff to Stosch, 28.5.1877, BArch-MA RM1/1794.

educated and strategically positioned in the armed forces because this represented the direct exercise of executive power by the sovereign and tied their dynasties to the core of the state.²³¹

Throughout the early modern period, it had been custom for the kings and princes of seaborne countries, like Christian IV of Denmark or James II of England, to command their fleets in battle or to occupy leading administrative posts. The naval careers of “Sailor Princes” formed part of a wider royal strategy aimed at retaining this control of the armed forces as a last bulwark of relatively untrammelled monarchical power in constitutional monarchies. The practice of half-heartedly introducing listless pleasure-seekers to a superficial knowledge of naval matters or of transferring authority to unexperienced, army-trained aristocratic amateurs, however, had always met with the resentment of professionally trained naval officers.²³² By the mid-nineteenth century, it was completely unthinkable. “Is it desirable to have princes in the navy?” asked Lieutenant Carl Irminger, the naval tutor of the later Frederik VII of Denmark, in a memorandum in 1836. The answer was a frustrated “No!” His pupil was probably the last amateur prince let loose on Europe’s waterways without the necessary know-how or even enthusiasm.²³³ Already in 1780, the British King George III had broken new educational ground by subjecting his son, the later William IV, to the then standard educational system of “pitchforking” unexperienced youths to sea.²³⁴ After 1850, naval education was entirely reserved for younger sons who could be thoroughly introduced to the profession and would remain career officers for life.

This fundamental change occurred because royal parents chose – or were forced – to incorporate middle-class components into their educational concepts. Arno Mayer was one of the first historians to point to the remarkable ability of nineteenth-century monarchies to renew themselves in response to the revolutionary challenges of 1789-1848. In his view, Europe’s *ancien regimes* “excelled in selectively ingesting, adapting and assimilating new ideas and practices” to secure their survival.²³⁵ As ideas of popular sovereignty and constitutional movements spread and national electorates expanded, the

²³¹ Mayer, 179-85; Mansel, Philip, ‘Monarchy, uniform and the rise of the frac, 1760-1830’, *Past and Present*, 96 (1982), 103-32; Girouard, Mark, *The return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English gentleman* (New Haven, 1981); Møller, Jes, *Monarkiet som Danmarks ansigt udatil, Økonomi og Politik*, 87.4 (2014), 37-47, 38; Sellin, 105-44.

²³² Wilson, 10ff; Bjerg, 44-45, 72-78.

²³³ Lisberg Jensen, Ole, *Er det ønskeligt at have prinser i søe-etaten?*, *Marinehistorisk Tidsskrift* 49 (2016), 30-42.

²³⁴ Hampshire, Cecil, *Royal sailors* (London, 1971), 24-55.

²³⁵ Meyer, 11-13.

continuity of monarchical rule became increasingly conditional on its “functionality”, that is on pragmatic aspects rather than show.²³⁶ Sovereigns like Queen Victoria, King Christian or Crown Prince Frederick William, though all aristocrats at heart, responded to these changes by adapting to the values and pragmatic demands of their most powerful potential critics and their best allies in stabilizing the status quo: the bourgeoisie.

Royal education provided a testing ground for this alliance where princes could acquire all the qualifications necessary for holding on to power. From 1789 onwards, many European monarchies performed unprecedented “educational experiments” which took account of public voices and were designed to balance the flaws of aristocratic upbringing by introducing modern, practical subjects, meritocratic standards, a focus on personal achievement and peer-group learning.²³⁷ As younger brothers of royal heirs such as Albert Edward Prince of Wales or Prince William of Prussia, “Sailor Princes” often participated in these innovative educational courses. Their subsequent training as naval officers went even one step further in that it put the new practice of acquainting royal princes with ordinary lives and middle-class “*Bildung*” (through farm or factory visits or public-school and university education) on a more permanent basis. The boys had to meet the substantial admission criteria of the navy (in Germany, for example, the equivalent of a *Realgymnasium* qualification), and apart from the hard physical conditions on-board they also had to master the intellectual challenges of the naval sciences in competition with other cadets.

Naval education demonstrated the readiness of royal families to find useful occupations for their younger offspring. In the High Middle Ages, the surplus of second- or third-in-line noblemen without means or marriage prospects had been remedied by the emergence of the “knight errand”.²³⁸ In the bourgeois nineteenth century, however, “useful occupations” were tantamount to middle-class professions. Thus, Prince Albert spoke of “competence” as early as 1857 when describing the objectives of his son’s training. While his brother, Duke Ernst, advocated the old concept of aristocratic dilettantism in the discussions about his nephew’s education – be a Jack of all trades but a master of none –

²³⁶ Prutsch, Markus, “‘Monarchical Constitutionalism’ in post-Napoleonic Europe: Concept and practice”, in: Id./Grotke, Kelly (eds), *Constitutionalism, legitimacy and power* (Oxford, 2014), 69-83; Kirsch, *Konstitutioneller Monarch*, 350-65.

²³⁷ E.g. O'Connor, Adrian, ‘Between monarch and monarchy: The education of the Dauphin and revolutionary politics, 1790-91’, *French History*, 27 (2013), 176-201, Wagner, Yvonne, *Prinzen-erziehung in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Zum Bildungsverhalten des preußisch-deutschen Hofes im gesellschaftlichen Wandel* (Frankfurt/M., 1995).

²³⁸ Duby, Georges, ‘Die “Jugend” in der aristokratischen Gesellschaft’, in: Id., *Wirklichkeit und höfischer Traum: Zur Kultur des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1986), 103-15.

Albert demanded a thorough level of professional knowledge, which, unlike noble character, had to be acquired through exacting theoretical and practical exercise rather than birth.²³⁹

This new insistence on professional standards became even more pronounced as time progressed. Thus, when, in 1862, Duke Ernst thought that Alfred was ready to end his temporary career in order to start his university studies, he was surprised to find the prince's military governor, Lieutenant Cowell, defending Alfred's professional interests. Cowell insisted that his charge should not forget his difficult craft and that he needed more practice to "acquire a degree of skill, and confidence in himself, which would render him at ease upon all future occasions at sea". Therefore, he arranged for him to continue on-board after the end of his formal training and in-between his studies. This "would be satisfactory to the officer of his profession [...] and would [...] inspire" his inferiors "with a degree of confidence in his ability."²⁴⁰ Similar adjustments towards middle-class professionalism were also made in Prussia, Denmark and Greece. How come?

On the one hand, changing external discourses demanded professional continuity. "Sailor Princes" soon proved too popular to be lost. Especially in countries like Britain and Greece, with their democratic constitutions and lively political press, their conduct and professionalism were also closely monitored – as will be detailed below. Keen to generate public approval to provide a new source of legitimacy, Europe's monarchs learned to keep an eye on expressions of public opinion. Therefore, they followed through with what was maybe never intended as a professional career.

On the other hand, there was a mechanism intrinsic to naval education itself which led to professional continuity. In joining the navy, "Sailor Princes" were entering venerable institutions which at the same time were all undergoing substantial processes of professionalization to meet the technological requirements of the age. If they wanted to profit from the reputation of these time-honoured and trendsetting institutions, they had to keep to their rules and go along with change. All of the princes began their naval training at a time of transition, and their parents' readiness to follow current professional standards meant that they became a new, more rigorous type of royal sailors. In Britain and Denmark, reform processes aimed at standardizing naval education and thus creating a

²³⁹ PAI to DE, early 1857/17.3.1857, in: Bolitho, 169-71.

²⁴⁰ Cowell, Memorandum concerning Prince Alfred's future, 1.3.1862, RA VIC/ADDA20/109-10.

unified, competent and efficient naval officer corps were drawing to a close in the 1850s-1860s. In Germany and particularly Greece, they were still underway in the 1870s-1890s. The Royal Danish Naval Academy, renamed Sea Officers' School in 1868, prided itself to be the oldest institution of its kind. Naval education had been centralized remarkably early, with virtually every naval officer since 1701 having graduated from the academy. The resulting homogeneity of the cadet corps was expressed in the early use of a standardized uniform, which was well-respected among Copenhagen's citizens, especially in the institute's golden period, the Age of Enlightenment.²⁴¹ After the establishment of the Danish parliament in 1849 and particularly after the traumatic defeat of 1864, however, the course of naval education came under fire. The liberal *Venstre* party wished to democratize entry to the institution by reducing the training period from six to four years, introducing free boarding for first- and second-year "pupils" and a small stipend for third- and fourth-year "cadets".²⁴²

Prince Valdemar, who enlisted in 1875, was among the quickly increasing number of "aspirants" applying for the entrance examination after the changes had been instituted. The Danish royal house had learned to respect the academy as the exclusive avenue of naval-officer education and thus the 16-year-old prince, apart from boarding at home, adhered to all its regulations.²⁴³ He documented that he had served several months as a "voluntary apprentice" aboard different vessels, a necessary stipulation compensating for the reduced training period. He proved that his extensive preparatory studies had been worthwhile by successfully passing the entrance exam. And he followed the four-year course of instructions at the academy, taking part in five summer training cruises and passing all his annual exams until, aged 20, he emerged as a second lieutenant in 1879.²⁴⁴

In Britain, prior to Queen Victoria's reign, naval training had been more diverse and less respected than in Denmark. Some entrants had been instructed at the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth, others by naval schoolmasters on-board seagoing ships and for a while all boys had been "pitchforked" to sea without preparation. After 1837, however, officer education was restructured and entrance procedures, once infamous for their absurdity, became regulated and more selective. In 1854, the first harbour training ship was commissioned, which, by replicating on-board living conditions, enabled naval

²⁴¹ Seerup, Naval academy, 328-329.

²⁴² Steensen, 276-79; Lisberg Jensen, *Skyggen*, 9, 33.

²⁴³ Seerup, Naval academy, 328.

²⁴⁴ Steensen, 278-80; Rulle (over søkadetkorpset), Forsvarsarkivet, G-22-26 1875-1879.

entrants to prepare for the practical challenges of seafaring life. An Admiralty Circular from February 1857, responding to the inefficiencies revealed during the Crimean War, stipulated the new rules for naval education.²⁴⁵

Prince Alfred, who entered the navy in 1858 at the comparatively old age of 14, was to follow them rigorously. Like most boys opting for the entrance examination, he settled near Portsmouth six months earlier to prepare for the arduous test and receive the mandatory three months of instructions aboard HMS *Illustrious*. He studied privately, though, and did not live on the training ship. In August 1858, he passed the theoretical and practical tests and embarked upon his “fleet time” on-board several operational war ships. After two years of primarily practical training as a naval cadet and another two years as a midshipman he passed his lieutenant’s examination in February 1863 at the earliest regular age of eighteen.²⁴⁶

The Imperial German Navy was still struggling to enhance the standards and hence social status of the naval officer corps when Prince Heinrich joined it in 1877. The new curriculum which had been drawn up to this end in 1864/1871 emphasized civilian education. True to the primarily intellectual idea of “*Bildung*” entertained by the German bourgeoisie, candidates for naval examination were required to have graduated from a (*Real*)*Gymnasium* and would thus usually be 16-17 years on entry.²⁴⁷ Prince Heinrich met these requirements, but at an unusually young entry age of 14. Since “[t]he general plan for his future career” made it “necessary for him to pass [his] examination at an earlier age than other boys usually do”, he was initially trained privately in all relevant subjects. Only in September 1876 did he enter the *Realschule* in Kassel to obtain his school certificate.²⁴⁸ His subsequent education conformed to common standards: Following six months on the training ship *Niobe* and another six months at the *Marineschule* in Kiel, he passed his exam in April 1878 and spent two years on-board HMS *Prinz Adalbert* as a sea cadet. After another year at the *Marineschule*, he was promoted lieutenant in October 1881 aged 19.²⁴⁹

The Greek navy, meanwhile, though living on the memory of the War of Independence, was considered in dire need of both reform and a professionally trained elite in the 1870s-

²⁴⁵ Dickinson, Harry, *Educating the Royal Navy: Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century education for officers* (New York, 2007), 1-7, 57-83.

²⁴⁶ Prince Alfred’s Service Record, TNA ADM 196/36/20.

²⁴⁷ Sondhaus, 469-474.

²⁴⁸ Hermann Sahl to John Dalton, 19.5.1876, RA GV/PRIV/AA6/149; Langguth, 16f.; Eschenburg, 23f.

²⁴⁹ Sondhaus, 469, 474; Peter, Karl, *Seeoffizieranwärter: Ihre Ausbildung, 1848 bis heute* (1969).

1880s. It was only the French naval mission led by Admiral Lejeune which effected a push for modernization. In 1884, the Naval Cadet School was established. It was closely modelled on the Naval College at Brest with Greek textbooks being translated from the French.²⁵⁰ The institute was created too late to be relevant for Prince Georgios, though. He therefore made use of the channels of dynastic relations and enrolled at the Danish Sea Officer's School in May 1885 aged 16. Greek naval officers were often dispatched to French naval schools or men-of-war to increase their knowledge. The royal family seemed to prefer the small, neutral Denmark, though, where their son could be taken under the wings of his grandparents and uncle. Despite one year of preparatory language training, Georgios would be hampered by his imperfect Danish during his four years at the renowned school. He went through all the required lessons and training cruises, however, passed his final exam in autumn 1889 aged 20, and returned to Greece as a second lieutenant.²⁵¹

It is in these four to six years within which the princes received their basic training that the most decisive change towards professionalism most likely occurred. All royal parents had their sons educated in the navy because they deemed it a worthy school for the higher nobility of seafaring countries and/or because they expected the princes to assume important command positions in a prestigious and future-oriented service. Within the context of the crisis of legitimacy, the rise of middle-class public opinion and the professionalization of the military branches, they were willing to incorporate new professional standards into their educational concepts. As David Cannadine and Arno Mayer have pointed out, this adoption of modern ideas did not mean that monarchies modernized; survival was the main goal.²⁵² By training their offspring according to the requirements of reformed naval education, however, the royal families nevertheless stepped on a slippery slope towards professional continuity and thus ultimately the "professionalization" and "modernization" of monarchy.

Lasting for an average of more than four years, requiring substantial additional preparation and involving their physical removal from the royal home, the naval education of "Sailor Princes" was so extensive that it would have been a waste of time not to let these newly-qualified naval officers continue in their chosen profession. The plans that royal parents kept in their drawers for the periods after their sons' initial training were often vague or

²⁵⁰ Fotakis, 15-21; Skandamis, 30-31.

²⁵¹ Rulle, Forsvarsarkivet, G-32-36 1885-1889; Kristensen, Steen, Freud har sagt: Prinsesse Marie Bonaparte, Sigmund Freud og Prins Georg af Grækenland (Copenhagen, 2006), 46-48.

²⁵² Cannadine, Last Hanoverian, 139-48; Mayer.

aiming for swift careers pursued on the side. Once they had subjected the princes to professional educational standards, however, their careers were also bound by the primacy of professionalism. And this was most profoundly the case because the “Sailor Princes” themselves would develop a remarkable allegiance to the navy.

Sailors in the making

In January 1864, Queen Victoria and Duke Ernst were shocked by a sudden revelation made by Prince Alfred. A comfortable compromise had been reached which allowed the 20-year-old prince to continue his naval career after his lieutenant’s examination while at the same time spending a couple of terms at the Universities of Edinburgh and Bonn to complete his training for his dynastic destiny as a future Duke of Coburg. In view of his imminent transfer to Germany, however, Alfred confessed to his mother that he considered himself “not cut out for the Coburg position”, that he “wished to stay in the navy” and that he “did not want to make use of his right of succession”.²⁵³

What had happened? For the queen, it was obvious that this change of heart was due to his “being together with English seamen”, which had made him “one-sidedly English”.²⁵⁴ Alfred, however, argued that there was also a vocational dimension in addition to the national one. In a letter to his uncle he explained that he could not satisfactorily “undertake a task in which my whole heart and mind were not engaged and which I did not feel able to do well”.²⁵⁵ Whatever the original considerations behind his parents’ decision-making, by the time the prince had obtained his officer’s commission, he had apparently made up his mind to spend the rest of his life at sea.

Similarly pivotal moments also occurred in the lives of other princes. Four years into his active career, in 1885, Prince Heinrich was ordered by his old-school grandfather to take over the regency of the Duchy of Brunswick – not an uncommon practice for the minor members of a dynasty. Only after having submitted some fervent petitions did he escape a task which would have invariably ended his naval career.²⁵⁶ In 1886, Prince Valdemar was publicly rumoured to be the successor to the unfortunate Prince Alexander of Bulgaria – a post which would have added another throne to the expanding Glücksborg portfolio. He politely declined the offer, though, and later explained that he was “content with being

²⁵³ QV to DE, 1.2.1864, StACo (State Archives Coburg) LAA 7001.

²⁵⁴ QV to DE, 18.2.1864, StACo LAA 7001.

²⁵⁵ PA to DE, 16.3.1864, StACo LAA 7032.

²⁵⁶ Eschenburg, 36; Mirbach, 127.

a Prince of Denmark and a sailor”.²⁵⁷ Only Prince Georgios would eventually assume the High Commissionership of Crete – a break which he would regret for the rest of his life.

During the first few years of their training and careers, all four princes had become so unusually detached from their original dynastic contexts and so closely identified with their naval professions that it was impossible for them to return completely. Earlier royal sailors had usually entered the navy at a considerably higher age or been sent on yachting sprees rather than proper service missions. The “Sailor Princes” lives, however, were largely transferred to the sea when they were aged fourteen to sixteen years and they spent their entire adolescence in the educational establishments and war ships of their respective navies. It was here that they were socialized, came of age and grew into men. Their mixed experiences, the challenges they faced, the role models they encountered and the relationships they formed, combined to create a deep allegiance to the navy which resembled that of many ordinary naval officers.

Autobiographical memoirs and sea novels alike describe naval education and the first couple of sea voyages as a journey of maturation which ends in the complete initiation of the now deep-sea sailor into the naval life and into naval comradeship.²⁵⁸ “Sailor Princes” went through exactly this rite of passage. And not only did it shape their personal outlook, but also their public persona. For as they grew up together with other naval cadets, the princes became intimately acquainted with non-royal lives, equipped with a certain social ease as well as a class-transcending message. They were integrated into the national community because their “being together with English [or Danish, German, Greek] seamen” set them apart from the dynastic transnationalism of their royal homes and because their varying national publics appropriated them as figures of emotional identification. Both their physical journeys and their private journey of adolescence were closely monitored by the popular media. As they thus grew up from child sailors to youthful naval officers, the abandonment of either their profession or their national allegiance became a public and private impossibility.

The journey of maturation and initiation into the navy and the nation started with the embarkations of “Sailor Princes” on their first service ships. Sometimes these preceded, at other times they followed periods of theoretical and practical training, but they all, for the first time, fully removed royal children from their privileged habitats. This introduction

²⁵⁷ Madol, Hans, *Kongernes onkel: Prins Valdemars erindringer* (Copenhagen, 1938), 28.

²⁵⁸ Kestner, Joseph, *Masculinities in British adventure fiction, 1880-1915* (Aldershot, 2013); Weibust, Knut, *Deep-sea sailors: A study in maritime ethnology* (Stockholm, 1969).

of princes to the foreign environment of a ship-of-the-line was negotiated on a variety of public and private levels. For the public eye, the ceremonies were often staged as dignified, even festive giving-away ceremonies: the boys were handed over to the elite factory of the navy and its ‘shareholder’, the nation. Since this was usually their first full appearance as “Sailor Princes” on the public stage, the events were carefully stage-crafted. Royal families would issue *carte-de-visite* photographs of their offspring in naval uniform or design the ceremonies to make a statement about the seriousness and momentousness of the step. The pictures and messages would then be reverberated in the (illustrated) press.

Thus, when Prince Alfred first embarked on HMS *Euryalus* in October 1858, the ceremony and its (pictorial) representations in the *Times* and *Illustrated London News* stressed the “civic publicness” of the occasion. The prince, dressed in civilian clothes and accompanied by his father and eldest brother, was received by the captain and officers with “all the honours due to royalty”, but no more. An engraving depicting the royal party aboard the imposing ship surrounded by sailors and marines standing at attention provided a quietly impressive allegory of the nation. Pictures and texts stressed how the young prince, despite the radical difference between his royal and his new home, easily integrated into the both majestic and humble new surroundings. This also threw a favourable light on the British monarchy. There were “no superfluities” in his outfit, chest and sailor’s kit, and his lodgings were to be as humble as those of everyone else.²⁵⁹

Prince Heinrich’s embarkation on HMS *Prinz Adalbert* in October 1878, meanwhile, was arranged more pompously. Hundreds of spectators lined the festively decorated promenades of Kiel harbour, cheering while the imperial boat with its crimson canopy passed by close to the shore. Welcomed by the salute of all the ships present, the imperial party entered the corvette as the imperial standard was hoisted. Popular depictions of the occasion published in the family magazine *Über Land und Meer* focused close-up on Prince Heinrich and his parents, particularly the crown prince dressed in full uniform. This was also a giving-away ceremony, but one that addressed the “nation in arms” rather than the civic nation. On Heinrich’s return in 1880, the semi-official *Provincial-Correspondenz* would explain how the Hohenzollerns had acknowledged the “new tasks” entailed by Germany’s changing role in the world” and “the present importance of the navy” and

²⁵⁹ ‘Departure of Prince Alfred for sea’, *The Times* (28.10.1858); *Illustrated London News* (6.11.1858).

therefore had “considered it their duty to [...] send [Prince Heinrich] forth into the world with his peers and comrades”.²⁶⁰

One of the attractions of embarkation scenes was the striking youth and freshness, if not innocence of their royal protagonists, who could be inscribed with all sorts of hopes. Also, the occasions provided rare glimpses on the intimate interaction of royal parents and children during a strangely public family farewell. The English papers were remarkably discreet in this respect, leaving it to the bourgeois reader to imagine all the tender pains evoked by an “affectionate leave”. German observers, on the other hand, sentimentalized the farewell scenes between child princes and their families. Thus, *Über Land und Meer* saw “a young German prince” depart “escorted by the loving care of the mother and the blessings of the father”.²⁶¹ And a poem penned by the North German dialect poet Klaus Groth investigating the depths of princely emotion on leaving the harbour was printed in all the big papers of the country:

“Now, straight’n up, royal child!
It’s time for puttin’ to sea.
The sails are swelling in the wind,
Quickly, raise your hand once more;
For the last time: Adieu!

[...]

And while you’re standing looking back
To where land and shore recede,
Wipe the tears off your face,
Do not think of the sad goodbye,
You are of royal race!”²⁶²

Sentimental as they were, these lines actually came closer to the truth than most public representations. For, privately, the embarkations of “Sailor Princes” were often traumatic events. Eventually, their first sea voyages would indeed accustom them to naval life and ultimately to the nation at large; but the process was a longer and more painful one. Although all princes had been brought up in comparatively frugal royal households and under the strict discipline of governesses and tutors, their lives had still been more

²⁶⁰ Provinzial-Correspondenz (13.10.1880); Werner, Reinhold von, Prinz Heinrich von Preußen (Berlin, 1894), 11-12.

²⁶¹ ‘Prinz Heinrich’s von Preußen Abfahrt’, *Über Land und Meer*, 6 (1878).

²⁶² Groth, Klaus, Klaus Groth’s gesammelte Werke, vol.2 (Kiel/Leipzig, 1898), 268-9.

privileged and sheltered than those of most of their peers, for whom the transition to the Spartan conditions on-board was already a challenge. Moreover, the boys' childhoods had been spent within tight-knit families including personal servants. On-board, they largely had to fend for themselves. Only by going through a hard time did the princes therefore grow into full-blown seamen.

In Queen Victoria's view, the radicalism of the break in her second son's biography was symbolized by his sleeping accommodation. On inspecting the quarterdeck of Alfred's future service ship "where Affie's humble hammock was slung, above his chest, just like all the other boys, the middy having no cabin for himself" she realized what "a hard life" his would be: "as Captain Tarleton said, no one knows the boon of becoming a Lieutenant and having a cabin of one's own, who has not gone through the hardship of midshipman's life."²⁶³ Feeling that she lost her child to an alien environment, Victoria, on parting, "clasped [her] precious child again and again in [her] arms and he sobbed bitterly".²⁶⁴ The emotional tyranny the queen exercised over her family had induced her 13-year-old son to imagine months in advance how "very sad" the "parting when I go to sea will be [...] to you [...] still more so than for me" and to promise that "the first thing I shall think of wherever I may be, and however I may be placed, shall be to write home."²⁶⁵

While no letters from Alfred's journey on the *Euryalus* survive, the correspondence between Prince Valdemar and his father, King Christian, affords an even more intimate insight into the heartrending goodbyes of one of Europe's most emotionally close royal families. When the nearly 15-year old boy left for his third cruise as a voluntary apprentice on the frigate *Sjælland* in October 1873, the king, as he confessed in a letter, had a bad night thinking "always of my angel Waldemar". In the morning, he was able to spot the departing vessel from Bernstorff Palace and hoisted a flag hoping for a response. The king and queen watched the ship through their spyglasses, and then Christian rode after it along the beach until he lost sight of it.²⁶⁶ This time, Valdemar overcame the "terrible parting" by going straight into bed after coming on-board.²⁶⁷ On the two previous occasions, though, he had "almost burst into tears" during lunch in the officer's mess. Coming from the relatively poor Glücksborg family, his predicament was a social rather than material one. "The hardest thing for me was", he explained to his parents, "that wherever I turned

²⁶³ QVJ, 7.8.1858.

²⁶⁴ QVJ, 27.10.1858.

²⁶⁵ PA to QV, 30.3.1858, RA VIC/ADDA20/1205.

²⁶⁶ PV to KCIX, 17.10.1873, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.VIII.2.

²⁶⁷ PV to KCIX, 16.10.1873, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.VIII.2.

I only saw strange faces; I didn't know any of the other boys and they behaved so curiously, talking to me as if I was their superior." Only when he summoned all his courage, returned on deck and "finally found some cheerful boys" with whom he chatted about lunch, he brightened up and regained his appetite.²⁶⁸

Despite the relatively close supervision from home, all princes suffered from loneliness and homesickness, feelings which were exaggerated by their exalted station. Gradually, however, they learned to cope by bonding with their new companions. In one way or the other, all "Sailor Princes", not unlike many ordinary sailors in fact and fiction, would come to find a substitute family in the navy – and it was here that one of the mainsprings of their subsequent allegiance would lie.²⁶⁹ The family replacements could take on the shape of father figures, friends or homoerotic relationships.

The most obvious confidants for Prince Alfred, Prince Heinrich or Prince Valdemar during much of their teenage years were their military governors, Lieutenants John Cowell, Albert von Seckendorff and H. Koch, respectively. These comparatively young men, carefully selected by their parents, supervised their entire military education and early careers, accompanied them on their journeys and, in the case of Seckendorff, even commanded some of their ships. While Cowell was not originally a naval officer, the other two always held actual posts in the shipboard hierarchy and thus could act as intermediaries and role models for their charges beyond their official responsibility. The role of a father figure could also be adopted by the princes' commanding captains or other superiors, who were often personally entrusted with their charges' wellbeing. Thus, Prince Valdemar, following the above-mentioned dramatic goodbye, developed a fond attachment to Captain Jakobsen who ensured him that he could always come to him "if I had something on my mind".²⁷⁰ Prince Heinrich greatly admired Albrecht von Stosch, the mastermind behind his naval education, who took a keen interest in his career. On Stosch's retirement, he told him that his "driving idea" during his journeys, spurring him "on to fresh zeal and enthusiasm" had been "to come back worthy of Your Excellency's attention and to contribute my share to a splendid inspection".²⁷¹

Even more important than understanding superiors were the peers with whom the princes shared their experiences. Their relationships with their fellow-midshipmen could take the

²⁶⁸ PV to KCIX, 5.6.1873, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.VIII.2.

²⁶⁹ Peck, 57; Weibust, 418f.

²⁷⁰ PV to KCIX, 16.10. and 27.10.1873, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.VIII.2.

²⁷¹ PH to Stosch, 12.5.1883, in: Baumgart, 261. Cf. PH to CPV, 26.8.1882, AHH Briefe 7/06-1.

shape of more generalized comradeship. Thus, Prince Heinrich always kept at a distance from the other youths on-board the training ship *Niobe*. But, according to *Korvettenkapitän* Hans Hirschberg, he nevertheless “live[d] and [ate] together with the cadets”; and in his own letters home, the prince soon used the plural of shared hardship and recompense: “I am always very tired when I turn in to my hammock as we have a lot to do, and we are also dreadfully hungry so that nothing stays on the table.”²⁷² He continued to feel attached enough to “Crew 77” to invite its surviving members for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of their entry into the navy in 1927.²⁷³ Prince Valdemar even made lifelong friends with some of his fellow-cadets. He was particularly close with Anton Evers, a brilliant student one year his senior who graduated first of his class in 1878. Their friendship was cemented when the two boys were serving on the training ship *Hejmdal* in June 1877 while Evers’s mother lay dying at home. Valdemar consoled the grieving child when he found him crying in his hammock, and ever since then the two were “nearly always together”.²⁷⁴ Evers would be Valdemar’s aide-de-camp from 1886 to 1905 and accompany him on several major cruises.

That the emotional assistance provided by a fellow-sufferer could lead to an even deeper attachment was proven by Prince Georgios, who was dispatched to Copenhagen in autumn 1884. Away from home the first time, unable to speak Danish and only accompanied for a short while by a Greek naval officer, the fourteen-year-old felt lost. Then he was taken care of by his uncle Valdemar, who proved very understanding. From this initial sympathy, a homoerotic relationship developed which lasted for the rest of their lives. Cast into the Spartan environment of the Sea Officer’s School, Georgios, according to his later wife, Princess Marie Bonaparte, soon became “devoted to a man, chastely but ardently fixed on the one Friend” – “ten years his senior and devoted like him to the sea”.²⁷⁵

This intensity of feeling, observable in various guises in the biographies of all “Sailor Princes”, can be explained by the fact that the traumatic initiation into the navy coincided with the most formative years of their lives: their adolescence. Cadets were growing into men in the relatively secluded environment of the ship/the academy, they adopted the “codes of masculine behaviour” of this “floating male society” and they bonded even more

²⁷² Mirbach, 47, 60-71, Hirschberg cited by Mirbach, 65; PH to CPV, 28.4.1877, AHH Briefe 7/06-1.

²⁷³ Mirbach, 69-71; StdtA Kiel, Medienarchiv Sig.11.629.

²⁷⁴ Rulle, Forsvarsarkivet, G-25 1878; PV to KCIX, 7.11.1875/17.6.1877, PVA Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.2; Fredensborg, 4.

²⁷⁵ Bertin, Celia, Marie Bonaparte: A life (New Haven, 1982), 85f, 105.

because they shared the experience.²⁷⁶ Particularly the Glücksborg princes started out as comparatively boyish cadets; Prince Georgios, though of tall stature and muscular physique, was characterized as “still very childlike and without stamina” in his first assessment.²⁷⁷ This immaturity was often one of the reasons why royal parents sent their sons to sea in the first place. The life on-board was supposed to help them grow in body and mind. And indeed, the princes underwent a succession of rites of passage in the company of their peers. Among other initiatory trials they experienced the ordeals of seasickness and the dangers of rough weather lurking in different parts of the world.²⁷⁸

The closed community of the ship and the anonymity of foreign places, however, also provided a space for the experience of the more shadowy side of naval adulthood: tobacco, alcohol and promiscuity. From Prince Valdemar’s letters, we know that the cadets at the naval school were allowed to smoke in their final year: “It is very comfortable” he told his parents in 1879, “one feels as if the tobacco smoke spread a certain dignity about one’s person.”²⁷⁹ Another ritual of male bonding was alcohol consumption. In March 1890, Prince Georgios reported to his grandmother that he had accidentally drunk two of his lieutenants under the table aboard a Russian frigate.²⁸⁰ Prince Alfred, finally, not only acquired a heavy drinking and smoking habit, but he was also an infamous ladies’ man. As early as 1862, his military governor Cowell was severely reprimanded because his charge had succumbed to the fairer sex in Malta. Together with his aristocratic fellow-officers, Francis Newry and Elliott Yorke, he had so many amorous antics on his tour through Australia in 1867/68 that the group were criticized by the press for their scandalous “fastness”.²⁸¹

The male companionship that had eased the initial parting would eventually even provide Alfred with a complete substitute for his increasingly dysfunctional family. He was probably the only child of Queen Victoria’s who survived the death of Prince Albert comparatively unscathed because he could escape to a parallel world. All “Sailor Princes” were, in fact, so reluctant to abandon the freedom of the life they found in the navy that they married considerably later than most of their siblings (Heinrich aged 26, Valdemar 27, Alfred 29 and Georgios 37). As they grew up in the naval environment and formed

²⁷⁶ Kestner, 27-29.

²⁷⁷ Bedømmelse af Cadetterne 1885, Forsvarsarkivet.

²⁷⁸ Weibust, 228-229.

²⁷⁹ PV to KCIX, 29.5.1879, PVA Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.2.

²⁸⁰ PG to QL, 9/21. 3.1890, KCQLA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.12/59.

²⁸¹ ‘The upshot of the Ducal visit’, *Freeman’s Journal* (18.1.1868); Pearl, Cyril, *Always morning: The life of R.H. “Orion” Horne* (Melbourne, 1960), 215-217; McCreery, *Transnational*, note 45.

personal attachments to father figures, comrades and lovers, they learned to love the naval life. They came to identify with their profession on an individual, emotional level. From this sprang a deeper loyalty to the wider, “imagined community” of the navy and to its corporate values – a desire to continue their professional careers without dynastic interruptions.

Moreover, since the ship was often considered a miniature nation or social microcosm, and since their ship’s crews indeed often represented a cross-section of their societies, the princes also came closer to the “imagined community” of the nation. The records of the Danish Defence Archives give a detailed account of the social composition of both Prince Valdemar’s and Prince Georgios’s classes at the Sea Officer’s School. They reveal that Valdemar, for example, grew up with the sons of an office clerk, a senior teacher, a forester, a farmer, a master baker and a lawyer. His best friend, Evers, was a merchant’s son.²⁸² During their time at the academy, the comrades would visit each other and each other’s families, take meals together or attend annual balls at the palace. Thus, Valdemar indeed came in close contact with the middle-class heart of Danish society. The British and German sea cadet corps were less close-knit, but they nevertheless acquainted royal princes with boys and men from social and regional backgrounds usually out of their reach, and with a national pride which complemented their dynastic internationalism. All “Sailor Princes” would therefore later be famed for their approachability as well as their national feeling.²⁸³

As the princes became acquainted with the nation, the nation also became acquainted with them. On their return home from their multi-faceted journeys of initiation, the popular media would be unaware of their private coming-of-age stories, but infatuated with the public ones. Especially Prince Heinrich’s disembarkations after his first two world tours were a favourite topic with the press. There were numerous depictions of the youthful prince being embraced by his august parents on platforms and gangways. The spectators and readers who witnessed these private moments before royal families withdrew “to the interior chambers” would participate emotionally in the familiar scene, uniting as a larger national family around the royal core family.²⁸⁴

All representations paid particular attention to the attractive features of grown-up naval manhood, stressing how the princes had become true sailors and real men. Their “youthful

²⁸² Rulle, Forsvarsarkivet, G-22-26 1875-1879.

²⁸³ Fredensborg, 3; Müller-Angelo, 306-7, 345; Mirbach, 300-302.

²⁸⁴ E.g. Poschinger, 283, Boeck, Central-Amerika, 220.

face[s]” were “tanned by the tropical sun”²⁸⁵, they were “tanned, grown and more handsome”²⁸⁶, there were “the first hints of a moustache”²⁸⁷, their “personality had unfolded”²⁸⁸ and “the school of [their] strict loneliness and arduous tasks had toughened their psyche” making them “indefatigable in the face of exertions and fearless in the face of danger”.²⁸⁹ Underlying all these observations was the idea that by sharing the manly virtues of the seaman, the princes had also become paragons of national virtue. This was best summed up by the *Illustrated London News* in 1864, which commented on “a most charming photograph” among a series of carte-de-visite photographs of the royal family showing “Prince Alfred in the elegant uniform of a Lieutenant in the Navy – the Prince who left us a boy and returned a man. And just such a handsome young sailor as Britannia herself might set up as her ideal.”²⁹⁰

Having grown up in the navy, all “Sailor Princes” were considered to be belonging especially to the nation. This active engagement in their young biographies and careers even induced the British journalist Harriet Martineau to interfere publicly in Prince Alfred’s professional-dynastic dilemma of 1863/4 regarding the Coburg throne. Empathizing with a youth “at the very age of enthusiasm and confidence”, she advocated a professionalism and national pride which came surprisingly close to Alfred’s actual feelings. “He, who is every inch a sailor now” was not supposed to become “the sovereign of a country which has never smelt the sea”, she declared and further recommended: “His chief ambition, we may hope, is professional. If he is as fond of his profession as we hear he is, he need not look beyond professional aims”.²⁹¹ The question, of course, was whether things were really that simple, whether honest love for the naval profession was enough to make professionals out of royal sailors and acquaintance with common friends enough to make commoners out of princes.

The limits of equality

One of the messages of the disguise stories about “Sailor Princes”, and one of the principal attractions of popular embarkation and return scenes, was the idea that in stepping on the planks of a ship and joining ranks with other cadets these privileged youths became

²⁸⁵ Poschinger, 283, Boeck, Carl von der, *Des Prinzen Heinrich von Preußen Weltumseglung* (Berlin, c.1882), 219.

²⁸⁶ Boeck, *Central-Amerika*, 220.

²⁸⁷ Asty (6.5.1891); Skandamis, 25.

²⁸⁸ *Illustreret Tidende* (6.9.1885).

²⁸⁹ Asty (6.5.1891).

²⁹⁰ *Illustrated London News* (9.8.1864).

²⁹¹ Martineau, Prince Alfred’s romance.

transformed into something new. They left behind their attitudes of noble entitlement, chose a humble life of unusual equality, merged into a socially diverse group of peers, imbibed the navy's professionalism and became real men and sailors instead of feeble aristocrats and amateurs. Put briefly, by entering the levelling institution of the navy and facing the dwarfing force of the sea, they symbolized their monarchies' break with the *ancien regime*. This fairy-tale storyline appealed to public audiences because it essentially paraphrased the value systems of the bourgeoisies and intelligentsias dominating nineteenth-century societies: the belief in meritocracy, democracy and equal career opportunities, the possibility of change and improvement through education, robust manliness and professionalism. Most public voices therefore followed the narrative comparatively blindly.

When Prince Alfred embarked on HMS *Euryalus* in October 1858, the *Times* observed that he enjoyed “no immunity from his Royal rank”, but “slings his hammock on the lower deck and berths himself therein the same as the other cadets”.²⁹² “The spray of old Father Ocean”, the *London Journal* poetically described Alfred's features in 1864, “has washed from [his face] every trace of royal luxuriance in ease and indulgence”.²⁹³ And the *Cape Monthly Magazine* noted the political implications of such royal condescension: “The prince is a subject like ourselves”, it remarked in 1860, “simply a midshipman, under tutors and guardians, lieutenants and captains.”²⁹⁴ Other “Sailor Princes” were assessed in a similar vein. Thus, one late-nineteenth-century portrait of Prince Valdemar stressed that “no heed was taken of his princely status; on the contrary, he learned the hard way just as his fellow-cadets that life and service on-board are not just for fun”.²⁹⁵ “A life full of grievances and self-denial” awaited Prince Heinrich on the training ship in the words of another author, “without any preferred treatment in service”.²⁹⁶ According to *Asty*, finally, Prince Georgios was not “a dainty aristocrat”, but “something more – ‘a real man’, as they call him on the streets”.²⁹⁷

Even the princes' parents largely believed, and revelled in these transformation stories. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, for example, adherents of a new kind of royal work ethos, took tremendous pride in the way Prince Alfred kept up with standards of

²⁹² The *Times* (28.10.1858).

²⁹³ ‘Our Sailor Prince’, *London Journal* (16.4.1864).

²⁹⁴ The *Cape Monthly Magazine* (1860), quoted in Anon., *The Progress of HRH Prince Alfred through the Cape Colony* (Cape Town, 1861), 147.

²⁹⁵ Fredensborg, 4, 22-23.

²⁹⁶ Werner, 11, 16, 85.

²⁹⁷ *Asty* (6.5.1891).

meritocracy. On receiving the “delightful news that dear Affie had passed an excellent [entrance] examination”, they “felt very proud as it is a particularly stiff examination”.²⁹⁸ Victoria’s pride in the intellectual abilities of her son combined with a certain admiration for his physical appearance once he grew into a young man. Following his first cruises, she felt “so proud of the hardship he has endured, the way he has worked [...] His hands are [...] so rough and hard from working.”²⁹⁹ When Prince Heinrich had “show[n] great courage and held his post undauntedly” during a typhoon on-board the corvette *Prinz Adalbert*, his father, Frederick William, likewise felt “pleased by news such as these.”³⁰⁰ For his brother, Emperor William II, Heinrich had been “[a] true seaman, German to the core”.³⁰¹

But was this true or at all possible? Some public commentators had serious doubts as to whether “Sailor Princes” did or even could leave their royal identities behind when stepping on-board. In Britain, in particular, several radical and liberal newspapers questioned the narratives of professionalism, equality and meritocracy. The republican *Reynold’s Newspaper* was convinced from the start that there was an insurmountable contradiction in the very promise of equal treatment for royalty. “Some of our servile sycophantic contemporaries”, it remarked in November 1858, shortly after Prince Alfred’s first embarkation, “pretend that now-a-days there is no royal road to favour and preferment, and that the scions of royalty, if they enter the army or navy, must rough it with their more plebeian comrades.” *Reynold’s* predictions differed, though: “Of course the young prince will be pampered and petted to his heart’s content; he will be spared all the hardships attendant upon a naval career”.³⁰²

Criticisms such as these arose because, no matter how well-intentioned their parents were and no matter how much they themselves identified with the naval service, there were instances in the biographies of all “Sailor Princes” which greatly differed from the ordinary experience of naval life. The internal discussions about the topic and the regulations issued for the information of military governors and senior officers generally prescribed equal treatment. Thus, Prince Alfred was to be treated “in all respects in the same manner as the other young gentlemen or officers of his own rank, with whom he

²⁹⁸ QVJ, 31.8.1858.

²⁹⁹ QVJ, February 1860, cited in Hampshire, 66.

³⁰⁰ CPFW to Stosch, 10.11.1879, in: Baumgart, 236ff.

³⁰¹ William cited by Mirbach, 293.

³⁰² ‘Counterfeit colonels and corporals in the cradle’, *Reynold’s Newspaper* (14.11.1858); ‘Our royal soldiers and sailors’, *Reynold’s* (7.11.1858); Plunkett, 8-9, 15, 131, 212, 223.

may be serving” on the *Euryalus*.³⁰³ Prince Heinrich likewise should experience “the effects of military force on himself as well as others” on-board the *Prinz Adalbert*.³⁰⁴ These regulations were often quickly suspended, though. For despite their adoption of certain sets of middle-class values or the military ethos, royal personalities like Queen Victoria or Crown Prince Frederick William were so far removed from being middle-class, so obsessed with the ceremonial distinctions of their exalted status, with concerns of safety, hygiene and social propriety that they sometimes did not even recognize how difficult it was to reconcile their sons’ professional and royal identities. A closer analysis of selected themes will reveal to what extent the princes really were treated as equals.

The subjection to the standardized examination procedures and objective assessment criteria of the navy was undoubtedly one of the most innovative aspects in the training of “Sailor Princes”. Apart from the later Emperor William II, who took his exams at the public grammar school in Kassel – an unheard-of experiment – they were the first royals to be examined in a wide range of set subjects and ranked according to their performance among a number of not purposely selected peers. The entrance, annual and final examinations of the various navies concerned were usually strenuous events where the princes’ knowledge of modern languages and Latin, the mathematical and general subjects as well as their theoretical and practical expertise in the nautical sciences (navigation, shipbuilding, machine technology etc.) were tested over several days. “It is a tough battle and an uncomfortable time to go through”, Prince Georgios later remembered the final examinations at the Sea Officer’s School.³⁰⁵

Even more humbling than the experience of examination were the subsequent assessments and rankings, which put the princes’ performance into the perspective of their age cohort. In his entrance exam, Prince Alfred achieved between 70 and 100% in all mathematical subjects and passed all others with the grade “very satisfactory”.³⁰⁶ Prince Heinrich, on the other hand, only passed his sea cadet exam with the grade “good” and he hardly ever achieved more than a grade 6 or 7 (quite good or good) in any of the subjects tested in the quarterly examinations on-board the *Prinz Adalbert*.³⁰⁷ As Commander McLean reported to the Admiralty, this meant that he ranked fifteenth to twenty-second out of 39 cadets.³⁰⁸

³⁰³ Hampshire, 65; Queen Victoria’s directions for Lt. Cowell, RA VIC/ADDA20/14.

³⁰⁴ Stosch, 22.5.1878, BArch-MA, RM2/397.

³⁰⁵ PG to KCIX, 1.4.93, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.2.

³⁰⁶ Board of Admiralty to QV, 31.8.1858, RA VIC/ADDA20/9-10.

³⁰⁷ LASH Abt.395 Nr.2.

³⁰⁸ McLean to Stosch, 7.4.1879, 5.7.79, 1.10.1880, BArch-MA RM2/397.

In the intimate environment of the Danish Sea Officer's School, Prince Valdemar usually came second or third out of seven to ten peers in the annual examinations, graduating third out of seven. His grades usually varied between 5 (very good) and 6 or 7 (excellent). Like Prince Alfred, he was initially especially advanced in modern languages – though this was “rather because of his better previous knowledge than because of his greater diligence”, as one examiner remarked in November 1877.³⁰⁹ Prince Georgios also usually ranked between third and fourth out of seven. He showed good practical skills and military bearing, but was hampered by “his relatively weak starting position on entry, the difficulties he had with the foreign language and his frequent absences”.³¹⁰

The matter-of-fact language of these evaluations and the very idea that the princes were directly compared to commoners were a striking novelty. What looked like unusually egalitarian standard procedures, however, was often only followed through half-heartedly. Thus Prince Alfred indeed sat through an exacting entrance exam at the Royal Naval College from 27 to 31 August 1858 – but he did so alone, being examined in the presence of the Commander-in-chief, Portsmouth and answering questions which had been approved before by his father.³¹¹ Prince Valdemar was appointed pupil “without number”, meaning that he was not formally ranked with his comrades. Prince Georgios apparently did not even take part in all the necessary exams due to his frequent absences. When he was awarded “the King's sword of honour” on his graduation, it was not because he had achieved the highest results in the practical examinations (he only came second); rather, he was given it as the son of a foreign potentate “outside the competition”.³¹²

If there was no royal road to knowledge, there was certainly one to distinction. And even the princes' knowledge was supported by special help. Aware that their sons were particularly scrutinized and had to perform doubly well to justify their exalted status in the meritocratic system, all royal parents ensured that they received the best possible preparation, including private lessons. Thus, Prince Heinrich, during his year in Kassel, was mainly taught privately, only attending a few revision sessions with his class at the *Realgymnasium*, because the naval examination “require[d] a greater knowledge [of several subjects] than any public school would supply for an ordinary examination.”³¹³

³⁰⁹ Rulle, Forsvarsarkivet, G-22-26 1875-1879; Examenskaraktere og bedømmelser på søofficersskolen, April 1876-August 1879, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.3.

³¹⁰ Rulle, Forsvarsarkivet, G32-36 1885-1889.

³¹¹ QVJ, 31.8.1858; Cowell to PAI, 11.8.1858, RA VIC/MAIN/E/50/50.

³¹² Rulle, Forsvarsarkivet, G36-1889; Lisberg Jensen, Skyggen, 238.

³¹³ Sahl to Dalton, RA GV/PRIV/AA6/149. Cf. LASH Abt.395 Nr.1, 1.2.1877.

Once on-board the *Prinz Adalbert*, Heinrich's quarterly examinations revealed that he still had severe problems "applying the practical rules to solve nautical equations" in navigation. "To remedy this deficit through greater exercise", he was attached to the navigation officer as a so-called "observation cadet", a measure which quickly brought progress despite the verdict that he had "no special talent" for mathematics and navigation.³¹⁴

The persons primarily entrusted with overseeing the princes' professional progress were their military governors. These men (Lieutenants Cowell, Koch, Seckendorff and Garoufalias) were another anomaly distinguishing the experience of royal princes from that of their comrades. On the one hand, they helped their royal charges to fit the requirements of the naval environment by encouraging them to work hard. As Crown Prince Frederick William remarked in 1879, Prince "Heinrich's slowly developing, sluggish nature" needed Seckendorff's "educating, assisting influence".³¹⁵ During his time at the *Marineschule*, he had "now and then lacked the powers of concentration and perseverance". With Seckendorff's help, however, he was able to benefit from the "lasting awareness of having met his duties the same as his comrades".³¹⁶

On the other hand, the governors' tasks by far exceeded the educational supervision of the princes. By taking on their "general guidance"³¹⁷, their "upbringing and education off-duty", their "private relations with the other cadets" etc. they significantly eased the transition for their charges.³¹⁸ This provoked criticism even beyond naval or court circles. In December 1858, the *Morning Chronicle* thus castigated the practice of attaching "naval wet or dry nurses" to royal princes as an effeminate influence preventing them from gaining true impressions of naval life and becoming "good, practical and experienced" seamen.³¹⁹ Solely Lieutenant Garoufalias, who was meant to be trained further in the Danish navy and returned home when war with Turkey seemed imminent in 1886, was considered a worthy delegate of the Greek navy and thus an adequate mentor for a Greek prince in Denmark.³²⁰

The discrepancies between the princely and the common experience of life at sea were even more pronounced in the material details of lodgings and the daily life on-board.

³¹⁴ Captain McLean to Admiralty, 7.4., 5.7.1879, 1.10.1880, BArch-MA RM2/397.

³¹⁵ CPFW to Stosch, 10.11.187, in: Baumgart, 236-38.

³¹⁶ Seckendorff to QV, 18.4.1878, RA VIC/MAIN/Z/65/43.

³¹⁷ Seckendorff to Stosch, 15.2.1877, BArch-MA RM2/397.

³¹⁸ Directions for the embarkation on-board SMS *Adalbert*, September 1878, BArch-MA RM2/397.

³¹⁹ 'Prince Alfred', *Morning Chronicle* (13.12.1858).

³²⁰ 'Prince Georgios', *Asty* (8.12.1885); Skandamis, 26.

Compared to palace luxuries, the living conditions on any given nineteenth-century vessel were naturally harsh: cramped spaces, little comfort and hardly any privacy. No “Sailor Prince” could escape these fundamental truths. Prince Alfred slept on the quarterdeck with all the other midshipmen, his personal space being confined to his hammock and his chest. Prince Valdemar likewise apologized for his bad handwriting in August 1873 because he was sitting in the crowded officer’s mess.³²¹

While they generally shared the fate of their fellow-cadets, though, the lives of “Sailor Princes” were cushioned in many important details. In 1878, during Prince Valdemar’s final class, a then new pupil, the future adventure book writer Walter Christmas, noted the subtle differences on-board. Next to the cadet’s mess, he explained, there was “a little shack containing a standing berth, a wash basin and other splendours of this kind. This luxury cabinet distinguished Prince Valdemar’s presence on the corvette”.³²² Prince Heinrich’s special treatment went still further: The ships on which he served were often carefully selected according to criteria of amenity, the *Prinz Adalbert* for example being one of the biggest, fastest and best-equipped vessels available. Moreover, Heinrich enjoyed the advantage of two separate rooms and an individual bathroom. He also shared the commander’s cook and was accompanied by a valet – as were Alfred and Valdemar.³²³

Stories which contrasted “Sailor Princes” with little Eastern potentates such as Tsarevich Nicholas or Touson Pasha celebrated the willingness of Western European monarchs to share the humble lodgings of ordinary seamen as a sign that they did not need the “parade of state”³²⁴ to legitimize their reign. Sometimes, the concerns for hygiene privately expressed by royal parents were just as haughty as the little pashas’ exclamations, though. Especially Crown Princess Victoria had imported a sense of superiority from Britain, allegedly the most civilized country in the world, which showed when she was judging Prince Heinrich’s accommodation arrangements at the *Marineschule* in 1877. Having inspected the intended rooms, which had been refurbished at the substantial cost of 2000 Mark, she expressed herself concerned about the “deficient air supply and bad ventilation”. Doubts were raised whether a “healthy stay” could be guaranteed or whether the prince should not rather move into private accommodation. Two expert reports attested that the rooms were “not a health hazard”. Due to several deficits regarding uncomfortable odours and other safety issues, though, the school as a whole

³²¹ PV to KCIX, 8.8.1873, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.2.

³²² Christmas, Walter, *Krydstogt gennem livet*, vol.1 (Copenhagen, 1923), 141.

³²³ Langguth, 45, 47-53; reports (5.2.1879/12.9.1880), GehStA I HA, Rep. 89, Nr.3092 26-32.

³²⁴ Hobart Mercury (17.1.1861).

might not meet the “sanitary requirements”.³²⁵ Valdemar and Georgios were never even supposed to board at the Sea Officer’s School.

Safety concerns often hindered the equal treatment of royal princes. Thus, Queen Victoria, in her orders regarding Prince Alfred’s first service cruises, wished that he was worked hard, but also that “every proper care should be taken to avoid his being needlessly exposed to danger”.³²⁶ The fact that they were usually third-in-line to the throne until their elder brothers married and had children, or potential regents in the case of a premature death, meant that their lives were even more precious. Thus, as late as July 1889, Chancellor Bismarck was opposed to sending Prince Heinrich on lengthy journeys, since he was “the only prince, who, in cases of illness [...] would be able to assist and represent” his brother, William II.³²⁷

The concerns for the princes’ wellbeing, moreover, also extended to their social contacts. Queen Victoria, in particular, always personally selected or at least surveyed Prince Alfred’s fellow-seamen according to her own ideas of respectability. In winter 1862/1863 her cousin, Count Gleichen, who had just commissioned Alfred’s next service ship, the *Racoon*, was even struggling to assemble a working crew because of the queen’s special recommendations. Victoria, often following the applications of higher noblemen with relatives in the navy, had forced him to put many “quite small Boys [who] just entered the Service” on his midshipmen’s list. On being sent another name, he confessed to the Prince of Wales’ secretary Sir Charles Phipps: “I should prefer a Sub-lieutenant or a Midshipman of some standing in the Service to another Youngster [...] some older hands capable of holding a watch”.³²⁸ Be it thoughtlessness or the hidden “snobbishness” of a secretly not so middle-class queen, Prince Alfred would thus be socialized in the company of aristocratic youngsters rather than middle-class officers. Ironically, it was companions of this sort who would introduce him to the “fast life” he was accused of by the Australian press in 1868/69.

Considering all the special arrangements made for them, could “Sailor Princes” interact on an equal footing with their (non-aristocratic) peers? The *London Journal* in 1864 liked to believe that Prince Alfred, “demean[ing] himself as a naval cadet should”, was involved

³²⁵ Seckendorff to director Liebe, 30.5.1877, and Liebe to Stosch, 11.6.1877, BArch-MA RM1/1794.

³²⁶ W.G. Romaine to Vice-Admiral Fanshawe, October 1858, RA VIC/ADDA20/20.

³²⁷ Bismarck to Vice-Admiral v.d. Goltz, 12.7.1889, BArch-MA RM2/398.

³²⁸ Correspondence Gleichen-Phipps, 1.12.1862, 28.1.1863, 31.1.1863, RA VIC/ADDA20/365 and 387-88. Cf. RA VIC/ADDA20/325, 4.10.1862; Douglas, George, *The life of Major-General Wauchope* (London, 1904), 30; ‘Prince Alfred’, *Morning Chronicle* (13.12.1858).

in “all kinds of practical jokes [...] as mischievous as he liked among his shipmates”.³²⁹ The idyllic picture Seckendorff painted of Prince Heinrich’s life among the “youthful flock” on-board HMS *Renown* in 1878 corresponded to this adventure-book image: “Freed from his heavy [...] workload, the prince very much enjoys life aboard and being together with the cadets. [...] there is no lack of all kinds of innocent jokes.”³³⁰ Prince Georgios was remembered by one of his fellow-cadets as a clown on the dance floor whose immense body strength also excited the admiration of his peers.³³¹ Prince Valdemar, in the words of Walter Christmas, was “the best-behaved of comrades and a brilliant example of kindness and forbearance towards the School’s and the cadet ship’s youngest and most defenceless.” “But”, so Christmas also conceded, “he was still Prince Valdemar, the King’s Son. His education as a naval officer shed a special lustre on the cadet school and on the corps, there could be no denying. Even the most unsnobbish person felt that.”³³²

It is safe to state that despite their strong identification with the navy, royal princes could never fully integrate into their peer groups. The combination of the signs of distinction conferred upon them, and the awe – and snobbery – that this as well as the indelible knowledge of their special status invoked in their peers, would almost always stand in the way. Even if they regarded their comrades as equals, these would probably see more in them. As early as August 1859, Queen Victoria dictated a memorandum on this very question. It asked how Prince Alfred could live “upon a footing of good fellowship” – and, “as far as His Rank would permit, of Equality” – with his “brother-officers”, instead of being looked upon “as one on whose report of their professional qualifications much of their future Success in Life might depend”. The suggested solution was that he should “decline any application he may receive to interfere in any way in the patronage of the Naval Service”.³³³ The reference to the limits of equality prescribed by his “Rank”, however, already exposed the real dilemma.

Alfred’s treatment on-board – and that of his fellow-princes – demonstrated the wider inability – and unwillingness – of their royal families to really and thoroughly adopt bourgeois values and lifestyles. In fact, nineteenth-century monarchies were balancing on a tightrope. While they were willing to live and dress according to bourgeois fashion, leading intimate family lives, espousing modern educational ideals and following the

³²⁹ London Journal (16.4.1864).

³³⁰ Seckendorff to QV, 18.4.1878, RA VIC/MAIN/Z/65/43.

³³¹ P.E. Saabye’s memoirs cited by Kristensen, 48.

³³² Christmas, Krydstogt, 189-90.

³³³ Memorandum, 12.8.1859, RA VIC/MAIN/E/50/50.

middle-class work ethos, they also knew that complete equality, the abolition of difference and the introduction of meritocracy, would have touched on the very essence of the aristocratic, the dynastic and the monarchical principle. “Sailor Princes” went further than any of their relatives on the tightrope walk towards equality and this daring was celebrated as an act of new, democratic empowerment. But with so much royal splendour given away, the preservation of rank, legitimacy and power by means of performance and distinction became even more important.

The obsession of royal personalities like Victoria or Frederick William with details of rank and ceremony reveals the entire complexity of their attitudes towards the aristocratic and the professional dimensions of their sons’ education – as well as the contradictory identities that resulted from it. On the one hand, the regulations governing Prince Heinrich’s treatment on-board the *Prinz Adalbert*, for example, laid down that, due to his youth, he did not have to be greeted with the usual honours or saluted as a member of the Imperial Family. Yet, on the other hand, he was still to be addressed “Your Royal Highness”. And things changed completely as soon as he stepped on-shore.³³⁴ Then, the young naval officer who fitted into the peculiar hierarchy of the parallel society that was the ship transformed into a full-blown prince again, wearing honorary uniforms and decorations above his professional rank and representing his entire dynasty, if not nation.

Such constant identity shifts were characteristic of all the princes’ service missions. Originally, the training cruises set down in most naval curricula were meant to introduce young aspirants, cadets or midshipmen to the authentic environment of operational war ships employed at such typical stations as the Mediterranean or the Americas. “Sailor Princes” also took part in these in order to acquire “the knowledge of [their] profession”.³³⁵ Their itineraries, however, were often modified for royal purposes, taking them on aristocratic grand tours or showing them off to international communities. This meant that foreign authorities would usually give them pompous receptions which, though flattering the pride of their parents and nations, could also call forth critical reviews in the press.³³⁶ “What has a young midddy to do with Royal receptions and Royal salutes and Royal fiddle-faddles of every description”? asked the *Times* in 1858 when Prince Alfred was touring all the major ports of the Mediterranean. While disguise stories where humble naval officers were revealed to be royal princes conformed to the ideals held high by the liberal

³³⁴ Eschenburg, 27; Stosch, 22.5.1878, BArch-MA RM2/397.

³³⁵ Instructions for Vice-Admiral Fanshawe, October 1858, RA VIC/ADDA20/20.

³³⁶ Hampshire, 65; Thomas, David, *Royal admirals, 1327-1981* (London, 1982), 70; QVJ, 29.12.1858; Kiste/Jordaan, 33ff; Hampshire, 56f.

English press, the reverse story where princes were treated as pashas was not appealing. The *Times* thus entertained serious doubts as to whether “an existence compounded of the two ideas of Mr. Midshipman Easy and of the Princely hero of a Court Circular” could be true.³³⁷

One could argue, though, that exactly this “strange anomaly” was an adequate description for the hybrid identities that “Sailor Princes” developed as a consequence of their upbringing in the navy and their status as princes. Their royal and their professional identities were like two different masks which they learned to put on and take off with astonishing speed. One moment, they would be emerging from the machine room “black as a negro”, as the popular story went and Prince Valdemar himself reported home from the gunboat *Krieger* in August 1877.³³⁸ The next, they were recognized as princes or enjoyed the privilege of a hotel room and a “lovely” bath in Edinburgh, leaving the dust of the sailor’s life behind in a bathtub, “the water”, as Valdemar mischievously remarked in June 1873, being “nearly black when I emerged again”.³³⁹

Between performance and destiny

Like their everyday life, the career patterns of “Sailor Princes” were also subject to the demands of equality and professionalism. The positive image of the navy in nineteenth-century public imaginations derived from the belief that it was a profession “suitable for rich and poor, rewarding spirit, enterprise and skill”.³⁴⁰ Rather than reflecting status and wealth, advancement in this branch of the armed forces was supposed to be a sign of performance and talent, since an incompetent captain could endanger many lives. This was why all naval cadets, independent of their social origin, went through the same exacting training, learning both the sailor’s craft and the commander’s tactics. Following this initial levelling process, they would then ideally be promoted according to ability, from “powder-monkey to Admiral”.³⁴¹

This favourable image, originating in the Napoleonic Wars and propagated by naval romances, also influenced the popular perception of the public persona “Sailor Prince”. Unlike their aristocratic forbears, who had often occupied high-ranking positions without the necessary expertise, the new royal naval officers were supposed to follow ordered

³³⁷ An existence...’, *The Times* (30.12.1858).

³³⁸ PV to KCIX, probably 16.8.1877, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.2.

³³⁹ PV to KCIX, 29.6.1873, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.2.

³⁴⁰ Behrmann, 69.

³⁴¹ Wilson, 3ff and 19ff; Conley, 107.

career paths until they were “not only nominally but actually a captain”.³⁴² “In the navy”, the *London Journal* declared in 1864, “promotion cannot be bought – it must be reached step by step. [...] All this [Prince Alfred] went through with perseverance and energy, which, allied to natural talent of no mean order, enabled him to acquit himself” well.³⁴³ In a booklet published in 1914, Prince Heinrich was likewise celebrated for having “climbed up step by step to his current position, always in accordance with his superiors’ conviction that he had the full experience and knowledge required for the next level up.”³⁴⁴

Although they had apparently committed themselves to new professional standards, though, the royal sailors seemed to be just as pre-ordained for high-ranking offices as ever. Public organs favourably disposed towards the monarchy would account for the coincidence by pointing to the princes’ natural abilities, work ethos or special preparation. Thus, Prince Heinrich excelled because of the scrupulous performance of his duties according to Hohenzollern tradition; Prince Georgios received important posts because, coming from Denmark, he was one of the best-trained officers in the young Greek Navy; and Prince Alfred was credited with qualities “which would have served to gain for him a high position even had he not been blest with the advantage of royal birth”.³⁴⁵ More radical voices, however, suspected the ongoing practice of privilege and nepotism. When Alfred took command of his first ironclad in 1876, the implacably anti-monarchical *Reynold’s Newspaper* asked the provocative question: “Is it on account of the service he has seen, the brilliant deeds he has performed, the searching examinations he has passed[...]? or is it because he is the son of a Queen?”³⁴⁶ A closer examination of the princes’ career patterns and of the major political, societal and institutional forces that shaped them provides answers to this worthwhile question.

All “Sailor Princes” enjoyed smooth careers close to the higher end of what was possible in their respective navies. As detailed above, their parents had decided early on that their educations and careers should follow the normal regulations. Soon, it also became clear that the princes would continue as serving officers after their basic training. Their careers were therefore distinct from those of most of their predecessors in that they were not promoted arbitrarily, on land or without actual service, but according to set criteria of

³⁴² Kent, Samuel, Brief notes of a thanksgiving sermon, commemorating the preservation of the life of Prince Alfred (London, 1868), 8ff.

³⁴³ *London Journal* (16.4.1864).

³⁴⁴ Werner, 85-86.

³⁴⁵ Langguth, 32f.; Skandamis, 32; ‘The Death of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha’, *The Graphic* (4.8.1900).

³⁴⁶ ‘The Duke of Edinburgh and the navy’, *Reynold’s Newspaper* (2.1.1876).

performance and seniority. Within these confines, however, they still rose through the ranks in a manner deemed fit for their royal station.

Prince Alfred, who had entered the Royal Navy as a cadet in August 1858 (aged 14), thus reached his first few advancements at the earliest ages possible despite several interruptions in his career due to his university studies, a major illness and his many other engagements as a royal prince: He was promoted midshipman in January 1861 (aged 16), lieutenant in May 1863 (at 18) and captain in February 1866 (22). Afterwards, his career would normalize, but it still passed as exceptional – with most of his promotions preceding those of his best colleagues by at least six or seven years: He became Rear-Admiral in December 1878 (at 34), Vice-Admiral in 1882 (39), Admiral in October 1887 (43) and, finally, reached the top post of Admiral of the Fleet in June 1893 (at 48).³⁴⁷

Prince Heinrich's career proceeded even more swiftly, especially in its latter stages. Starting at the unusually young age of 14, he became lieutenant in October 1881 (aged 19), captain in January 1889 (26), Rear-Admiral (*Konteradmiral*) in September 1895 (33), Vice-Admiral in December 1899 (37), Admiral in September 1901 (39) and *Großadmiral* in September 1909 (47). For comparison, most of his peers from "Crew 77" were still Lieutenants in the 1890s.³⁴⁸

In the small Danish Navy, the advancement opportunities of officers were stymied by the scarcity of posts; a senior officer had to retire for other officers to be advanced. Once Prince Valdemar, who had entered the navy at the age of 16, had been promoted second lieutenant in August 1879 (aged 20) and premier lieutenant in June 1880 (21), his career was thus characterized by long waiting periods. He became captain in December 1889 (aged 31), commander in January 1898 (39), Rear-Admiral (*Kontreadmiral*) in March 1905 (46) and Vice-Admiral in 1911 (53). Only after the end of his active career, in April 1918, did he receive the purely honorary rank of Admiral.³⁴⁹ This was still more than his friend Evers achieved, though, who, although one year his senior, in active service until 1923 and occupying much more significant posts, was usually promoted five to nine years later than Valdemar.

Prince Georgios's career was too broken and international to be comparable with those of his fellow-princes or peers. Yet, it was certainly also privileged. After his graduation from

³⁴⁷ Prince Alfred's Service Record, TNA ADM 196/36/20.

³⁴⁸ Eschenburg, 31, 88.

³⁴⁹ Topsøe-Jensen, T.A./Marquard, H.F.T.E., *Officerer i den Dansk-Norske søetat 1660-1814 og den Danske søetat 1814-1932* (1935), 668/9.

the Danish Sea Officers' School in September 1889 (aged 20), he entered the Royal Greek Navy as a premier lieutenant. Following two years in Russian service, he returned to be promoted lieutenant commander (*Hypoploiarchos*) in 1892 (23). Shortly before his post as High Commissioner of Crete ended his active career in February 1898, he then received the honorary title of Vice-Admiral (*Antinauarchos*) at the incredibly young age of 28. After this break, he would only nominally be promoted Vice-Admiral and Admiral of the Royal Danish Navy in September 1901 (31) and June 1949 (80), respectively.³⁵⁰

In addition to their swift rise, all "Sailor Princes" held a number of prestigious posts on land and water which fitted their exalted station and simultaneously demonstrated the functionality and patriotism of their royal families. These included the command of squadrons of technologically innovative vessels. When the so-called "torpedo craze" – a school of tactical thought which favoured the building of small and comparatively inexpensive, but powerful torpedo boats over large battleships – swept Europe in the 1880s-1890s, "Sailor Princes" thus often stood at the helm. Prince Heinrich was in command of the First Torpedo Boat Division in 1887, "attract[ing] much attention" when the flotilla attended Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee Review the same year.³⁵¹ Prince Georgios was chief of the Greek torpedo boat flotilla in 1896/7 and thus could be dispatched to Crete under the cheers of his countrymen when another revolt was threatened to be crushed by the Ottoman forces.³⁵²

Most commonly, though, the princes would hold representative offices in the administration or command larger naval units. Thus Prince Alfred was Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet, Britain's defence force in her own home waters, from 1883 to 1884; Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Station, the largest and most prestigious of the many naval stations that supported Britain's naval supremacy (1886-1889); and he ended his active career as Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth.³⁵³ Prince Heinrich was Chief of the Baltic Sea Naval Station from 1903 to 1906. He commanded the High Seas Fleet, Germany's active battleship fleet (1906-1909). And he ended his active career by becoming Inspector General (1909-18), an office responsible for inspections of the entire navy.³⁵⁴ When war broke out in 1914, he was too old for shipboard service. Yet, he was

³⁵⁰ Pontoppidan, S.E./Teisen, J., *Danske Søofficerer, 1933-1982* (1934), 152-3; Skandamis, *passim*.

³⁵¹ Mirbach, 132; 'German torpedo boats', *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* (30.6.1887).

³⁵² Markopoulos, *Selection*, 335-36; Holland/Weston, 91.

³⁵³ Conley, 20-21; Prince Alfred's Service Record, TNA ADM 196/36/20.

³⁵⁴ Witt, Jann Markus, 'Prinz Heinrich als Marineoffizier', in: Hering, Rainer/Schmidt, Christina, *Prinz Heinrich von Preußen: Großadmiral, Kaiserbruder, Technikpionier* (Neumünster, 2013), 45-46.

appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Fleet, a position which, though overseeing a secondary theatre of a naval war, had a high symbolic importance.³⁵⁵ Prince Georgios became Chairman of the Board of Examiners in 1890, a crucial post during a time of educational consolidation in the Greek Navy. Prince Valdemar, finally, a relatively low-key figure, occupied the post of chief of the mobile defence in Denmark from 1907 to 1911.

The question whether the princes had earned their success by professional excellence or not cannot be answered in general. Prince Alfred seems to indeed have qualified for a command position. Due to his intellectual gifts – and his royal training – he was a perfect administrator. Moreover, he earned an almost unrivalled reputation for his fleet tactics and was remembered as one of the most efficient admirals of his time.³⁵⁶ Prince Heinrich, on the other hand, though often commended for his practical skills and knack for technological innovations, lacked the wider vision necessary for senior commands. According to Jann Markus Witt, he might have “made it to the command of a cruiser or ship-of-the-line due to his nautical talents”, but “in the face of his limited operative-strategic skills” he would never have commanded a larger naval unit.³⁵⁷ Although he was “a capital fellow as a human being”, his staff officer Albert Hopmann conceded in 1908, he was not “as rooted in and preoccupied with his profession [...] as is imperative and necessary for his position. He only kisses the cup where he should drink it to the full and only knows the surface, not the depths. This is and always will be the fault of many princes: they always swim on the surface.”³⁵⁸

Hopmann addressed the old dilemma that princes could never simply be sailors, but were often distracted from their duties. The fact that both Prince Alfred and Prince Heinrich nevertheless had the same steep storybook careers reveals that a variety of other criteria apart from their personal performance governed their promotions. The career patterns of “Sailor Princes” essentially depended on several variables which differed from case to case: the constitutional role, self-understanding and relations with the military establishment of the respective monarchs; the political and societal parameters of public discourse; and the princes’ own agency.

³⁵⁵ Cf. Roehl, John, *Wilhelm II.: Der Aufbau der persönlichen Monarchie* (Munich, 2001), 1061ff.

³⁵⁶ Eschenburg, 31; Kiste/Jordaan, 113,130; Hampshire, 75-80; ‘Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper (1.8.1900); ‘The sailor prince’, Hampshire Telegraph (4.8.1900).

³⁵⁷ Witt, 51.

³⁵⁸ Albert Hopmann cited by Epkenhans, Michael, ‘Prinz Heinrich als Oberbefehlshaber der Ostsee’, in Hering/Schmidt (eds.), *Prinz Heinrich*, 52-65, 53.

First, the speed and nature of the princes' careers depended on the role played by their reigning relatives in the military command structure, both constitutionally and in real practice. In the nineteenth century, most monarchs retained the prerogative of supreme command over the armed forces. The degrees to which they could – and would – influence the professional advancements of their sons varied greatly, though. Personal values played a considerable part.

In Britain, Queen Victoria was nominally still Lord High Admiral. Executive power, however, had long passed to the Board of Admiralty. She was therefore unable to appoint or promote naval officers without prior approval.³⁵⁹ What looked like an immense check on her power, though, did not count for much. For, as demonstrated in Chapter One, Victoria perceived herself as a “Warrior queen” and, throughout her long reign, was eager to have her say on army and naval matters. Moreover, although her wishes could be denied, they usually carried enormous weight with her Sea Lords. In the 1840s-1870s, the command of the armed forces, and especially the Admiralty, was largely in the hands of “unprofessional, institutionally weak and politically insignificant” “Gentleman-Amateurs” hailing from the (higher) aristocracy. Their relations with the civil establishment were characterized by informal structures and “unofficial channels”, with a small clique of lords and ministers rather than professionals deciding about the deployment of ships or staff appointments.³⁶⁰

Victoria could thus effortlessly determine Prince Alfred's deployments. Early memoranda from Admiralty circles also showed a general understanding that the prince would have a swift career.³⁶¹ If things did not go to plan, his promotions could be manipulated accordingly. In February 1863, a special Order-in-Council thus allowed Alfred to pass the lieutenant's examination at the youngest possible age (18) even though he had only gathered four instead of the required five years of sea experience. His royal obligations, the cause of his many absences, so the justification, would otherwise have unfairly prolonged his qualifying time.³⁶² That these very breaks were themselves an irregularity caused by the queen's constant ordering-about of her son was neglected. Throughout his career, the deployments of Alfred's ships would be carefully planned around his royal

³⁵⁹ Hampshire, 13-15.

³⁶⁰ Philpott, William, Großbritannien: Regierung, Militär und Empire von 1860 bis 1890, in: Epkenhans, /Gross (eds.), Militär und Moderne, 21-41.

³⁶¹ Memoranda by Admiral Hamilton and Captain Drummond, 18.1./2.6.1857, RA VIC/ADDA20/1; 16.6. 1857, RA VIC/ADDA20/3; 11.10.1857, RA VIC/MAIN/S/27/1.

³⁶² Memorandum, 11.10.1857, RA VIC/MAIN/S/27/1; Hampshire, 71; Kiste/Jordaan, 46.

engagements.³⁶³ As late as 1893, a group of radical MPs publicly attacked his record as retiring Commander-in-chief calculating that he had spent 369 out of over 1000 days in office away on other duties.³⁶⁴ Although a vote of censure was not passed because most other members acknowledged the prince's obligation to attend the queen, this nevertheless reveals how little Victoria was inclined to subordinate her personal comfort to the professionalism of her son.

In the German Empire, where, by paragraph 53 of the constitution, the Emperor exercised direct command over the navy and appointed all officers, the personal values of the monarch were even more decisive.³⁶⁵ William I, though never happy with the career choice of his grandson, was a stern adherent to the military ethos. He hardly interfered with Prince Heinrich's promotions or deployments, as long as he regularly attended important court festivities.³⁶⁶ Crown Prince Frederick William and Albrecht von Stosch vacillated in their attitudes. On the one hand, the two soldiers wanted Heinrich to have as professional a career as possible. He was to "preferably go through all the phases of naval service and to get to know the varying branches, so as to be able to independently handle the command of the navy once he has reached mature manhood".³⁶⁷ On the other hand, the two men had a common vision for the navy as a symbol of imperial unity directly connected with the imperial family which entailed that Heinrich would indeed one day be in charge. It was in anticipation of this destiny that he entered the Imperial Navy at 14.

Stosch's and Frederick William's limited influence after 1883 meant that their utopian plans were never put into action. William II, however, inherited his father's vision both for the imperial role of the navy and the naval role of his brother. Unhampered by anything close to an internalized military ethos, he made full use of his constitutional rights, personally managing staff appointments and restructuring the entire naval administration.³⁶⁸ Prince Heinrich, whom he regarded as his helping hand, was promoted in quick succession after 1889.³⁶⁹ The unsteady, erratic nature of William's commands for his brother hindered his professional advancement even more than Queen Victoria's matriarchal egotism hurt Prince Alfred's career. Heinrich was constantly ordered to attend state occasions in Berlin. Moreover, he often received new commandos when his old ones

³⁶³ E.g. Memorandum Cowell, 5.3.1862, RA VIC/ADDA20/110.

³⁶⁴ Kiste/Jordaan, 145f.

³⁶⁵ Eberspächer, 32-35.

³⁶⁶ William I, 24.9.1884, GehStA BPH, Rep.52 V1, No.8.

³⁶⁷ CPFW to Caprivi, 20.10.1887, BArch-MA RM2/398.

³⁶⁸ Eberspächer, 32-35.

³⁶⁹ Eschenburg, 31, 192.

were not yet finished. As early as 1892, Rear-Admiral von der Goltz had therefore warned William that “it would be desirable for His Royal Highness to occasionally complete a training period of the fleet without interruptions caused by the detachment of his ship.”³⁷⁰ As Albert Hopmann’s regrets about Heinrich’s life on the surface reveal, though, William never learned to respect his professional interests.

King George of Greece, per articles 32 and 34 of the constitution, was also supreme commander of the armed forces and responsible for the conferral of ranks. Once his domestic political power had been curtailed as a consequence of the constitutional conflict of 1874/5, this and the conduct of foreign affairs became the two most important royal prerogatives and his dynasty’s main domains of activity.³⁷¹ Aware of his precarious situation, he used military promotions to create a loyal officer corps. He also sent his sons to join the military branches in order to strengthen his control, contribute to the build-up of a strong regional force and place the Glücksborgs in the best position for accomplishing the *Megali Idea*. Prince Georgios was destined to head the naval build-up and therefore, according to a letter from April 1889, would have “a lot do” on his return from Denmark, his influential tasks “naturally” being bound to “increase over the years”.³⁷² With this end in view, King George, an old-school aristocrat, did not hesitate to make full use of his rights, regularly promoting him and his brothers in one sweep.³⁷³ This was made even easier by the fact that the party of Charilaos Trikoupis, the winner of the constitutional conflict, willingly distributed favours to the court in return for its loss of political power. A law passed in 1887 authorised the government to control the military positions of the royal princes per degree, ensuring rapid promotions.³⁷⁴

The clientelism, exchange of favours and clique-building which governed the relationship between the monarchy, the political parties and the armed forces was increasingly resented by a growing group of aspiring middle-class officers, though. Disappointed with the political establishment, which condoned the royal patronage system, they reacted by staging a coup in 1909. It aimed to introduce military reform and a new, more Western-style military ethos characterized by loyalty to the state and the nation rather than by personal ties.³⁷⁵ Prince Georgios was only nominally affected by the Goudi Coup, which

³⁷⁰ V.d. Goltz cited by Eschenburg, 56f, 70/71.

³⁷¹ Binder-Iijima/Kraft, 7-14.

³⁷² KG to KCIX, 2.4.1889, KGA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.20.

³⁷³ E.g. PA AA, RZ 201, R7477 (20.5.1892) and R7478 (9.6.1895).

³⁷⁴ Hering, 558/9; Christmas, Walter, King George of Greece (London, 1914), 286.

³⁷⁵ Veremis, Thanos, The military in Greek politics: From independence to democracy (Montreal, 1997), 42-48, 70-83.

resulted in the temporary withdrawal of all royal princes from their military offices. The developments leading up to it, though, had also shaped his active career.

Affairs in Denmark were radically different from this. Although Christian IX was still supreme commander of the armed forces by virtue of article 18 of the Danish basic law, and although he held the rank of an Admiral by tradition, he exercised hardly any influence over naval matters.³⁷⁶ The early centralisation of naval education in the Sea Officer's School had led to the creation of a "loyal and uniform officer corps [...] independent from arbitrary royal influence".³⁷⁷ The fact that positions were so limited in the small Danish Navy that officers had to wait for years to be promoted was almost a source of popular pride which even the monarchy had to respect.³⁷⁸ Cautious and conscientious, King Christian never, as far as we know, tried to interfere with the advancement of his son. The constitutional conflict was a question of conservative versus liberal principles rather than one of royal power. Even the cruise of the *Valkyrie*, an unheard-of case of a ship of the Danish Navy being sent to East Asia to support the aspirations of a private business venture, was not a royal *fait accompli*. Rather, it was preceded by a constructive debate in both parliament and the media, in which conservative and liberal voices favoured Prince Valdemar as the commanding captain of a ship on a public-diplomacy mission.³⁷⁹

The royal restraint evident in Valdemar's career was lauded as a highly commendable trait demonstrating the closeness of the Danish monarchy to the people even when the constitutional conflict was still underway. Thus, *Illustreret Tidende*, in 1885, expressed amazement at the fact that the prince had been a premier lieutenant for five years without promotion. "So far from true is it that the Admiral's patent was tucked in his cradle", it pronounced. He shared the fate of his comrades instead, "for, as it is, opportunities for advancement are rare in the Danish navy". That Valdemar did not escape this through special patronage, "did honour to both himself and his house".³⁸⁰ While the public perception and actual realities of princely careers were in perfect harmony in Denmark, they were more divided elsewhere. If monarchs did not exercise restraint, public voices, often in the shape of the press, would step in. In how far they did so, depended on the political and societal parameters of public discourse as well as the ideas that national publics had about their monarchy and the functions of "Sailor Princes".

³⁷⁶ Nørby/Seerup, 142.

³⁷⁷ Seerup, Naval academy, 332.

³⁷⁸ *Illustreret Tidende* (6.9.1885).

³⁷⁹ Larsen, 494-96.

³⁸⁰ *Illustreret Tidende* (6.9.1885).

In Greece, a lively “crowned democracy” characterized by a politicized public of newspaper readers and an influential, partisan press, discourse about the monarchy and hence about Prince Georgios was two-pronged.³⁸¹ Although the Greeks were generally critical of their monarchy, the criticism was not necessarily anti-monarchical. Rather, King George and his family were often accused of not fulfilling their monarchical functions. One strand of public discourse commonly voiced by opposition parties and papers thus expressed the hope for a stronger, more involved monarchy.³⁸² George’s sons in particular were supposed to actively “serve the interests” of their country and “share [the Greeks’] aspirations and struggles”.³⁸³ As long as their promotions and positions served the greater Greek cause, they were happily accepted.

There was also a strand of public discourse, though, which monitored any lapses and became increasingly critical of royal incompetence and nepotism. Thus, when the Greco-Turkish war of 1897 ended in disaster and when it became known that the torpedoes luckily never used by the torpedo-boat flotilla had actually come without fuse, the papers held Prince Georgios responsible. While he had hitherto been thought to be both especially attentive and competent, there were calls for him to be removed from his post as chief of the torpedo defence.³⁸⁴ These criticisms formed part of a wider discourse on the alleged poor performance of the royal princes in the war, which was led by the military opposition and would culminate in the 1909 coup.

In Britain, the print media also closely observed Prince Alfred’s progress. Particularly the illustrated and family magazines accepted royal narratives of equality and professionalism relatively blindly. Liberal papers such as the *Times*, satirical papers such as *Punch* and radical papers such as *Reynold’s Newspaper*, however, took objection to this very press “sycophancy” and “flunkeyism”. *Reynold’s* even fought a crusade against the courtier-like language in which the monarchy and Prince Alfred’s career were often depicted.³⁸⁵ The main thrust of this criticism was not directed against individual persons, but against the institutional defects of monarchy as such.³⁸⁶ In particular, Queen Victoria was constantly reminded not to repeat the mistakes of her relatives which had held posts in the army or

³⁸¹ Britsch, 179; Miller, 279; Zaharopoulos, Thimios/Paraschos, Manny, Mass media in Greece (Westport/Conn., 1993), 6-7.

³⁸² PA AA, RZ 201, R7479, 24.3.1896.

³⁸³ Ephimeris (10/22.8.1890).

³⁸⁴ PA AA, RZ 201, R7480, 28.10.1897.

³⁸⁵ Plunkett, 8-9, 131, 212, 223; cf. ‘Jenkins and Prince Alfred’, *Reynold’s* (2.1.1859).

³⁸⁶ Cf. Kohlrausch, Martin, Monarchische Repräsentation in der entstehenden Mediengesellschaft, in: Andres, Jan et al. (eds), *Die Sinnlichkeit der Macht: Herrschaft und Repräsentation seit der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt/M., 2005), 93-122.

navy before. Prince Alfred was to avoid the “hop-step-and-jump processes” that had characterized the advancement of the incompetent Dukes of York and Cambridge.³⁸⁷ In 1860, the *Times* wanted him to “learn his profession – not in a vapid, half-and-half, Royal Highness, kind of way”, but hoped that he would one day be “in command because he has a right to command”. If not, if the practice of nepotism should continue for another generation, it warned, “the result will be that the country [...] will cease to care about this young Prince.”³⁸⁸ Warnings such as these, threatening to deprive the monarchy of the most important source of legitimacy – the interest and respect of the people – were always heeded by the queen, no matter how offended she felt. It was thus primarily public discourse that held Prince Alfred’s advancement in check.

In Germany, on the other hand, even this kind of criticism was missing. Instead, Prince Heinrich’s destiny as a future head of the navy was widely accepted. From the very beginning, not only his family, but also press and popular literature expected him to become “*Prinz-Admiral*”.³⁸⁹ Petitions addressed to him by young naval enthusiasts hoping for his patronage projected unlimited authority onto his person.³⁹⁰ Much has been written about the “*Untertanengeist*” that characterized Wilhelmine Germany and the “feudalization of the bourgeoisie”.³⁹¹ These phenomena certainly played a part in the willing acceptance of Heinrich’s swift rise to the top. One also has to concede, though, that after 1871 the Hohenzollern dynasty came to be widely identified with the German nation, its economic success, growing power and world-political aspirations, and that some of its members were popular exactly because they struck a chord with the contemporary national spirit. Prince Heinrich, who was handed over to the small Imperial Navy and the young German nation at the age of 14 and rose to the top as both grew more powerful, represented this development. High ranks in the naval establishment, whether reached by performance or destiny, befitted him as a representative of the nation. In the age of nationalism, similar trains of thought were discernible everywhere alongside the much less straightforward discourse on the “democracy of the sea”.

³⁸⁷ Reynold’s Newspaper (7.11.1858).

³⁸⁸ The Times (30.12.1858).

³⁸⁹ E.g. Provinzial-Correspondenz (13.10.1880); Rothenberg, J., *Prinz Heinrichs Reisen um die Welt* (Berlin, 1909), 6; Langguth, 29, 41, 52, 80; Müller-Angelo, 53; Wislicenus, 45-6.

³⁹⁰ LASH Abt.395 Nr.72.

³⁹¹ Cf. Giloi, *Monarchy*, 1-16; Blackbourn, David/Eley, Geoff (eds), *The peculiarities of German history: Bourgeois society and politics in 19th-century Germany* (Oxford, 1985); Nipperdey, Thomas, ‘War die Wilhelminische Gesellschaft eine Untertanen-Gesellschaft?’, in: Id., *Nachdenken über die Geschichte* (Munich, 1986), 172-85.

If neither the sovereign nor public discourse exercised discipline, though, was there any control force left to ensure the professionalism of royal careers? One could argue that there was, in the shape of the princes' own professional identity and self-restraint. On the one hand, their growing-up in the navy meant that, to varying degrees, all princes absorbed the professional ethos of the naval officer and developed a sense of loyalty towards their comrades which forbade privileged treatment. On the other hand, both the flattery and the envy that they encountered among their fellow-officers made them (painfully) aware of their special role in the military apparatus. Exposed to both preferential and discriminating treatment throughout his career, Prince Heinrich thus developed a peculiar desire to prove his professionalism. When his brother planned to promote him to Admiral on his 29th birthday, he refused the premature advancement on the grounds that this "pushing ahead" might harm him "permanently in his most vital interest, the naval profession", while he honestly wished to be "self-acting and [...] avoid superficiality".³⁹² Prince Alfred, in his later years, similarly felt that his professional authority had suffered through preferential treatment. He therefore cautioned his mother against promoting his nephew, Prince George, too early.³⁹³ The professionalization of royal naval education, it seems, took place between the private arena of monarchical introspection and the open arena of public discourse. Most of all, however, it occurred on an individual level, being not so much the normative goal than the logical consequence of princely socialization in the navy.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the education and careers of "Sailor Princes". As has been demonstrated, the naval officer's uniform, far from being an invisibility cloak, added some favourable connotations to their brand: associations of honest toil, middle-class professionalism, meritocracy and royal folksiness. The question of how authentic the princes' educations and careers were, though, is hard to answer. The "Sailor Princes" were undoubtedly more dedicated to their professions and more professionally trained for their positions than any of the royal admirals before. Their education largely followed standard regulations and acquainted them with lives fundamentally different from their own. They were career officers who were socialized in the naval environment, formed friendships with 'commoners' and developed a strong sense of professional identity. However, they were no commoners and neither were they treated as such by their families or by their

³⁹² Roehl, *Persönliche Monarchie*, 703-704.

³⁹³ Hampshire, 131-32.

colleagues. Countless exceptions were made for them in the different stages of their careers.

Yet, although authentic professionalism was a decisive part of the “Sailor Prince” brand, the contradictions between the promises of equality and professionalism on the one and the realities of royal distinction on the other hand, were not detrimental to its success. This was undoubtedly because many instances of special treatment did not trickle through to the public. Others were criticized and then triggered policy changes. Ultimately, however, all national publics, even in radically un-aristocratic Greece, more or less accepted that princes were different from commoners.

Maybe this was even the central part of the brand. The popular disguise stories cited at the beginning built on the fact that the simple middy was eventually revealed to be a prince. Had the midddy just been a midddy, where would have been the attraction? It was not the adoption of a new professional identity or of practiced equality as such that was celebrated, but the act of royal condescension – which would have been meaningless if not based on a hierarchical social model. Thus, the narrative of equality and professionalism surrounding the “Sailor Prince” was ultimately a “political myth” of the kind that Frank Lorenz Müller sees realized in the public persona “Our Fritz” fashioned by Crown Prince Frederick William. Frederick’s myth, by “integrat[ing] apparent contradictions [such as his bourgeois folksiness and his aura as a royal war hero] through a narrative process”, contributed to the legitimization of the Prussian Hohenzollern monarchy.³⁹⁴ The myth of the prince who becomes a sailor, by integrating the idea of equality with the basic assumption of inequality at the heart of the notion of aristocracy, similarly stabilized the contradictory political system called “constitutional monarchy”: a system which depended on the belief that the ideas of popular sovereignty and representative government could be reconciled with the monarchical and dynastic principle.

Whether it introduced them to the egalitarian, performance-based life imagined by wide sections of society or not, their education in the navy nevertheless meant that all “Sailor Princes” were identified with their nations in a social sense: they became “one of us” or a sort of comrade to the entire nation. Thus inscribed and prepared with the necessary skills, they could sail off to connect their monarchies with the nation on yet another level: neither on a horizontal timeline between past and future, nor on a vertical scale between aloofness

³⁹⁴ Müller, *Our Fritz*, 147.

and equality; but on a spatial axis between metropolitan centres and imperial peripheries. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

3 To the Empire's ends: Mobility in a globalizing world

On 5 January 1862, only three weeks after the sudden death of her husband, Prince Albert, the grief-stricken Queen Victoria wrote to her long-suffering sister-in-law, Duchess Alexandrine of Saxe-Coburg. She sent her a transcript of a letter which she had just received. Dated Jamaica, 24 December 1861, it opened with the words “My dearest parents” and closed with fond memories of past family Christmases. As she informed Alexandrine, it was from “poor, unknowing Alfred” whose ship was currently stationed in the Americas and who had not yet received the tragic news that had cast a shadow over the Christmas festivities at home.³⁹⁵ The young midshipman would only be able to return to England two months after his father’s burial.³⁹⁶ Almost 50 years later and despite considerable developments in the cabling of the world, Prince Valdemar suffered a similar blow. He and his three sons were on their way to Siam when they learnt the devastating news that their wife and mother, the 44-year-old Princess Marie, had unexpectedly died of influenza in Copenhagen on 4 December 1909. The men were completely unprepared, since her last telegram had reported her to be perfectly well. Although they abandoned their travel plans immediately, they did not return in time for Marie’s funeral. Months later, as one German diplomat noted, Valdemar was still “close to tears when he described the impression that the empty palace had made on him upon his return”.³⁹⁷

In this respect, “Sailor Princes” certainly shared the general fate of their nineteenth-century fellow-professionals. For long stretches of time they were separated from their homes. While away, they depended on the slow speed of overseas news and on the pure luck of whether mails or telegrams would reach them in this harbour or the next. They hated “the beastly leave-taking”, as Prince Heinrich called it³⁹⁸, because they could never be sure whether the “fateful life and sudden drama” of a sailor’s existence would not prevent them from ever seeing their loved ones again.³⁹⁹ Travelling the world’s oceans, they were often conspicuously absent from family events, leaving a void in group pictures or court circulars.

This, however, did not mean that they were irrelevant to their dynasties or national publics while they were away. On the contrary: this chapter argues that the princes’ physical

³⁹⁵ PA to QV, 24.12.1861, StACo LAA 8648/1.

³⁹⁶ Kiste, 41-42.

³⁹⁷ PV to George of Wales, 10.1.1910, RA GV/PRIV/AA43/127; report, 12.6.1910, PA AA, RZ 201, R5294-5296.

³⁹⁸ PH to CPV, 20., 25. and 26.11.1897, AHH Briefe 7/06-2.

³⁹⁹ Kirby/Hinkkanen, 187, 206, 212-15.

absence from the core of their families and from the metropolitan public stage was merely the flipside of a remarkable mobility which enhanced the monarchy's profile in the Age of Empire. Almost as unprecedented as their social mobility, this mobility of movement so integral to the sailor's trade enabled "Sailor Princes" to roam seaborne colonial empires and a globalizing world. While life cycles, seasons and day-to-day business ran their course at home, the princes would depart on journeys along the spatial axes which connected urban centres with national and colonial peripheries. They were strikingly present at the ends of empire and beyond, on the international and interimperial stage, communicating with diverse audiences. There, in Jamaica or Siam, they performed some of their most important functions, increasing the monarchy's visibility and relevance at a time when great changes affected the conceptualization of states, the culture of travel and global-power thinking.

"[O]ne of the most inveterate" traditions of late *ancien regime* monarchies, according to a *Times* editorial from March 1860, had been "the immobility of Royalty". The eighteenth-century kings of England, France or Spain had preferred to "remain habitually within a certain radius of [their] capital, and never go beyond it." As general travel habits changed, though, in the age of locomotion and increasing mass tourism, so did royal custom.⁴⁰⁰ Facilitated by private railway carriages and state-of-the-art royal yachts, monarchs were increasingly able to explore new ways of legitimizing their rule. The politically emancipated middle-class publics of nineteenth-century constitutional monarchies demanded visibility and approachability from their reigning sovereigns as well as the diligent performance of relevant functions. In many European countries, the medieval concepts of the peripatetic monarchy and the royal progress were therefore re-invented and enhanced by "civic publicness". Monarchs would travel their countries to garner vital displays of public approval. They would perform new, low-key symbolic practices to prove their diligence to their industrious and sociable audiences: receiving addresses, laying foundation stones and opening buildings. They would anxiously distribute their favours across the different provinces of their realm, thus integrating individual parts into grander national units. And the integrative role they adopted in the context of nation-building was finally underlined by the theatrically staged state visits during which the

⁴⁰⁰ The Times (20.3.1860).

members of Europe's family of kings increasingly represented their nations to each other after 1814.⁴⁰¹

While they learned the craft of local and state visits, integrating their nations and cultivating international alliances, most nineteenth-century monarchs remained comparatively stationary, though, in the context of imperial expansion and the globalization of the world. From the 1840s onwards, most European states, influenced by ideas about global economy, human resources and great-power status, began to strengthen their ties with existing colonies or worked towards carving up the remaining parts of the world into spheres of interest to create their own competitive empires. Monarchies in search of new functions and continued relevance soon found their place at the centre of these projects of imperial integration and empire-building. Since "neither sovereigns nor heirs apparent [could] be very great roamers"⁴⁰² as a result of their general indispensability, their often advanced age and sometimes their gender, they were usually spared the still considerable hazards of overseas travel. "Sailor Princes", however, a few pegs further down in the line of succession and already used to the strains of a seafaring life, were mobile enough to extend their dynasties' reach.

This chapter investigates how the princes enacted royal progresses on an imperial scale and thus amplified the monarchy's repertoire of integrative symbolic practices. The royal sailors, it argues, united disparate colonial settlements, (in)formally penetrated colonies and diaspora communities into larger imperial units by strengthening feelings of belonging. Their sphere of activity, moreover, transcended imperial boundaries: they also transferred the practice of royal state visits to the inter-imperial and intercultural sphere, serving as their nations' good-will ambassadors to far-off places like America or Asia or staking rival power claims.

While the previous chapter focused on shipboard life and on the princes' inner journeys towards manly naval professionalism, the principal setting and frame of reference in this chapter, consequentially, is the ocean and the oceanic world of empires. This has become a lively field of study. While traditional historiography has clearly divided between national histories, between metropolitan and colonial histories, between the world on this

⁴⁰¹ Plunkett, 13-18; Prutsch, 80; Paulmann, Johannes, *Pomp und Politik: Monarchenbegegnungen in Europa* (Paderborn, 2000), 13-21; 402-415; Id., 'Peripatetische Herrschaft, Deutungskontrolle und Konsum', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft & Unterricht*, 53 (2002), 444-61; Geisthövel, Alexa, 'Wilhelm I. am „historischen Eckfenster“: Zur Sichtbarkeit des Monarchen in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts', in: Andres (ed.), *Sinnlichkeit*, 163-85.

⁴⁰² 'The Royal visit', *The Advertiser* (19.9.1900).

side and on the other side of the ocean, more recent scholarship has discovered the in-between spaces and their inhabitants. Scholars of “Oceanic” and “Transatlantic history” have begun to study the different seas of the world as “liquid continents” which connected rather than separated adjacent states or maritime empires. They examine “seascapes” as routes of transport and communication for humans, goods and ideas. They seek to capture the people lost between the coarse meshes of national historiography by focusing on ocean-crossers – merchantmen, sailors, emigrants or slaves. Adherents of “coastal history” particularly scrutinize the places where the maritime and the land-based world intersected. They explore the waterfronts and bustling ports where ships spit out and swallowed passengers as lively “cultural contact zones” for hybrid ocean-travellers. Students of the “postcolonial turn”, finally, have drawn attention to the many interdependencies between the so-called “centres” and “peripheries” of seaborne colonial empires, between Europe and overseas. They study the encounters between the colonizers and the colonized and how they influenced both colonial and metropolitan popular cultures.⁴⁰³

“Sailor Princes” were professional travellers well-acquainted with this oceanic and imperial world. They often left behind their national territory to cross the Atlantic, the Pacific or the Indian Ocean as well as the continents that bordered them. The huge distances they covered can be gauged from the time it took them to receive important news or to travel home when tragedy struck. Their identities, as we have already seen, were just as hybrid, if not amphibious, as those of any ocean-crosser. They were sailors aboard and had a cosmopolitan knowledge of the world’s coastal contact zones. But they were also representatives of their dynasties and nations and members of a family of kings who transformed into courted guests whenever their feet touched foreign ground. The study of their travels to the ends of empire therefore highlights a unique intersection between the history of the imperialization of monarchy and royal diplomacy on the one, and the new inquiry into the formation and negotiation of transnational, transoceanic and imperial identities on the other hand.

⁴⁰³ E.g. Rediker, Marcus, *Between the devil and the deep blue sea: Merchant seamen, pirates and the Anglo-American maritime world, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, 1987); Id., *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, pirates and motley crews in the Age of Sail* (London, 2014), 10; Bailyn, Bernard, *Atlantic history: Concept and contours* (Cambridge/Mass., 2009); Lachenicht, Susanne/Heinsohn, Kirsten (eds), *Diaspora identities: Exile, nationalism and cosmopolitanism in past and present* (Frankfurt/M., 2009), 7-14; Land, Isaac, ‘Tidal waves: The new coastal history’, *Journal of Social History*, 40 (2007), 731-43; Kirby, 3-4; MacKenzie, John, *Imperialism and popular culture* (Manchester, 1986).

Imperial webs

Edinburgh of the Seven Seas on the island of Tristan da Cunha in many ways exemplifies what “Sailor Princes” could and did achieve in the context of national and imperial integration. It was Prince Alfred’s oddest ever landing at a costal contact zone that gave this tiny settlement its name. The Duke of Edinburgh, as he was then officially known, had left London in February 1867 to circumnavigate the world as the captain of HMS *Galatea*. On its journey from Rio de Janeiro to the Cape, the ship drifted off course and came so close to the island group in the South Atlantic Ocean that he decided to land on the morning of 5 August. Tristan da Cunha was the most remote part of the British Empire and, in fact, the most remote inhabited archipelago in the world, lying 3,000 miles from Cape Horn and 1,500 miles from the Cape of Good Hope. A mere volcanic speck in the ocean, it had been occupied by British forces in 1815 and although it had long ceased to be a military post, there was still, in 1867, a tiny settlement of Scottish origin and Creole influence. The 53 inhabitants remained remarkably composed when they discovered *Galatea*’s ensign to be the royal standard. They sent a delegation which helped to pilot a small boat to the coast. Drenched by a wave, the visitors hastily leapt out and some were even carried on the backs of their welcoming committee. Then Prince Alfred inspected the curious settlement, distributing gifts of tobacco, tea and sugar before returning to his ship. Inconspicuous as it seemed, the surprise visit had a deeper meaning. On the one hand, an account penned by *Galatea*’s chaplain caused great excitement in the English press, as it provided the first update on the situation in Tristan da Cunha in 16 years. It reminded the metropolis that even this lonely Robinson Island belonged to their globe-spanning network of colonies. On the other hand, the event also strengthened the islanders’ sense of national identity. They spoke English, formed part of the commercial orbit of the Cape, and occasionally a British ship-of-the line passed their island. But the visit of a British prince on his royal tour demonstrated like nothing else that, isolated as they were, they belonged to the British Empire. The Tristonians named their main settlement “Edinburgh of the Seven Seas” in memory of the occasion and in honour of their Caledonian roots which the Duke epitomised so well.⁴⁰⁴

Visits such as these, though usually less improvised, were the everyday business of “Sailor Princes”. They all undertook land and sea voyages designed to integrate remote provinces,

⁴⁰⁴ For information about Tristan da Cunha: Lt. Haig to Duke Ernst, 18 August 1867, StACo LAA 9482; Milner, John, ‘HRH the Duke of Edinburgh at Tristan d’Acunha’, *Good Words* (1.11.1867); ‘Tristan d’Acunha’, *Illustrated London News* (12.10.1867).

disparate colonial possessions or diaspora settlements into (virtual) national and imperial systems. The reason why they could have such a cohesive effect was that as a result of both their royal and their professional identities they embodied two overlapping “imagined communities”⁴⁰⁵: the homeland and the empire.

As princes, they participated in the status of the monarchy as an important symbol of the nation. As discussed in the first two chapters, monarchs such as Queen Victoria or King Christian devised a range of strategies by which they could avoid their redundancy in an age when dynastic realms transformed into nation-states glued together not by personal rule but by common ethnicity, culture or citizenship. By “performing the nation” in small or grandiose new rituals or by aligning with “symbols of togetherness and emotional loyalty” in their media representation they would eventually themselves become emotive symbols on which nationalisms could be centred.⁴⁰⁶

The need for such emotive embodiments of the abstract nation increased with distance from the political centre. Thus, the monarchy often stood “at the heart of the narratives of belonging” by which diasporas, settler communities or colonial subjects negotiated their (multiple) national identities. The popular imperial monarchism that evolved around sovereigns as celebrated “mothers/fathers of empire” served to sustain and unite disparate colonial systems. Nothing better epitomised the intimate connection between mother/father/homeland and distant communities than the royal tours which princes undertook as “building blocks of an empire of common feeling”.⁴⁰⁷

As the direct progeny of their august parents “Sailor Princes” represented the monarchical nation more than any governor could. For through their genetic closeness to the royal “mothers/fathers of empire” they provided both a likeness and a direct conduit of communication to the monarch. “Alfred! Victoria’s type! In thee we hail”, one poet welcomed the Duke of Edinburgh on his visit to India in 1869, “Our Monarch’s absence here we oft bewail! / Our Sov’reign dear we ne’er can hope to see, / A comfort ‘tis! We trace that Face in thee!”⁴⁰⁸ Profiting from the benefits of a “family on the throne”, “Sailor

⁴⁰⁵ Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 2006).

⁴⁰⁶ Grever, Maria, ‘Staging modern monarchs’, in: Deploige, Jeroen/Deneckere, Gita, *Mystifying the monarch* (Amsterdam, 2006), 161-80, 179; Hobsbawm *Age of Empire*, 105-7; Cannadine, *Ritual*, 101-64; Paulmann, *Peripatetische Herrschaft*, 452. Cf. Id., *Pomp und Politik*, 404-5; Kroll, 360-362; Colley, 99; Hobsbawm, Eric, ‘Mass-producing traditions, Europe, 1870-1914’, in: Id./Ranger, *Invention of tradition*, 263-330, 281.

⁴⁰⁷ McKenna, Mark, ‘Monarchy: From reverence to indifference’, in: Schreuder, Deryck/Ward, Stuart (eds), *Australia’s Empire* (Oxford, 2008), 261-7.

⁴⁰⁸ Dutt, G.C., *Welcome to HRH the Duke of Edinburgh* (n.p., 1870).

Princes” would enhance the visibility of the monarchy by physically replicating both the monarch’s “body politic” (their authority) and their “body natural” (their individual traces).⁴⁰⁹ What distinguished them from their siblings, moreover, was their unprecedented mobility. While heirs to the throne could at best only perform a small number of carefully stage-managed royal visits during their time-in-waiting, “Sailor Princes” were deployable around the globe and, as naval professionals, did not need state occasions of the first order.⁴¹⁰ They could stumble on an island like Tristan da Cunha without further ado.

The princes’ connection with the navy nevertheless linked them to a vital second unifying force and marker of imperial/national identity. Jan Rüger has analysed this institution as an “agent of Britishness” and Germanness as well as an important tool for the negotiation of conflicting (regional, national and imperial) identities. Within the nation, the navy, through the symbolic choice of ships’ names or the liturgy of ship launches, was used as “an arena for the projection of national inclusion and unity”. In the imperial context, these symbolic practices were complemented by the transformation of fleet reviews into “imperial festivals” and, more importantly, the increasing frequency of imperial cruiser voyages which physically united empires.⁴¹¹ For the peripheries of archipelagic kingdoms, global diasporas and colonial empires, the navy was not only a mediated symbol of unity representing the historically evolved and socially structured nation. It was also a very real and experienced vector of unity bridging the physical divides of the ocean. Tristan da Cunha epitomised perfectly how the sea could be an almost insurmountable barrier: the island’s inhabitants would lead a self-sufficient community life for months on end. At the same time, however, the sea, in the shape of whalers or occasional ships-of-the-line, was their gateway to the world. The navy, in utilizing this bridge and “annihilat[ing] ocean spaces” thus functioned as an important “lifeline” between the imperial centre and its satellites.⁴¹² Its battleships, symbolizing protection and prestige, were welcome guests in diaspora settlements and colonies since they imparted a sense of belonging and, as “travelling exhibitions” of their nation’s technological and global success, inspired spectators with pride or respect.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁹ Bagehot, Walter, *The English Constitution* (London, 1867); Kantorowicz, Ernst, *The king's two bodies: A study in mediaeval political theology* (Princeton, 1957).

⁴¹⁰ E.g. Radforth, Ian, *Royal spectacle: The 1860 visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the United States* (Toronto, 2004).

⁴¹¹ Rüger, *Nation*, 160-65, 173-82; cf. Id., *Naval game*, 140ff.

⁴¹² Quilley, 7; *Sheffield&Rotherham Independent* (3.12.1867); Behrmann, 113-15; Bjerg, 132.

⁴¹³ Manz, Stefan, *Constructing a German diaspora: The “Greater German Empire”, 1871-1914* (New York, 2014), 98-111.

Of royal blood and socialized in the national-imperial institution of the navy, “Sailor Princes” participated in these imperial cruises and gave them an irresistible royal touch. Like spiders sailing through the air, they reached out to the ends of both nation and empire, connecting them with one another and with the metropolitan centre via fine threads and leaving in their wake an imperial web of strengthened feelings of unity and belonging. The bodies thus woven together were diverse entities. The British Empire was a vast conglomerate of naval stations, formal and informal colonies which facilitated Britain’s undisputed position as the world’s superpower; yet, in the 1850s-1860s, many metropolitan politicians considered it a costly enterprise.⁴¹⁴ The Danish Empire, on the other hand, was a disintegrating collection of provinces and colonial possessions scattered around the Atlantic; therefore, it has hardly been studied as an empire at all for the period 1848-1914.⁴¹⁵ The German colonial empire, for its part, was primarily a virtual empire, built on huge “colonial fantasies” of equality with Europe’s major imperial powers; yet, in reality, it merely consisted of large diaspora communities in the New World as well as a few leftover spoils from the final race for colonies in Africa and Asia that started in the 1880s.⁴¹⁶ The Greek Empire, finally, was also an empire of the mind, but one spurred by the “Great idea” of uniting all the Greeks and all the Greek-inhabited areas of the Levant and Balkans region into one nation state; therefore, it has usually been termed an irredentist rather than imperialist enterprise.⁴¹⁷ Diverse as they were, though, and despite the varying nomenclatures, all empires could profit from the integrative effect of royal tours. By tracing the travels of “Sailor Princes” one can visualize the shape and extent of even the most virtual systems, highlighting the visions that contemporaries had for them as well as the surprising similarities between some of these.

If we imagine all empires as imperial webs, the first and core threads spun by “Sailor Princes” were usually those linking metropolitan centres with peripheral regions, provinces or kingdoms of the nation-state itself. Here, they performed the classic dynastic function of geographical integration by way of titles and residences. That the Tristonians associated Prince Alfred with their Scottish homeland was therefore not a coincidence. For before the prince arrived at their island, he had already been entrusted with

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Quilley, 10f; Porter, Andrew, ‘Introduction: Britain and the empire in the 19th century’, in: Id. et al. (eds), *Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol.3 (Oxford, 1999), 3-27.

⁴¹⁵ Jensen, Lars, ‘Denmark and its colonies: Introduction’, in: Id./Poddar, Prem/Patke, Rajeev (eds), *A historical companion to postcolonial literatures* (Edinburgh, 2008), 59-62; Thomson, Claire, ‘Narratives and fictions of empire’, in: *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴¹⁶ Berman, Russel, *Der ewige Zweite: Deutschlands Sekundärkolonialismus*, in Kundrus, Birthe (ed.), *Phantasiereiche: Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus* (Frankfurt, 2003), 19-32.

⁴¹⁷ Tatsios, T., *The Cretan problem and the Eastern question: A study of Greek irredentism* (1967).

symbolizing the monarchy's special connection with the inhabitants of this northern part of the British Isles. Challenged to accommodate the conflicting loyalties of the "four nations" that constituted the United Kingdom, Queen Victoria had arranged for her three eldest sons to represent and thereby reconcile England's so-called "Celtic fringe": The heir to the throne was to embody Wales (as Prince of Wales); her third son, Arthur Patrick (!), Ireland (as Duke of Connaught); and Alfred, by receiving the title of Duke of Edinburgh in 1866, Scotland.⁴¹⁸ In this dynastic mission, he followed in his parents' footsteps. For the lifelong love that Victoria and Albert felt for the Highlands and expressed via their many Highland tours or their purchase of Balmoral Castle was not only a whim reflecting Scotland's romantic revival. It was also part of a policy of emotional integration.⁴¹⁹

Prince Alfred's studies at the University of Edinburgh in 1863/64 and his subsequent title would further gratify the Scots' pride in their national tradition. They fostered a mutual bond between the country and the prince, who would "always [be] delighted with anything that can connect me more with [...] Scotland" and who felt "as if I were more of a Highlander than belonging to the South."⁴²⁰ His contribution to the integration, or "internal colonization", of Scotland, moreover, also extended to those members of the fourth British nation who were involved in the British imperial enterprise abroad.⁴²¹ Throughout his imperial tours, the prince would meet white-settler communities like the Tristonians who could connect with him on multiple levels of regional, national and imperial identity.⁴²² His special bond with Scotland even sustained a very personal form of imperial integration. Thus, the Duke, equipped with a list of names compiled by his mother, actually spent part of his time in Australia and New Zealand in 1867/69 looking for Scottish emigrants related to the royal family's Highland friends and servants. Making his enquiries through the police, he would be able to locate people such as "John Brown's brother" or "Farquharson's uncle", reporting home to his mother how they had preserved their "thorough nationality" in the colonies. By doing "all for them I could" and by telling them "that it was especially at your desire which pleases them more than anything as they all know the interest that you take in all your subjects" he would be

⁴¹⁸ Cf. Ellis, John, 'Reconciling the Celt: British national identity, empire and the 1911-investiture of the Prince of Wales', *Journal of British Studies*, 37.4 (1998), 391-418.

⁴¹⁹ Urbach, Karina, *Queen Victoria: Eine Biographie* (Munich, 2011), 75, 88-90; Trevor-Roper, Hugh, 'The invention of tradition: The Highland tradition of Scotland', in: Hobsbawm/Ranger (eds), 15-41.

⁴²⁰ PA to QV, 30.6. and 31.5.1864, RA VIC/ADDA20/1257 and 1251. Cf. Schneider, *Dynastie*.

⁴²¹ Munich, Adrienne, *Queen Victoria's secrets* (New York, 1996), 35ff; Porter, 19.

⁴²² Cf. McCreery, *Transnational*.

able to plant a loyalty to the crown in the hearts of these citizens that was just as unending as their loyalty to their Scottish home.⁴²³

Prince Heinrich was also involved in a project of emotional integration. Following its political unification in 1871, the German Empire was challenged to integrate not only four nations, but 25 federal states and their regional loyalties into one national, Prussian-dominated whole. The “Sailor Prince” was destined to win over Schleswig-Holstein, a tricky case in point, since as Prussia’s northernmost province this region also had to be incorporated into the Hohenzollern orbit. The once Danish duchies had been annexed by Prussia in 1866 despite their wish to form an independent federal state. While their sense of belonging to the German nation had been strong before, the Schleswig-Holsteiners therefore still had to become loyal Prussians. A programme of “Borussification” through education was initiated.⁴²⁴ Just as important for their identity, though, was the economic upturn brought about by the Imperial War Harbour Kiel and the Hohenzollerns’ policy of reconciliation associated with it. William II, who had already married Princess Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg in 1881, would frequently honour the region’s capital to inspect his fleet or take part in the annual Kiel regatta. Even more lasting than these loyalty-evoking sojourns was Prince Heinrich’s installation in Kiel’s city palace. Not only did this meet the demands of his professional career by stationing him close to the navy, but it also turned the city into a sort of royal residence with all the economic benefits and glamour attached. Together with his wife, the prince would carry out numerous welfare functions spanning the entire north of Germany and including the proud Hanseatic cities. In taking this coastal region as his anchor point, the “Sailor Prince” connected the Hohenzollerns with Germany’s traditional “sea folk”.

The thread-spinning skills of a royal sailor became even more important in archipelagian kingdoms where single provinces were cut off from the mainland by the ocean. How the “crowned midgy” King George of Greece, in the first year of his reign, was able to undertake a major royal progress through his realm of scattered islands has already been discussed in the first chapter. In George’s home country Denmark, his father King Christian could do with the help of Prince Valdemar. At its heyday in 1800, the composite Oldenburg Monarchy had been a small, but commercially powerful colonial empire with colonies and trading stations on four continents. In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars

⁴²³ PA to QV, 24.11., 27.12.1867, 01.03., 10.5.1869, RA VIC/ADDA20/1276, 1277, 1287 and 1290.

⁴²⁴ Geithövel, *Eigentümlichkeit*, 90-290; Jahnke, Carsten, ‘Die Borussifizierung des schleswig-holsteinischen Geschichtsbewusstseins, 1866-1889’, *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte*, 130 (2005), 161-91.

and the Schleswig-Holstein conflict this empire had to sustain considerable losses of territory both in Europe and in overseas. Norway, Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg were conceded in 1814 and 1864, respectively. The colonies of Tranquebar and Frederiksnagore in India, the Nicobar Islands and the forts established at the African “Gold Coast” were all abandoned between 1845 and 1849.⁴²⁵ After that, Denmark was a truncated state, but it nevertheless retained the island provinces (*bilande*) Iceland and the Faroe Islands as well as the Atlantic colonies Greenland and the Danish West Indies. Originally elected to secure the territorial integrity of the composite Danish monarchy, but robbed of their *raison d'être* in 1864, King Christian and Queen Louise henceforth regarded it as their special mission to keep these remaining parts of the empire together.⁴²⁶ Prince Valdemar contributed decisively to their policy of integration by providing the invaluable link with the navy, an institution whose main peacetime tasks included station service in the North Atlantic as well as annual cruises to the tropics.⁴²⁷

During one of his first naval apprentice cruises, in July-August 1874, the young prince already accompanied his father on a visit for the celebration of the millennial anniversary of Icelandic settlement meant to contain the centrifugal forces of Icelandic and Faroese nationalism. Iceland and the Faroes were the Ireland and Scotland of the Danish Kingdom. Inhabited by the descendants of Norse settlers, the two countries had passed from Norwegian to Danish suzerainty during the Kalmar Union and had stayed with Denmark after the loss of Norway in 1814. In the nineteenth century, they developed peculiar forms of nationalism based on their proud cultural heritage and memories of medieval independence. They successfully fought against Danish trade monopolies, lobbied for the control of their own internal affairs and, in the wake of the revolutionary period 1830-1848, were allowed to re-establish consultative assemblies (the *Althing* and the *Lagting*).⁴²⁸ In 1874, King Christian was the first reigning sovereign to visit these remote parts of his kingdom. He used the festivities at *Thingvalla* (their old, mystic assembly grounds) to present the Icelanders with a constitution that had been promised to them in 1848, and he stopped at the Faroes along the way. The constitution, which merely granted limited legislative and budgetary power, disappointed Icelandic nationalists. Christian and

⁴²⁵ Cf. Heinzelmann; Jones, Denmark, 28-58.

⁴²⁶ Møller, Dynastiet, 42-61. Many thanks to Per Nielsen, University of Copenhagen, for sharing his thoughts on the topic of the Glücksborg's attitudes towards the empire. Cf. Nielsen, Per, Flåden og Dansk Vestindien: Den danske flådes togter til Caribien, 1671-1917 (Copenhagen, 1997).

⁴²⁷ Bjerg, 132; Nørby/Seerup, 218; Lisberg Jensen, Skyggen, 125-32.

⁴²⁸ Jones, 218f; 'Hálfðanarson, Guðmundur, 'Severing the ties: Iceland's journey from a union with Denmark to a nation-state', Scandinavian Journal of History, 31.3-4 (2006), 237-254.

his son, however, were able to engender some feelings of loyalty and affection through the symbolic act of honouring the proud dependencies with a visit and through showing their appreciation for their long history, culture and stunning landscapes.⁴²⁹

In a song performed during the royal reception in Thorshavn, the Faroese thanked King Christian for the bravery he had shown in “chang[ing] [his] palace for the ship’s deck” and travelling to their island “buried wide out in the ocean”.⁴³⁰ Iceland and the Faroes were indeed as far as any (reigning) member of the Danish royal family had ever gone. For further royal visits, it needed a “Sailor Prince” used to the hazards of ocean travel. Prince Valdemar’s next task during the first decade of his naval service therefore was to convey a sense of belonging, appreciation and social order to the ethnically diverse colonies of Greenland and the West Indies. In 1886, he ventured north to Greenland aboard the cruiser *Fylla* in a mission which matched Denmark’s general paternalistic-humanitarian attitude towards this Inuit-inhabited island. Since the eighteenth century the Danish “colonizers” had pursued a policy of trade monopolies and had also sent scientific expeditions to study and preserve the primitive “Stone Age” culture of the Inuit.⁴³¹ In keeping with this policy, Valdemar’s cruise was meant to defend the Greenlandic fishing grounds against American trespassers, to perform zoological and botanical studies and also “to win over the population through friendliness and thereby tie them more closely to the motherland.”⁴³²

Even before that, the prince had already reached out to the empire’s southernmost end in a similarly significant mission. The cruise of the corvette *Dagmar* to the Danish West Indies in 1879 was supposed to calm social unrest after the suppression of a major workers’ revolt the year before. Once a lucrative part of the triangular trade, the economy of the Danish islands St Thomas, St Croix and St Jan had declined following the abolition of first the slave trade (1792) and then of slavery (1849). The continuation of a system of economic exploitation and of unsatisfactory employment contracts, however, led to frequent unrest among the “free coloured” sugar plantation workers, with a temporary climax in 1878.⁴³³ The navy’s presence and the prince’s visit were clearly designed to

⁴²⁹ Fredensborg, 4; ‘Icelandic Festival’, *Illustrated London News* (29.8.1874).

⁴³⁰ *Berlingske Tidende* (7.8.1874).

⁴³¹ Jones, 228; Høiris, Ole, ‘Anthropology, Greenland and colonialism’, in: Jensen (ed.), *Historical companion*, 63–66; Rud, Søren, ‘Erobringen af Grønland: Opdagelsesrejser, etnologi og forstanderskab i atten hundredetallet’, *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 106.2 (2006), 488–520.

⁴³² ‘Fra Fylla’s togt til Grønland’, *Illustreret Tidende* (24.10.1886).

⁴³³ Hornby, Ove, *Kolonierne i Vestindien* (Copenhagen, 1980), 262ff; Nielsen, Per, ‘Aldrig har det været så dansk: Hugo Larsen og Dansk Vestindien’, in: Brendstrup, Helle (ed.), *Hugo Larsen i Dansk Vestindien, 1904-1907* (Hellerup, 2006), 63–73.

appease the workers, support governor J.A. Garde and the plantation owners in the name of Premier J.B.S. Estrup's conservative government and to strengthen a general feeling of belonging with the Danish state.⁴³⁴

In doing so, Prince Valdemar performed a second vital function of seafaring princes: By spinning more substantial threads not only to (archipelagic) provinces, but also to overseas colonies, the princes extended the radius of the imperial web, tying scattered possessions to the metropolitan centre and providing vague imperial systems with both a clear-cut form and a stabilizing frame. Valdemar's travels thus were like an inventory of the late-nineteenth-century Danish Empire. And his dynasty's colonial engagement anticipated a wider political school which would soon dedicate itself to the renovation of a more official imperialist agenda. In 1904, following a number of unsuccessful attempts at selling the West Indies to the US, a small group of businessmen and intellectuals founded the Danish Atlantic Isles Association (*Forening De Danske Atlanterhavsøer*). It aimed to tie all Atlantic possessions closer to the motherland and focused particularly on the economic development, social reform and "Danification" of the West Indies. The royal family eagerly participated in this ambitious project by organizing specialized welfare work or by promoting the West Indies in commissioned art.⁴³⁵ One could argue, though, that the Glücksborgs had realized long before that Denmark's remaining colonial possessions provided a means of retaining international prestige as well as a bridge to the wider world across which a kind of cosmopolitan rather than provincial identity could be constructed.⁴³⁶ Prince Valdemar, by systematically visiting all the provinces and colonies, had accessed this resource for them.

Prince Alfred's royal tours also represented a vital royal strategy, albeit at the dawn of a period of imperial expansion rather than at the end of an era of "dis-imperialization".⁴³⁷ Building on arguments made by Theo Aronson and Miles Taylor, one could say that the prince's entire itinerary of early sea voyages, from his tour to the Cape Colony in 1860 through to his world cruise in 1867-71 was part of a wider project of creating an "Imperial monarchy" by tightening a hitherto loosely-knit web of empire.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁴ Fredensborg, 6-10; Lisberg Jensen, *Skyggen*, 125-32; Hornby, 316f; Nielsen, *Flåden*.

⁴³⁵ Nielsen, *Aldrig*, 63-73; Klausen/Rosvall, 107; Tuxen, Jan, 'Hugo Larsen: Manden bag kunsten', in: Brendstrup (ed.), *Larsen*, 16-18, 23-33.

⁴³⁶ Cf. Jones, *Denmark*, 28, 52-58; Oxfeldt, Elisabeth, *Nordic Orientalism: Paris and the cosmopolitan imagination, 1800-1900* (Copenhagen, 2005).

⁴³⁷ Henningsen, 1864, 121-141.

⁴³⁸ Taylor, 75-82; Aronson, 10-34; Brantlinger, Patrick, *Rule of darkness: British literature and imperialism* (Ithaca/NY, 2013), 3-7.

In the mid-Victorian period, the British Empire, much like the Royal Navy, was actually stagnating and taken for granted. Most (liberal) politicians advocated the semi-independence of the white-settler colonies and they regarded the empire as a costly enterprise after the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Prince Albert, however, always attentive to the essential characteristics of Britishness, realized that the monarchy could gain new relevance by becoming a sort of magnetic centre for Britain's scattered colonies and their freely-floating loyalties. Twenty years after Victoria's coronation, he sent his two eldest sons, the Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred, on simultaneous visits to British North America and South Africa, respectively. In a speech given at Trinity House in June 1860, Albert stressed the "important and beneficent" part given to the British royal family "to act in the development of those distant and rising countries, who recognize in the British crown and their allegiance to it, their supreme bond of union with the mother country and with each other."⁴³⁹ The two brothers' "triumphal and peaceful progress, in such very opposite parts of the globe", as Victoria mused in her journal, proved a great success.⁴⁴⁰ It was repeated in autumn 1861, when Alfred visited the British West Indies, and in 1867-1871, when he toured virtually the entire empire, particularly the new white-settler colonies the Cape, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand and the "jewel of the crown" India.⁴⁴¹

In many ways, these activities anticipated the "Greater Britain" school of political thought of the early 1870s. Its representatives would envision a closely integrated imperial federation united by common loyalty to the "iconographic order of Britain": a set of emotive national symbols such as the Union Jack, the constitution, or Britannia ruling the waves headed by the "patriot queen". The Greater-Britain thinkers suggested that the queen's sons, similar to their dynastic distribution of tasks in the four-nations context, should occupy the posts of colonial governors.⁴⁴² Prince Alfred, though frequently discussed as King of Australia, never took up such a post. By sailing around the world and discharging his naval duties, however, the "Sailor Prince" became something more: the "pure and spotless representative of the grand idea we have formed of a mighty empire", as the *Cape Monthly Magazine* observed in 1861, and a "pioneer

⁴³⁹ Martin, *Life*, vol.5, 88, 230; *The Times* (28.6.1860).

⁴⁴⁰ QVJ, 28.10.1860; *The Times* (20.3.1860).

⁴⁴¹ McKinlay, Brian, *The first royal tour, 1867-1868* (Adelaide, 1970); Reitz, Falk, 'Die Weltreisen des Prinzen Alfred in den Jahren 1867 bis 1871', in Id. et al. (eds), *Ein Prinz entdeckt die Welt: Die Reisen und Sammlungen Herzog Alfreds von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha* (Gotha, 2008), 35-47.

⁴⁴² Bell, Duncan, 'The idea of a patriot queen? The monarchy, the constitution and the iconographic order of Greater Britain, 1860-1900', *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History*, 34.1 (2006), 3-21.

of that British Imperialism” of the 1880s-90s in the words of an obituary in 1900.⁴⁴³ His cruises preceded Benjamin Disraeli’s Crystal Palace speech (1872), the Prince of Wales’s visit to India (1875), Queen Victoria’s proclamation as Empress of India (1876) and many other milestones of British New Imperialism by several years.

While Prince Alfred and Prince Valdemar heightened the monarchy’s relevance by integrating already existing empires with clear territorial borders, Prince Heinrich and Prince Georgios did so by spinning even finer threads. Their primary function was to connect with the large but elusive German and Greek diasporas as well as to bring two symbolic additions into the folds of Greater Germany and Greater Greece.

As a national and imperial latecomer, the German Empire could not boast of substantial colonial possessions. Surprisingly, Prince Heinrich never visited any of the few colonies that it did acquire in Africa and the Pacific between 1884 and 1899 (German East, South West or West Africa, New Guinea, Micronesia or Samoa). By reaching out to Germany’s emigrant and merchant-diaspora communities, though, and by participating in the nation’s most prestigious colonial project in East Asia, the “Sailor Prince” traced the outlines of an imaginary realm much larger and much more fabulous than Germany’s territorial empire: a virtual empire called the “wider Fatherland”.

One of the main hubs of this dream kingdom, which the prince visited during a number of major voyages, were the Americas. Around 90% of the approximately five million Germans who left the country between 1830 and 1914 migrated to the growing economy of the US. Another 5% believed that pots of gold would wait for hardworking farmers in the sunny, fertile regions of Latin America.⁴⁴⁴ They were accompanied by the exotic dreams and colonial phantasies of those Germans who stayed behind, with the Wild West and the tropics becoming some of the most popular settings of nineteenth-century adventure fiction.⁴⁴⁵ From the 1840s onwards, however, there was also a political discourse which evoked fears that Germany might lose vital manpower in a competitive world. One suggested remedy which simultaneously would have helped the nation to gain the colonial territory generally associated with great-power status was a policy of targeted

⁴⁴³ Cape Monthly Magazine cited in Anon., Progress through the Cape Colony, 150. ‘The Sailor Prince’, North-Eastern Gazette (1.8.1900).

⁴⁴⁴ Manz, 26-29; Conrad, Sebastian, Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich (Munich, 2006), 229f., 238f.

⁴⁴⁵ Kundrus, Birthe, ‘Die Kolonien: “Kinder des Gefühls und der Phantasie”’, in: Id. (ed.), Phantasiereiche, 7-18; Witzmann, Matthias, Eigenes und Fremdes: Hispanoamerika in Bestsellern der deutschen Abenteuer- und Reiseliteratur (Munich, 2006), 2.

emigration and, ultimately, the building of a “*Neu-Deutschland*” overseas.⁴⁴⁶ The idea became most influential after 1880, when the unified German Empire, now formally participating in the imperial game, re-conceptualized its emigrants as “Germans abroad” (“*Auslandsdeutsche*”): members of an ineradicable national community of culture and language which transcended territorial borders. Emigrants like the German-Americans, who tended to quickly assimilate into the mainstream culture of the US – an emerging rival – were encouraged to follow the example of the agricultural settlements in Latin America, which usually preserved a comparatively high level of “Germanness”.⁴⁴⁷

During his many travels to the region, Prince Heinrich would communicate with both kinds of diaspora communities, honouring their continued loyalty to the homeland or inviting them to cultivate it. In 1878-1880 he visited Uruguay, Chile and Peru; in 1882-1884 the Caribbean, Venezuela and Brazil; in 1902 the United States; and in 1914 again Argentina, Brazil and Chile. As the first member of the newly-created imperial family to travel this far he evoked feelings of sentimental “attachment”. As a figurehead of the young navy he elicited “pride in a new and strong homeland” and Pan-German Empire which the emigrants, who had taken a keen interest in the Wars of Unification, could feel part of.⁴⁴⁸

An even more symbolic focal point of German dream imperialism was the colony of Kiautschou. Long before 1871, German trading companies had already been busy all over the world, claiming, for example, a significant and expandable share in Chinese trade. As early as the 1840s, national economists had therefore called for a fleet strong enough to secure these business activities and thus to contribute to the creation of an integrated economic empire comparable to the British.⁴⁴⁹ After 1871, the German navy worked hard to project an image of itself as the main source of protection for Germany’s globe-spanning trade and shipping companies. Leading men such as Stosch even lobbied for formal “protectorates”, because these would necessitate patrol cruises, which, in turn, would provide the navy with just the missions it needed to increase its reputation and justify its further build-up.⁴⁵⁰ In 1897/98, this policy of self-promotion, brought to a new

⁴⁴⁶ Müller, *Traum*, 108-18; Bernecker, Walther/Fischer, Thomas, ‘Deutsche in Lateinamerika’, in :Bade, Klaus (ed.), *Deutsche im Ausland: Fremde in Deutschland* (Munich, 1993), 197-214.

⁴⁴⁷ Conrad, *Globalisierung*, 29-32, 229ff; cf. Manz, 134-43.

⁴⁴⁸ Speech by Konsul Diehl in Uruguay, quoted by Eschenburg, 28; cf. Manz, 136-43; Preußen, Oskar von, *Wilhelm II und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Neuried, 1997), 164; Laverrenz, Victor, *Prinz Heinrichs Amerika-Fahrt* (Berlin, 1902).

⁴⁴⁹ Müller, *Traum*, 121-128; Sieg, 201-6.

⁴⁵⁰ Sieg, 173-176, 196-224, 275-310, 498; Eschenburg, 30.

level by Admiral von Tirpitz and combined with the ideology of world power championed by William II, led to the establishment of a naval base in Kiautschou Bay. The German Empire exploited the assassination of two Catholic missionaries as well as the Chinese Empire's general weakness after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) as an opportunity to enter the "scramble for China" and to occupy the strategically important area near the seaport Tsingtau. To seal the act, William sent an improvised naval unit, the East Asia Squadron, and he stressed the intimate connection between the imperial project, the navy and the monarchy by putting his brother in command.⁴⁵¹ Heinrich, who would return in 1912, oversaw building works, explored the region, connected with Germany's elite diaspora in Asia and paid official visits to the bordering powers. He thus identified the monarchy with Germany's "model colony" and least tainted colonial project.

Prince Georgios's activities, in many ways, mirrored those of his German counterpart, although they generally ran under a different header. As the Cypriot-born historian Andrekos Varnava has recently stressed, most scholars tend to use the term "irredentism" for Greek territorial ambitions after 1832. By unquestioningly doing so, he argues, they actually adopt the terminology of those who espoused these ambitions, buying into their claim that Greek expansion was different from other imperialisms "because the Greeks sought to liberate those Greeks under Ottoman tyranny". Varnava remarks, though, that "border expansion at the expense of another polity is de-facto imperialism"; that many Greeks under Ottoman rule, particularly those of Cyprus and Anatolia, identified not the Greek state, but the Ottoman Empire as their homeland; and that even if they could be classified as ethnic Greeks, they lived scattered among other ethnicities (sometimes even claimed by other Balkan irredentisms) rather than as homogenous majorities in one territory.⁴⁵² By aiming to integrate both the people and the land into a "Greater Greece" of Byzantine dimensions, the Greeks thus, at least between 1880 and 1920, clearly bought into the imperialist ideology of the age.

Like the German "wider Fatherland", "Greater Greece" remained a virtual empire of "transterritorial character" for much of the nineteenth century, though. It comprised three groups of inhabitants, of which only one and initially the smallest resided within the borders of the independent state. Some portions of the second group, the "unredeemed"

⁴⁵¹ Sieg, 201-6; Roehl, *Persönliche Monarchie*, 1061ff; Eschenburg, 59-62; Baumgart, Winfried, 'Imperialism in historical perspective', in: Knoll, A./Gann, L. (eds), *Germans in the tropics: Essays in German colonial history* (New York, 1987).

⁴⁵² Varnava, Andrekos, *British and Greek liberalism and imperialism in the long nineteenth century*, in: Fitzpatrick, *Liberal imperialism in Europe*, 220-239, 222.

Greeks of the Ottoman Empire and Aegean Sea area, would gradually join Greece (the Ionian Islands in 1863, Epirus and Thessaly in 1881, Crete in 1898-1908). But others, like Macedonia or Asia Minor, remained outside until the Balkan Wars, let alone the large Greek diaspora in Western Europe and the Near East.⁴⁵³ In the eyes of most of their contemporaries the Glücksborg dynasty's mission was, on the one hand, to work towards territorial expansion by diplomatic and military means. On the other hand, they were meant to effect the integration of the archipelago's different parts, especially the later acquisitions, into one comprehensive, secular nation-state as well as one Hellenic imagined community including the Greeks living outside Greece.⁴⁵⁴

Prince Georgios contributed significantly to both projects. First, he connected with some of Greece's major transterritorial communities during his journey on-board the Russian armoured cruiser *Pamiat Azova* in 1890/91. This cruise, essentially a grand tour to the East which he undertook together with his cousin, Tsarevich Nicholas of Russia, led the prince first to Egypt and later to America. In Egypt, he was able to address the large Greek diaspora community consisting of many prosperous entrepreneurs who had settled there under Muhammed Ali as well as a few thousand construction workers who had been engaged in the building of the Suez Canal. In the "golden age of the Greek diaspora" (1880-1930), this community flourished and few of the successful expatriates were inclined to return to the economically lagging Greek state. The Greek government, however, tried to influence the ideological, political and economic life in the area. This was because, for one thing, it depended on the patriotic philanthropism of wealthy businessmen such as Emamnouil Benakis or Georgios Averoff, whose generous donations funded numerous cultural and military institutions in Greece.⁴⁵⁵ On the other hand, there was a general desire to tie the loyalties of the diaspora more closely to the homeland. The majority of expatriates identified as belonging to the wider Greek nation; but, vacillating between sentimental attachment to Greece, loyalty to the new political authorities and a general sense of cosmopolitanism, they did not necessarily support the Greek nation-state

⁴⁵³ Venturas, Lina, "Deterritorialising" the nation: The Greek state and "Ecumenical Hellenism", in: Tziouvas, Dimitri (ed.), *Greek diaspora and migration since 1700* (Farnham, 2009), 125-173, 125.

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. Schneider, Miriam, "A sporting Hermes": Crown Prince Constantine and the ancient heritage of modern Greece', in: Müller/Mehrkens, *Soft power*, 243-61; Varnava, 223.

⁴⁵⁵ Tziouvas, Dimitris, 'Indigenous foreigners: The Greek diaspora and travel writing, 1880-1930', in: Id., *Greek diaspora*, 157-76, 158; Tomara-Sideris, Matoula, *Greek diaspora and euergetism: The case of Egyptian Hellenism* (2002; Venturas, 125).

and its policies.⁴⁵⁶ The presence of a Greek prince, enthusiastically celebrated in all the visited ports, re-activated national feeling and could clarify priorities.⁴⁵⁷

In America, meanwhile, Georgios's visit supported the comparatively young Greek-American diaspora, which was still in need of organizational structures. His arrival there was a convenient coincidence. Originally, he had been supposed to accompany his cousin all the way back to St Petersburg. Following the famous attack on the Tsarevich by a deranged policeman in the Japanese town of Otsu, however, some embarrassed members of his cousin's entourage had conspired against the Greek prince because he had been the only European coming to Nicholas's rescue.⁴⁵⁸ Georgios was expelled from the tour and had to travel home alone via the US. His unexpected visits to San Francisco and New York brought hundreds of Greek emigrants onto the streets to welcome him. In New York, the Greek community, according to some sources, even realized for the first time how large it had become. Its leading members would subsequently found "The Hellenic Brotherhood of Athena", an association which, under the honorary presidency of the prince, would work for the establishment of the first Greek-Orthodox church in the US.⁴⁵⁹

Georgios's most important contribution to the Greater Greek cause, though – his relationship with Crete – resulted from a planned dynastic strategy rather than an accidental route change. Next to Macedonia, the large and populous island in the Aegean Sea formed one of the most symbolic bones of contention of nineteenth-century Greek irredentist imperialism. Mainly inhabited by ethnic Greeks but still under Ottoman rule, it was caught in a "vicious cycle" of oppression, revolt, suppression and greater oppression.⁴⁶⁰ King George managed to position himself as a champion of the Cretan Cause. With every new revolt, however, the pressure grew for him to actually achieve the ultimate goal of territorial unity. By 1897, his dynasty's reputation had reached such an all-time low that he dispatched the Greek torpedo-boat flotilla under the command of his sailor son to win back some trust.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁶ Polycandrioti, Ourania, 'Literary quests in the Aegean, 1840-1940: Identity and cosmopolitanism', *History & Anthropology*, 16 (2005), 116; Roudometof, Victor, 'Transnationalism and globalization: The Greek orthodox diaspora', *Diaspora*, 9.3 (2000), 376.

⁴⁵⁷ Skandamis, 36-37.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Schneider, Miriam, 'A tale of two princes', "Heir of the Month", May 2016, http://heirstothethrone-project.net/?page_id=2357.

⁴⁵⁹ Namee, Matthew, The First Greek Church in New York, <http://orthodoxhistory.org/2009/10/08/the-first-greek-church-in-new-york/> (last accessed 3.5.2016); *New York Times* (23.7.1891); Burgess, Thomas, *Greeks in America: An account of their coming...* (New York, 1913), 53.

⁴⁶⁰ Koliopoulos/Veremis, 47.

⁴⁶¹ Christmas, 74-80. Cf. Schneider, Miriam, 'The Prussian Duke of Sparta', http://heirstothethrone-project.net/?page_id=1467; PA AA, RZ 201, R7479, 9.2.1897; Markopoulos, Selection, 335-50.

Though nothing much came of the “dramatic show” – for the intervening great powers kept him from doing anything in Crete – Prince Georgios would continue to be his dynasty’s best asset in their attempt to align with the Greater Greek cause. Following Greece’s humiliating defeat by the Ottoman forces in the Greco-Turkish War, he was elected High Commissioner of the newly semi-autonomous Cretan state in 1898.⁴⁶² Initial hopes that he might bring about complete unity with the Greek homeland were soon thwarted. Georgios certainly cut as fine a figure as he could in negotiating his different tasks: He brought stability to the troubled area, thus satisfying the great powers; he successfully improved Muslim-Christian relations and remained a conscientious servant of the Ottoman sultan, thus easing Turkish concerns. But by keeping true to his mandate, he inevitably failed to fulfil the Cretan/Greek wish for a complete transfer of sovereignty. As a consequence, the prince’s initial “messianic” aura gradually faded, and, becoming more of a burden than an asset, he was finally dropped by the powers. It would eventually be Eleftherios Venizelos, the Cretan republican who started a major insurrection against Georgios’s “unfortunate regime” in 1905, rather than the Glücksborg dynasty who achieved Crete’s unity with Greece.⁴⁶³

Nevertheless, the prince, styled “Prince of Crete” in common parlance, had, for a considerable time, been the living embodiment of one of the most powerful dreams of the Greek nation. Thus, Georgios had performed a vital final function common to many “Sailor Princes”. For the fine threads that they spun to connect metropolitan centres with peripheral provinces, colonies or diaspora communities ultimately also tightened the emotional community of the nation at home. How closely the empire-building project was connected with the nation-building project is best illustrated by the German case. Significantly, the vessel on which Prince Heinrich sailed to Kiautschou in 1897 was called SMS *Deutschland*. The name conveyed an important message: By circling the imagined territory of a virtual empire aboard a vessel representing the German state, the “Sailor Prince” was not only uniting a “wider Fatherland over the oceans”. In taking many Germans on imaginary journeys with him, he was also uniting the “narrow Fatherland at home” around the idea of a seaborne colonial empire.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶² Markopoulos, Selection, 335-48; Holland/Weston 91-95, 253-255; Holland, Robert, ‘Nationalism, ethnicity and the concert of Europe: The case of the High Commissionership of Prince George of Greece in Crete, 1898-1906’, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 17/2 (1999), 253-276, 253-255.

⁴⁶³ Holland/Weston, 106-7, 108-127; Holland, Nationalism, 256-272; Markopoulos, 349-50.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. William II’ cited in Bernstorff, Hans Nikolaus von, *Seine Königliche Hoheit Prinz Heinrich von Preußen in Ost-Asien, 1897-1900*, in: *Album 1900* (Berlin, 1900), 9.

Royal go-betweens

The imperial webs that “Sailor Princes” helped to connect were not floating in a vacuum, but were surrounded by and interacted with other empires. During their travels, the princes permanently crossed the international waters of the world. Even if their journeys were not planned as grand tours, the necessities of seaborne travel meant that they often had to call at ports and coaling stations belonging to other (colonial) empires. The diasporas to which they reached out were, by definition, scattered among foreign peoples. In the age of globalization and New Imperialism, when the different parts of the world grew closer together and the subsequent impression of a shrinking world ushered in a last phase of frenzied imperial expansion, “Sailor Princes” thus automatically performed another vital function: by becoming go-betweens between empires as well as go-betweens between metropolitan centres and colonial peripheries they stabilized their respective empires from the outside as well as from the inside. On the one hand, they represented their nations’ imperial power claims to other European or transoceanic powers. On the other hand, they cultivated friendly relations with these powers in order to further their countries’ own economic and geopolitical interests.

Just as in the intra-imperial case, the princes were perfectly equipped to carry out these diplomatic functions because they had access to the symbolic arsenals of the monarchy and the navy. As Europe’s monarchs nationalized in the course of the nineteenth century, they also morphed into “personified representatives of national prestige”. The pompous state visits that they paid each other as the public faces of their nations could be read as assertions of national honour and power in the context of increasing international competition.⁴⁶⁵ “Sailor Princes” entered this show run on an inter-imperial level, and they clearly also profited from the dazzling imagery of court etiquette.

The language of royal ceremonial, moreover, was underscored by the messages of “gunboat diplomacy”. Between 1814 and 1914, Europe’s expanding navies were rarely used as weapons, but often as instruments of diplomatic coercion. Countries like Britain or Germany frequently despatched gunboats to European or overseas trouble spots to demonstrate their readiness to resort to hard-power measures.⁴⁶⁶ “Sailor Princes” also often travelled aboard such prestigious vessels and as part of imposing naval squadrons.

⁴⁶⁵ Paulmann, *Peripatetische Herrschaft*, 448-51.

⁴⁶⁶ Conway, Stephen, ‘Empire, Europe, and British naval power’, in Cannadine, David (ed.), *Empire, the sea and global history: Britain’s maritime world, c.1763-1840* (New York, 2007), 22-39, 25; Lloyd, 224; Eberspächer, Cord, *Die deutsche Yangtse-Patrouille* (Bochum, 2002).

This helped them to inspire national pride amongst their home audiences and to impress or intimidate rival powers by “appear[ing] as daunting as possible”.⁴⁶⁷

At the same time, the princes possessed the ideal prerequisites to ease the tensions of national-imperial rivalry. For although Europe’s monarchs slowly moved towards becoming mere representatives of their nations’ interests and chauvinist attitudes, they were still members of the world-wide family of kings. Their dynastic connections and corresponding mindsets transcended borders and enabled them to project images of international harmony.⁴⁶⁸ “Sailor Princes” shared this “dynastic internationalism”: they were all related with each other and with Europe’s other major dynasties either by descent or by marriage; they had enjoyed the benefits of a cosmopolitan education; and they participated in transnational event calendars. These qualities gave them access to doors which remained closed to other diplomats.

As naval officers, moreover, they also belonged to a group of professional cosmopolitans with a knack for intercultural diplomacy. The navies of nineteenth-century Europe were not only instruments of hard power, but also soft-power tools used to carry out many peacetime tasks as well as to showcase their nations’ technological and economic prowess to foreign societies. The officers that commanded them were regarded as “ambassadors in blue”. Their globe-trotting lives and everyday acquaintance with multinational crews, foreign cultures and all kinds of other empire roamers (diplomats, colonial administrators or trade agents) rendered them ideal interpreters and negotiators in the trans-oceanic world of empires. Many naval commanders would therefore perform vital diplomatic functions especially prior to the establishment of embassies.⁴⁶⁹ “Sailor Princes” were no exception. Encounters with exotic “others” were part of their professional portfolio as they commanded their ships and visited the heterogeneous societies that constituted their own and other empires.⁴⁷⁰ This ease distinguished them from their less mobile relations. Equipped with the urbane manners, cosmopolitanism and power tools of royal princes and naval officers, they were perfect ambassadors for the Age of Empire.

The fact that they did not have political or diplomatic mandates in the strict sense was an asset rather than a disadvantage. Royal contributions to inter-imperial diplomatic relations

⁴⁶⁷ PH to WII, 9.9.1912, BArch-MA RM2/401.

⁴⁶⁸ Paulmann, International; Daniel, Ute/Frey, Cristian (eds), *Die preußisch-welfische Hochzeit 1913: Das dynastische Europa in seinem letzten Friedensjahr* (Braunschweig, 2016).

⁴⁶⁹ Sieg, 489; Pantzer, Peter (ed.), *Japanische Impressionen eines Kaiserlichen Gesandten: Karl von Eisendecker im Japan der Meiji-Zeit* (Munich, 2007); Larsen, 496; Kirby/Hinkkanen, 186-230.

⁴⁷⁰ Cf. McCreery, *Transnational*, 57-74.

have so far received little attention due to the general misconception that because Europe's constitutional monarchs lost or conceded most of their governing powers to ministerial elites or representative assemblies in the course of the nineteenth century, they had scant influence on foreign policy. Yet, most sovereigns clung fiercely to their special prerogative. By 1900, royal diplomacy might no longer have been able to sideline parliaments and governments or to overcome conflicts of national interest and feeling; but it could still play an important part in European international relations.⁴⁷¹ Even though royal state visits were mainly acted out on a level of symbolic communication rather than political negotiation, their effects on home and foreign audiences should not be underestimated. It was in this atmospheric realm that "Sailor Princes" mainly acted. Their travels were often arranged as cost-effective goodwill tours with no clear-cut political or economic objectives. Yet, they were never without consequence.

When Prince Heinrich embarked on his famous state visit to the United States in 1902, Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow instructed him that he was not expected to "bring back any tangible political result" from the journey. The prince was not even to talk politics with President Theodore Roosevelt. Rather, he should "win over the Americans" in more general terms and convince them of German sympathies. The journey formed part of a wider public-relations campaign initiated by William II to test the mood and maybe also bring about a rapprochement between the two empires following conflicts over Germany's colonial acquisitions in the South Seas as well as the Spanish-American War of 1898.⁴⁷² It was exactly this "a-political" character, though, which turned the visit into a major success in terms of friendly relations and which generally made "Sailor Princes" so suitable for diplomatic tasks. Neither William nor his Chancellor had much faith in Heinrich's political judgement; the prince was considered superficial and naïve.⁴⁷³ Yet, he possessed an ability to win over people that his brother lacked completely. The political-industrial elites and wider society of the States were enthralled by the authentic language and easy-going manners of the royal sailor as well as the not at all snooty "spirit in which [he] met unconventional Uncle Sam". The entire republic was swept away by "Aristomania".⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷¹ Cf. Markopoulos, Selection; Glencross, Matthew, *The state visits of Edward VII: Reinventing royal diplomacy for the 20th century* (Basingstoke, 2015); Urbach, Karina, *Go-betweens for Hitler* (Oxford, 2015).

⁴⁷² Preußen, 11-15, 152-65; Freudenberg, Mechtild, 'Prinz Heinrich von Preußen und seine Sammlung japanischer Rüstungen', in: Bräutigam, Herbert/Morper, Cornelia (eds), *Über den ziehenden Wolken der Fuji* (Gotha, 2000), 40-46.

⁴⁷³ Roehl, *Persönliche Monarchie*, 706, 1067-70; Eschenburg, 82-3, 110.

⁴⁷⁴ Wile, Frederic, *Men around the Kaiser* (London, 1913), 50; Mirbach, 278-81; Preußen, 157-60.

Equally, the princes' unpretentious dignity and the notion that they somehow stood above the nitty-gritty of the expansion-driven politics of their governments as well as the ulterior motives of two-faced colonial agents, helped them to win the confidence of their suspicious Asian hosts. In a characteristic conversation with a Hong Kong pilot aboard the *Valkyrie* in 1899, Prince Valdemar calmed the Chinese man's worries that the Danes might have "come take piece country?" like all the other European powers. He smilingly replied in fluent pidgin: "No take piece country, we come look see!"⁴⁷⁵ The semi-touristic character of the princely goodwill tours convinced other powers of the peaceful intentions and disinterested motives of their countries. Thus, Prince Heinrich, during his stay in East Asia, also worked to refute rumours that Germany was looking for further territorial aggrandizement. He "str[ove] to convince people that this is not at all our intention and that they should continue trusting us".⁴⁷⁶

The cultivation of friendly relations via royal-naval diplomacy was so cost-effective that major players like the British could even extend it to such minor states as the Kingdom of Hawaii. In July 1869, Prince Alfred visited the archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean as part of his *Galatea* world cruise. Britain and Hawaii had enjoyed good relations ever since the first Hawaiian king, Kamehameha I, had put himself under British protection and his dynasty had adopted Britain as its constitutional role model. From 1860, when Queen Emma had introduced the Anglican Church to the isles, Queen Victoria had even kept close contacts with the royal family. Prince Alfred's visit was meant to assure the Hawaiians of her ongoing friendship and of Britain's continued support. It was one of a series of honours by which the queen convinced the otherwise little respected kings of the house of Kamehameha and later Kalakaua that they could rely on her personal agency for their protection from US-American annexationism. When these fears materialized in 1893, though, Victoria cared little and Britain did not jeopardize her relations with America by intervening.⁴⁷⁷ The a-political character of royal diplomacy meant that princes could be obliging without the slightest commitment.

The friendly atmosphere that cost so little to create yielded great dividends, though. For the hidden long-term agenda behind the princes' goodwill tours was naturally to work

⁴⁷⁵ Svedstrup, 292-93.

⁴⁷⁶ PH to WII, 8.9.1912, 29.9.1912, 13.10.1912, BArch-MA RM2/401.

⁴⁷⁷ Miller, Lynne, 'Enthrallingly exotic: Victoria and Liliuokalani', *Tau Sigma Journal of Historical Studies*, 21 (2013), 92-96, 108; Bott, Robin, "'I know what is due to me': Self-fashioning and legitimization in Queen Liliuokalani's Hawaii's story by Hawaii's Queen", in Homans, Margaret/Munich, Adrienne (eds), *Remaking Queen Victoria* (Cambridge, 1997), 139-156; cf. PA to QV, 30.7.1869 RA VIC/ADDA20/1292.

towards a friendly environment for their countries' geopolitical and economic interests. Powered by their belief in the unbounded American and Asian markets, the trading and export nations of the West all competed over economic outlets and spheres of influence. Without directly contributing to the negotiation of formal treaties, princely visits could still pave the way for informal imperialist penetration. Thus, Britain profited from its good relations with Hawaii because the strategically convenient islands functioned as a supply base for British traders and whalers in the Pacific. Prince Heinrich and Prince Valdemar explored their countries' business opportunities in the Americas and the Far East. They acted as illuminating examples of what one might call "cooperative imperialism", a win-win partnership between smaller or aspiring European powers seeking influence and small, non-European states seeking to defend their independence through accommodating them.

One European method of getting a foot in the door of formally independent markets such as Latin America or East Asia was military aid for "developing" countries. By the fin-de-siècle, most of the states which had managed to remain autonomous in the face of imperialist aggression had realized that their best chance of survival was to cooperate with and learn from their potential enemies. Challenged to open up to the West and/or intent on becoming regional hegemons or global players themselves, countries as diverse as the Ottoman, Persian or Japanese Empires, the Kingdom of Siam or the republics of Argentina, Bolivia and Chile made a virtue of necessity and opted for programmes of "modernization" according to European standards. In Meiji Japan, almost the entire constitutional, political, legal, educational and military systems were reformed along Western lines. In Siam, the programme was more restricted, mainly to military build-up. All states, however, recruited advisors from abroad and they learned to distribute their favours carefully. The logic of imperial rivalry meant that Europe's powers vied for invitations to send advisors and army or naval missions because these reflected their (military) prestige in the world and could serve as stepping stones for further economic, cultural or political influence.⁴⁷⁸

As military professionals with a friendly aura, "Sailor Princes" often acted as representatives or promoters of these military relations. This was particularly true for Prince Heinrich's visits to Japan in 1898/1912 and to Argentina, Brazil and Chile in 1914.

⁴⁷⁸ E.g. Petersson, Niels, *Imperialismus und Modernisierung: Siam, China und die europäischen Mächte 1895-1914* (Munich, 2000); Stockwell, 'British expansion and rule in South-East Asia', in: Porter (ed.), *Oxford history*, 371-95, 373, 380-89.

While Britain was an undisputed leader in naval matters, the German Empire, after 1871, had quickly overtaken post-Napoleonic France as a role model for the organization of land forces. The German government and the “military-industrial complex” around the Krupp Company soon learned to take advantage of the high prestige of Prussian militarism. Sought-after military missions and arms deliveries to Turkey or South America were used as instruments of *Weltpolitik* that were meant to improve the young empire’s otherwise weak position in the imperial game. While William II travelled to Constantinople himself in 1889, his brother represented the German military establishment as well as the economic interests of the arms industry in further removed regions. The parades and troop inspections that he attended in Japan or Chile gave him a unique opportunity to show his welcome appreciation of the countries’ military institutions. Particularly in Chile, the “Prussia of Latin America”, Heinrich’s visit made a favourable impression on the Germanophile officer corps, which consolidated Germany’s position as a military partner and thus constituted a real advantage over the other European powers active in the region.⁴⁷⁹

Even the comparatively small naval power Denmark was able to carve out a niche as a military model and subsequently economic partner of an up-and-coming Asian nation with the assistance of royal-naval diplomacy. Imitating Japan, the enlightened absolutist King Chulalongkorn of Siam pursued a clever policy of preventing direct colonial rule – and of bolstering his dynasty’s undisputed position – by creating a partly modernized, unified nation-state centred on the throne and by cooperating with a range of advanced European nations to this end. Some of the highest positions of trust in the kingdom were occupied by Danish militaries seeking their fortunes abroad, since Denmark could not be considered a threat. The naval lieutenant Andreas du Plessis de Richelieu became a close confidant of Chulalongkorn and was entrusted with the build-up of the Siamese navy; Major Gustav Schau entered the Royal Bodyguard and later formed the Siamese provincial gendarmerie; and the sailor H.N. Andersen was allowed to establish a highly successful shipping and teak business in Bangkok. The personal contacts of these men paved the way for many other Danish immigrants and businesses as well as for more formal economic and diplomatic relations between the two kingdoms personified by the two royal families. During his tour of Europe in 1897, King Chulalongkorn befriended Prince Valdemar and his wife. Especially the business-savvy Marie subsequently embraced Andersen’s project

⁴⁷⁹ Schäfer, Jürgen, *Deutsche Militärhilfe an Südamerika: Militär- und Rüstungsinteressen in Argentinien, Bolivien und Chile vor 1914* (Düsseldorf, 1974), 1-10, 28-66, 113, 176-77.

of creating an *East Asiatic Company* dedicated to shipping between Europe and the Far East as a patriotic endeavour putting Denmark on an equal footing with other European powers. A few years before, the foundation of the *Great Northern Telegraph Company*, dedicated to the cabling of Russia and the Far East, had already established the small nation as a global provider of communication infrastructures. In 1899, Prince Valdemar, supported by business and banking circles, journalists and ultimately also the parliament, went on an official naval visit to the Far East to assist both enterprises. Three additional visits in 1906/7 (together with Prince Georgios), 1909 and 1911/12 were meant to further strengthen the ties with Siam and to bolster the EAC's position as it expanded into the myth-invested China market.⁴⁸⁰

As becomes obvious from Prince Valdemar's visits to Siam, Prince Alfred's stay in Hawaii or Prince Heinrich's sojourns in Chile and Japan, the so-called "cultivation" of royal potentates, influential politicians or militaries via the conferment of special honours was another, complementary strategy for gaining military, economic or political influence in "exotic" countries.⁴⁸¹ Here again, "Sailor Princes" as easily deployable agents in command of the symbolic language of court etiquette and the cultural knowledge of the naval globetrotter were right for the task.

Antony Best, one of only a few historians who have studied intercultural royal diplomacy, has stressed how symbolic communication and the concept of the family of kings were able to overcome the racial divides between Europe's imperial powers and their "Oriental" counterparts by creating "mutual respect and a sense of equality".⁴⁸² Best focused on changes in Britain's relations with Japan during the coming-about of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1901/2. One can safely say, though, that the potential utility of court diplomacy was realized much earlier – by "Sailor Princes". Thus, it was actually Prince Alfred's reception at the Japanese Imperial Court in 1869, the first of its kind, which marked the beginning of the cautious rapprochement between Britain and Meiji Japan on the brink of

⁴⁸⁰ With special thanks to Søren Ivarsson (University of Copenhagen) for helpful information on Siamese history. Cf. Eggers-Lura, Aldo, *Admiralen, kongen og kaptajnen: Danskere i elefanternes rige*, (Copenhagen, 1998); Peleggi, Maurizio, *Lords of things: The fashioning of the Siamese monarchy's modern image* (Honolulu, 2002); Winther Nielsen, Flemming, Phraya Vasuthep: The Good Danish Soldier of Fortune, <http://scandasia.com/9329-phraya-vasuthep-the-good-danish-soldier-of-fortune/> (last accessed 1.6.2016); Klausen/Rosvall, 77, 93-98; Dall, Mads, 'Danish trade with China: From the beginning of the 20th century to the establishment of the People's Republic', in: Brødsgaard, Kjeld/Kirkebak, Mads (eds), *China and Denmark: Relations since 1674* (Copenhagen, 2001), 153-91.

⁴⁸¹ Schäfer, 113.

⁴⁸² Best, Antony, 'Race, monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese alliance, 1902-1922', *Social Science Japan Journal*, 9 (2006), 171-186; Hofstede, Geert, *Diplomats as cultural bridge-builders*, in: Slavik, Hannah (ed.), *Intercultural communication and diplomacy* (Malta, 2004), 25-38; Pantzer, Peter, 'Prinz Heinrich und der Ferne Osten', in Hering/Schmidt (eds.), *Prinz Heinrich*, 83-99.

the ancient empire's policy of "leaving Asia".⁴⁸³ Prince Heinrich's first visit to Tokyo ten years later represented the "culmination point" of a famed "golden era of German-Japanese relations" between 1870 and 1895.⁴⁸⁴ In their quest to modernize and be accepted as part of the international community, "exotic" monarchies such as Japan, Siam or Hawaii adopted the Westphalian model of diplomacy, European court etiquette and sometimes also European habits.⁴⁸⁵ Any sign of recognition by Western monarchs was counted as symbolic capital able to legitimize dynasties or bolster power claims. "Sailor Princes" were travelling treasurers holding this symbolic currency at their fingertips. Their visits alone were signs of distinction. In addition, they would usually exchange carefully selected, cost-effective decorations with their hosts. On the death of Emperor Meiji in 1912, Britain and Germany would even compete over which power could confer the more prestigious order on the new emperor. By picking Prince Heinrich, a naval professional used to the strains of long-distance travel even at short notice and familiar with the Japanese court from previous visits, the German Emperor gained an unassailable time advantage.⁴⁸⁶

Most of the few other studies of intercultural royal encounters such as the state visits of oriental potentates like the Shahs of Persia to fin-de-siècle Europe have focused on aspects of royal spectacle or culture clashes.⁴⁸⁷ They justly point to the asymmetrical nature of mutual relations. What has been overlooked, though, is the bridge-building role of "Sailor Princes". They were often the first when it came to returning the visits of foreign princes; and they would also receive and accommodate them during their stays in Europe. Thus, Prince Alfred was selected as Princess Liliuokani of Hawaii's escort during the celebrations of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887.⁴⁸⁸ Prince Valdemar hosted King Chulalongkorn in Copenhagen during his two educational tours through Europe in 1897/1907; he visited the King in Bangkok in 1899/1900 and 1906/7; and he and the entire Danish royal family treated his sons, who were almost all educated in Europe, like family

⁴⁸³ Cortazzi, Hugh, 'Royal visits to Japan in the Meiji-Period, 1868-1912', in Nish, Ian (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical portraits*, vol.2 (Folkestone, 1997), 79-93; Keene, Donald, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his world, 1852-1912* (New York, 2002), 183-87; PA to QV, 3.9.1869, RA VIC/ADDA20/1294.

⁴⁸⁴ Pantzer, Prinz Heinrich, 89/90, 92.

⁴⁸⁵ Best; Pantzer, Eisendecker, 21-22.

⁴⁸⁶ Best, 181f; PH to WII, 11.9.1912, BArch-MA RM2/401.

⁴⁸⁷ E.g. Cortazzi, 79-93; Motadel, David, 'Qajar Shahs in Imperial Germany', *Past and Present*, 213.1 (2011), 191-235; Watanangura, Pornsan (ed.), *The visit of King Chulalongkorn to Europe in 1907: Reflecting on Siamese history* (Bangkok, 2009); Miller, *Enthrallingly exotic*.

⁴⁸⁸ Bott, 144.

members.⁴⁸⁹ Prince Heinrich, likewise, returned King Chulalongkorn's state visit to Potsdam in 1900; he was twice received by Emperor Meiji in 1879 and 1899 and once by his successor Taisho in 1912; and he frequently hosted Japanese princes studying or receiving their military training in Germany, who would then often be his escorts in Japan.⁴⁹⁰

While Britain, prior to the disastrous Boer War and Japan's impressive victories in the Sino-/Russo-Japanese Wars, was renowned for ignoring the tacit rules of intercultural diplomacy, it was particularly smaller or latecomer powers like Germany or Denmark which profited from these soft-power benefits of cosmopolitan royals.⁴⁹¹ For them, the "moral conquests" made by "Sailor Princes" both as representatives of their Western model nations and as distinguished individuals honoured for the respect they showed to their hosts were a much-needed competitive advantage.⁴⁹²

Thus, Prince Heinrich, by never concealing the fact that he had fallen in love with the beautiful landscape and culture of Japan during his first visit as a naval cadet, even obtained some very material gains for his country. His one-year-stay in 1879/80 had been a triumph of hospitality on the part of the Meiji court, and when he returned to the region twenty years later on his mission to Kiautschou, he would not rest until he was allowed to "refresh" his memories in this "only true recreational spot in the East".⁴⁹³ He would visit ancient places like Kyoto, admire Shinto temples, learn the art of Japanese archery, attend theatre plays or Japanese tea ceremonies and always soak up his experiences in a surprisingly appreciative spirit.⁴⁹⁴ In his reports to his brother, Heinrich declared that the Japanese were a "serious, forward-striving people" and advocated "friendly courtesy" towards them.⁴⁹⁵

This connoisseurship of Japanese culture and his favourable view of the Japanese did not go unnoticed by the Meiji court. The gratified Tenno treated Heinrich with unprecedented kindness and tuned his gifts (valuable ancient Samurai armour) to his taste.⁴⁹⁶ Japanese newspapers celebrated the prince's kind personality; and when he embarked on his third visit for Meiji's funeral, Japanese officials declared their open satisfaction with the choice

⁴⁸⁹ Eggers-Lura, *passim*.

⁴⁹⁰ Pantzer, Prinz Heinrich, 91; LASH Abt.395, Nr.9-10, 16.

⁴⁹¹ Best, 175-78.

⁴⁹² PH to WII, 1.7.1899, LASH Abt.395 Nr.9.

⁴⁹³ PH to Senden-Bibran, 25. 7. 98, BArch-MA N160/4; Pantzer, *Eisendecker*, 23-25.

⁴⁹⁴ E.g. PH to WII, 1.7.1899, LASH Abt.395 Nr.9; PH to CPV, 17.7.1899, AHH Briefe 7/06-2.

⁴⁹⁵ PH to WII, 10. and 14.9.1912, BArch-MA RM2/401.

⁴⁹⁶ Freudenberg, 40-46.

of a royal delegate.⁴⁹⁷ As a special bonus reflecting the court's high esteem for him, Heinrich was even allowed to inspect ports like Lassebo which were otherwise closed to foreigners, thus generating valuable insights into the state of the Japanese navy.⁴⁹⁸ Prince Valdemar, meanwhile, by cultivating a close personal friendship with the Siamese royal family involving intimate correspondences and lengthy visits, even contributed to the acquisition of economic concessions which by far exceeded Denmark's strategic importance for Siam.⁴⁹⁹ He remained the public face of his country's peculiar imperialism until the 1920s.

There was a great need for conciliatory intermediaries of this kind. By accessing the intercultural diplomatic arena of the Age of Empire, "Sailor Princes" entered a minefield of world-political tensions. Thus, Prince Alfred's arrival in Japan in 1869 occurred only one year after the Meiji restoration, when the country's ports had been open for just a few months and civil war was still raging. In order to demonstrate his willingness to allow Western influence into his country, the young enlightened Emperor Mutsuhito had to override tradition and treat the English prince as an equal instead of inferior. The Chinese government refused to give the prince a similar reception, forcing him to travel incognito. It was only in 1899, following the disastrous Sino-Japanese War, that this rigid policy changed and Prince Heinrich became the first European royal to be presented at the Chinese Imperial Court.⁵⁰⁰ Heinrich's visit to Japan in 1879, meanwhile, marked the heyday of German-Japanese relations. Yet, an unfortunate shooting trip during which he and his entourage were mobbed by Japanese farmers and subsequently involved in a dispute with the local authorities revealed underlying tensions stemming from Europe's policy of unequal treaties.⁵⁰¹

Germany's participation in the so-called Triple Intervention of 1895, which deprived Japan of its territorial gains from the Sino-Japanese War, and the subsequent seizure of Kiautschou at the Chinese east coast, finally, cast doubt on the country as a cooperative partner. Though France and Russia were equally involved in both the intervention and the

⁴⁹⁷ E.g. report Count Leyden, 4.7.1899, LASH Abt.395 Nr.9; cf. LASH Abt.395 Nr.58; WII to PH, 8.8.1912, LASH Abt.395 Nr.57.

⁴⁹⁸ PH to WII, 21.7.1899, LASH Abt.395, Nr.9; cf. BArch-MA RM2/401, 22. Sept. 1912.

⁴⁹⁹ Cf. letters from members of the Siamese royal family to PV, 21.11.1904-15.12.1928, PVA, pk.9.9; Howitz, Pensak, Thai-Danish relations: 30 cycles of friendship (Copenhagen, 1980), 65-66.

⁵⁰⁰ Reitz, 35-47; Keene, 183-87.

⁵⁰¹ Wippich, Rolf-Harald, 'Prinz Heinrichs Japan-Aufenthalt 1879/80 und der Jagdzwischenfall von Suita', in: Beck, Thomas (ed.), *Überseegeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1999), 267-275.

scramble for China, the Japanese were particularly disappointed by the Germans.⁵⁰² Thus, when Prince Heinrich wanted to visit Japan during his next stay in the region in 1898-1900, public xenophobia had reached such extremes that, for some time, the situation was deemed too dangerous for him to travel.⁵⁰³ Not without reason: for the so-called Otsu incident of 1891, the assassination attempt by a Japanese policeman on the Russian Tsarevich Nicholas, had alerted Europe's foreign offices. The first attack on a royal personality on Japanese soil was luckily thwarted by the resolute action of Nicholas' travel companion, Prince Georgios, among others. Nevertheless, it became a major diplomatic incident.⁵⁰⁴

Emperor Meiji's responses to Suita and Otsu – on both occasions he officially apologized to his guests, the second time even by travelling to Nicholas in person – reveal how highly he and the Japanese public valued foreign opinion and how much they feared that Japan might be considered a barbarous rather than civilized nation. Asia's monarchs were all highly sensitive to the slightest nuances of favourable treatment, jealous of distinctions and desiring the accordance of equal status with European sovereigns.⁵⁰⁵ Thus, the Japanese court, in 1898, was nonetheless eager to secure a second visit by Prince Heinrich despite the security issues. In view of his entrées in Japan and China, the King of Siam could also not hide his disappointment at the news that Heinrich's call at Bangkok had to be postponed in early 1899. When the prince finally managed to attend ten months later, Chulalongkorn faced the uncomfortable dilemma of a simultaneous visit by Prince Valdemar. Not wanting to divide his attention – and knowing that the Danish prince would receive a more cordial welcome than his German cousin – he pleaded for a slight alteration of itineraries. Luckily, Heinrich understood and only arranged for a private meeting between “Sailor Princes”: a small dinner on-board his ship in the Gulf of Siam.⁵⁰⁶

Cosmopolitan nationalists

As the last episode shows, “Sailor Princes” were representatives and agents of inter-imperial tension and rivalry just as much as they worked towards friendly international relations. They travelled the same waters and visited the same regions of the world –

⁵⁰² Pantzer, Prinz Heinrich, 95-99; Wippich, Rolf-Harald, ‘Japan-enthusiasm in Wilhelmine Germany: The case of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-5’, in: Id./Spang, Christian, Japanese-German relations, 1895-1945 (London, 2006), 61-65.

⁵⁰³ LASH Abt.395, Nr.9.

⁵⁰⁴ Schneider, Tale of two princes.

⁵⁰⁵ Motadel, 200-235; LASH Abt.395, Nr.9.

⁵⁰⁶ Relevant correspondence, 15.3.1898-27.11.1899, LASH Abt.395, Nr.5-9; PH to CPV, 26.1.1899, AHH Briefe 7/06-2.

sometimes even at the same time or shortly after each other. Their closeness was noted by foreign observers such as the Maharaja of Johore, who related Prince Heinrich's 1880 visit to that of his uncle Alfred in 1869 hoping that "the two navies in which the scions of two such illustrious and so closely related royal houses are serving" would jointly contribute to the benefit of the world.⁵⁰⁷ The common understanding that the princes were professional and dynastic kin suggested naval cooperation and even a sort of imperialist solidarity between their nations. Yet, the princes also participated in the struggle over who would secure the biggest slice of the imperial pie. They were both cosmopolitans and nationalists.

For small and aspiring nations like Denmark and Greece "cooperative imperialism" in the sense not only of cooperation with "exotic" states, but also of cooperation with major European powers was essential. Both piggybacked on the diplomatic infrastructures created by other powers connected to them by dynastic links. Denmark's commercial interests in the Far East, for example, were protected by Russia until 1912. The Danes established their own legation in the Republic of China only once Russia's position had changed following its conflicts with Japan.⁵⁰⁸ Prince Georgios of Greece undertook his two major cruises to the Far East as a travel companion first of his cousin, the Tsarevich, and then his uncle, Prince Valdemar.

For Britain and Germany, the situation was more complicated, as the two powers were geographically and dynastically close to each other, yet increasingly became imperial rivals. As high-ranking officers, Prince Alfred and Prince Heinrich initially represented a project of Anglo-German naval rapprochement (1871-1890).⁵⁰⁹ When his uncle attended the Kiel fleet review in 1881, Heinrich welcomed him as the "representative of a mighty nation, on friendly terms with and related to the German nation".⁵¹⁰ Just as British historians had done with regard to Denmark in the 1860s, so many Germans in the 1870s-80s construed a special relationship between Britain and Germany based on the idea of racial affinity, dynastic intermarriage and the hope that the younger naval power might become the "junior-partner" of the maritime super-power. Following two naval visits early

⁵⁰⁷ Sturgeon, 7; Mirbach, 95.

⁵⁰⁸ Kirkebæk, Mads, 'The establishment of a Danish legation in China in 1912', in: Id./Brødsgard (eds), *China*, 73-91.

⁵⁰⁹ Duppler, Jörg, 'Die Anlehnung der kaiserlichen Marine an Großbritannien, 1870-1890', in: Rahn, Werner et al. (eds), *Deutsche Marinen im Wandel* (Munich, 2005), 91ff.

⁵¹⁰ 'Das Flottenfest in Kiel', *Provinzial-Correspondenz*, 29 (20.7.1881).

in his reign, however, William II's endeavours to strengthen existing ties were thwarted by his own impertinent behaviour.⁵¹¹

Prince Heinrich's later years were characterized by a love-hate relationship with Britain. During his missions to the Far East, he would enjoy the company of British naval officers and officials. In his letters to his mother from Shanghai in 1898, he rejoiced that "the British and German subjects out here could not be on better terms"; and he wished he "could give many of our narrow-minded country men at home an idea of Great Britain's position on this globe of ours!"⁵¹² Overwhelmed by British colonial sociability, the prince was even disposed to believe in the idea of a "German-English-Japanese-American alliance!?" which Rear-Admiral Lord Charles Beresford expanded before his eyes as an antidote to Russian imperialist aggression in China. "May [...] the day not be too far off, on which we may see the greatest sea power and the greatest continental power friendly united for the sake of commerce, peace and civilization", Heinrich wrote to his mother. Yet, eventually he was disappointed by the "double-tongued" Beresford.⁵¹³

Naïve as he sometimes was, the prince nevertheless also displayed all the signs of a nationalist-chauvinist worldview. While he admired the British nation, he did so with a wish to emulate British success and establish Germany as an independent world power.⁵¹⁴ And while he "tried to make friends with the English", he never stopped suspecting ulterior motives, declaring that "should I find, that they intend harming us in any way out here, I shall stop that policy of mine."⁵¹⁵ Ultimately, the "Sailor Prince", by occupying a central position in Germany's naval iconography and by systematically touring the imagined realm of Greater Germany, represented that fateful naval-imperial challenge which his nation posed to Britain in the 1890s-1900s. In the hostile environment of a competitive rather than cooperative state system this rivalry became one of the many long-term causes for the outbreak of war in 1914.

Despite the potential of dynastic internationalism, all "Sailor Princes" were ultimately viewed – and viewed themselves – as figureheads and promoters of their own country's national interests as opposed to the interests of others. While "exotic" potentates vied for their presence, their global itineraries were critically eyed by Europe's foreign offices. On his mission to Kiautschou in 1899, Prince Heinrich felt sure that "Germany [was] indeed

⁵¹¹ Langguth, 429-30; Duppler, *Anlehnung*, 91ff.

⁵¹² PH to CPV, 9.12.1898 and 8.2.1898, AHH Briefe 7/06-2.

⁵¹³ PH to Senden, BArch-MA N160/4; PH to CPV, 21.11., 27.12. 1898, 13.1., 28.3.1899, AHH 7/06-2.

⁵¹⁴ PH to CPV, 8.2.1898, AHH 7/06-2; Eschenburg, 82-83; Roehl, *Persönliche Monarchie*, 1070ff.

⁵¹⁵ PH to CPV, 10.4.1898, AHH 7/06-2.

being watched” by the British. At the same time, however, German diplomats in Peking, Bangkok or Copenhagen were closely and jealously monitoring Prince Valdemar’s every move in the East. They repeatedly speculated about the purpose of his travels: whether they were private “commercial trips”, “globetrotter enterprises” or pointing towards more substantial joint ventures between Denmark, Russia, France and Siam. The degrees of warmth with which the prince was welcomed by his Asian hosts were read like a barometer. Worried observers noted with satisfaction that both the coldness of Valdemar’s reception in Shanghai “in comparison with HRH Prince Heinrich’s frequent stays” and the “insignificance” of Danish interests in the region meant that there was no need for concern.⁵¹⁶

“Sailor Princes” actively contributed to this hostile climate prevalent between the European powers. Prince Alfred, for example, resented the expanse of the French colonial empire, Britain’s main rival in the mid-Victorian period. In 1862, he reported home from Algiers how “the character of the place is much spoiled by the presence of the French”.⁵¹⁷ Prince Heinrich, on his travels to the Far East, advocated Germany’s foreign cultural policy to create and then “utilize the favourable conditions for us”. Like many other men-on-the-spot, he tried to move imperial peripheries like Kiautschou into the centre of attention of the German government to counter or pre-empt the real or imagined (soft-power) influence of competing powers like Britain, Russia or the USA.⁵¹⁸ Even Prince Valdemar, the prime representative of Danish cooperative imperialism in all its meanings viewed his activities in the light of (economic) competition. He was convinced that the “Danish interests” in Bangkok, that is the many private businesses which had been established there with the help of Admiral Richelieu, were so vital for the small power that they “ha[d] to be supported from home”. For if King Chulalongkorn’s aging confidant should retire and not have been replaced by another “nice Danish naval officer”, “an Englishman w[ould] surely be taken instead” and thus end the golden period of Danish-Siamese relations.⁵¹⁹ Prince Georgios, finally, like many members of the Glücksborg dynasty, maintained an open hostility towards the German Empire. In July 1895, he even persuaded his father not to send a naval delegation to the opening of the Kiel Canal, since

⁵¹⁶ Reports, 20.2.1900-21.11.1909, PA AA, RZ 201, R5294-5296.

⁵¹⁷ PA to QV, 30.11.1862, 1862, RA VIC/ADDA20/1219.

⁵¹⁸ PH to WII, 1.7.1899, LASH Abt.395 Nr.9; PH to WII, 29.9.1912 and 13.10.1912, BArch-MA RM2/401; cf. Roehl, *Persönliche Monarchie*, 1067.

⁵¹⁹ PV to KCIX, 3.1.1900, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.2.

its construction would enable ships to sail from the North to the Baltic Sea without passing the Danish Straits, which was “clean antidanish (sic)”.⁵²⁰

As these examples show, “Sailor Princes”, like many empire and diaspora roamers of the Age of Empire, were ultimately “cosmopolitan nationalists”. Undoubtedly, they displayed signs of cosmopolitanism: they shared many of the practices and attitudes of people at home in the world and open to or even appreciative of cultural difference and diversity.⁵²¹ However, they were also and probably more importantly nationalists who were guided by a blind devotion to their nation and who put their nation’s interests before everything else. As scholars of globalization, migration history or postcolonial studies stress, the global interconnectedness experienced by many Europeans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did not necessarily lead to the disappearance of concepts of national and racial difference; rather, it increased and intensified the mechanisms of delimitation.⁵²² Chauvinist nationalism evolved parallel to – or even as a result of – the growing-together of the world; and the people who crossed the borders of this globalizing and nationalizing world responded to their experiences by cultivating not only cosmopolitan or internationalist, but also nationalist mindsets.⁵²³ “Sailor Princes” shared the transnational lifestyles of uprooted diaspora communities and colonial societies as well as the bewilderment and disconcertion that came with it. Their experiences widened their horizons. “Once in the Far East”, Prince Heinrich wrote to his mother in 1898, “the world looks very very different from what it does in Berlin, London or Friedrichshof!” But the experience of difference could also trigger defensive mechanisms. “Out here”, Heinrich reported to his brother from Tsingtau in 1912, “one feels a certain apprehensiveness, not to say a certain non-comprehension of East Asiatic affairs, which cannot be measured in our domestic terms.”⁵²⁴

One defensive mechanism which sustained nation-building projects and nationalist mindsets in Europe, but also reassured the “civilized” West in its contacts with those cultures subjected to (informal) colonial expansion, was the process of “othering” and stereotyping: By defining themselves in contrast to (non-)European “others” with fixed, usually negative characteristics (for example “barbarity”) Europeans were able to

⁵²⁰ PG to KCIX/QL, 10/22.7 95, KCQLA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.12/59.

⁵²¹ Calhoun, Craig, ‘Cosmopolitanism and nationalism’, *Nations & Nationalism*, 14.3 (2008), 427-48.

⁵²² Conrad, *Globalisierung*, 7-25, 65-70; Calhoun, 429.

⁵²³ Lachenicht/Heinsohn, 12f; Weber, Thomas, *Our friend ‘the enemy’: Elite education in Britain and Germany before World War I* (Stanford, Calif, 2008), 48-98.

⁵²⁴ PH to CPV, 10.4.1898, AHH Briefe 7/06-2; PH to WII, 13.10.1912, BArch-MA RM2/401.

construct and support a positive self-image justifying their hegemonic aspirations. In his seminal work on “Orientalism”, Edward Said interpreted the European way of perceiving and depicting Eastern cultures as inherently inferior as such a strategy of self-affirmation.⁵²⁵ His cultural criticism has been modified, though, by scholars who prefer the less one-sided term exoticism: It refers to, on the one hand, the general curiosity and fascination which widening circles of European societies felt for all kinds of exotic things (not just the Oriental); on the other hand, it describes the intellectual/art movement whose members, dissatisfied with European modernity, actually longed for semi-imaginary “exotic counter-worlds”.⁵²⁶ Chris Bongie distinguished between “imperialist exoticism”, a sort of “Orientalist” mindset which “affirm[ed] the hegemony of modern civilization over less developed, savage countries” and was directed towards imperial conquest; and “exoticizing exoticism”, an attraction to what was different from the civilized West.⁵²⁷ Taken together, these two processes of “othering” can probably best explain the Janus-faced attitudes of “Sailor Princes” towards their non-European hosts.

Like many of the cultured elites of Europe, “Sailor Princes” were “exoticizing exoticists” in the sense that they took an aesthetic or even nostalgic pleasure in what was perceived as “exotic”. Their friendly attitudes towards the Kingdoms of Hawaii and Siam or the Japanese Empire were partly based on general trends in their societies. Prince Alfred, for example, shared the fascination of his contemporaries for the tropical islands of the South Seas. French and British travelogues and literary fictions from the late eighteenth century had launched a pervasive myth of the islands of the South Pacific as “veritable Edens, inhabited by noble savages and beautiful and sexually available women”.⁵²⁸ When the prince visited Tahiti in July 1869, he was thus enthralled by “all that tropical beauty of scenery, amongst the most peaceful and charming inhabitants”. He gave his mother a detailed account of the charming Tahitians with their “wreaths of leaves and flowers”⁵²⁹, because he knew her own love of exotic lands and handsome foreigners. It was also the queen’s exoticism far more than her royal solidarity which induced her to single out the kings of Hawaii as the recipients of her special graciousness.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁵ Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

⁵²⁶ Schepers, Gerhard, ‘Exoticism in early-twentieth-century German literature on Japan’, in: Spang/Wippich (eds), *Japanese-German relations*, 98-113; Andreassen, Rikke, ‘The “exotic” as mass entertainment: Denmark 1878-1909’, *Race and Class*, 45.2 (2003), 21-38.

⁵²⁷ Bongie, Chris, *Exotic memories: Literature, colonialism and the fin-de-siècle* (Stanford, 1991), 16f.

⁵²⁸ Brawley, Sean/Dixon, Chris, *The South Seas: A reception history from Daniel Defoe to Dorothy Lamour* (Lanham, 2015).

⁵²⁹ PA to QV, 10.7.1869, RA VIC/ADDA20/1292.

⁵³⁰ Miller, *Enthrallingly exotic*, 92ff.

Prince Heinrich's enthusiasm for Japanese warfare, sports and craftsmanship, meanwhile, reflected the pan-European trend of Japonism. Japan was recognized as an ancient, advanced civilization in Europe and Japanese art not only commanded a high collector's value, but its aesthetics also influenced Western art schools. The Land of the Rising Sun was increasingly imagined as an idyllic Arcadia characterized by majestic mountains and cherry blossoms, inhabited by tiny, cultivated people and erotic Geishas. Like many European tourists, Prince Heinrich perceived its ancient costumes and traditions as refreshingly different from European modernity and, to a certain extent, wished them to stay the way they were.⁵³¹ He declared that European churches could not compete with Japanese Shinto temples "as far as scenery and architecture are concerned"; he regretted that "our Western civilization does not admit similarly innocent pleasures" as Japanese tea ceremonies; and though he admired the Westernization of the Imperial Court, he admitted that "naturally this is not exactly what you look for in Japan."⁵³² At the same time, his admiration for the speedy modernization of the country reflected a wider feeling of kinship entertained by many Germans for "East Asia's Prussia". Japan, which combined a fascinatingly exotic culture with a progressive profile closely modelled on Germany, functioned as a "mirror image" in which they could admire their own remarkable success.⁵³³

This mirror function of exoticism is also reflected in Prince Valdemar's attitudes towards the East. His close relations with the kingdom of Siam can be viewed as a late illustration of what Elizabeth Oxfeldt has termed "Nordic Orientalism". According to her, the many (fictional) encounters with the exotic that characterized nineteenth-century Danish literary and popular culture (e.g. H.C. Andersen's fairy-tales or the entertainment park Tivoli) helped the Danish nation-state to construct a cosmopolitan rather than provincial identity after 1814/1864. From this perspective, Valdemar's activities contributed towards a wider project of nation-building which set Denmark in relation to other Orientalist powers such as France.⁵³⁴ Ebbe Volquardsen has stressed, however, how little exotic and how fundamentally Copenhagenish stories like Adam Oehlenschlaeger's *Aladdin* really were. Rather than constructing them as an "other", the Danes were identifying with their exotic

⁵³¹ Schepers 103; Wuthenow, Ralph-Rainer, 'Unexotisches Nippon: Nicht nur deutsche Japan-Bilder', in: Maler, Anselm (ed.), *Exotische Welt in populären Lektüren* (Tübingen, 1990), 19-35.

⁵³² PH to WII, 28.9.1912, BArch-MA RM2/401; PH to CPV, 11.7.1899, AHH Briefe 7/06-2.

⁵³³ Wippich, *Japan-enthusiasm*, 66-74.

⁵³⁴ Oxfeldt, 11-15.

counterparts and establishing a sort of romantic kinship between North and East.⁵³⁵ In surprising congruity with the literary fictions, Prince Valdemar's accounts of Eastern cultures display a mix of curiosity and empathy. His first description of the Siamese Court even reads like an Andersen/Oehlenschlaeger tale. For just as the two national bards clothed their own society in Oriental clothes, so the cheeky Valdemar translated the exotic women's costumes of the Siamese Court (trousers!) to Amalienborg Palace: He "imagin[ed] the ladies at home in this costume, what [they] would say, if they met like this at the Sunday dinner table".⁵³⁶ In thus "exotifying" the Danish, the Danes established a familiarity which helped them to understand or even incorporate the "other".⁵³⁷ For Denmark's empire roamers the "exotic" was a mirror in which they spotted the image of the "noble Dane", an adventurous Aladdin whose success story in the Orient differed from that of the other imperialists because he did not conquer by force, but by kindness.⁵³⁸

Europe's eastern border states, finally, were even torn themselves between their Eastern and Western identities. Thus, Tsarevich Nicholas's grand tour on which he was accompanied by Prince Georgios represented a turn towards the East which influenced intellectual and political life in fin-de-siècle Russia. Disappointed with the intellectual-political development of Western Europe and disillusioned about Russia's prospects of ever catching up with its material progress, Russian intellectuals and nationalists such as Nicholas's tutor Esper Ukhtomsky fell in love with the concept of Asianism. Seeking not only a counter-world, but also their own self in the Oriental "other", they began to believe that both Russia's roots and her future lay in Asia. The Tsarevich, inspired by Ukhtomsky, openly praised Eastern culture as unsullied by European influence. That he was joined by Georgios made complete sense. For the Greeks, who yearned to be accepted as a "civilized" country by the European great powers because of their ancient heritage also knew how it felt to be at the receiving end of Europe's "othering" cultural imperialism. Gradually, therefore, they would embrace their Eastern, Byzantine heritage as a complementary source of pride.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁵ Volquardsen, Ebbe, 'Die Orange im Turban: Über die Funktionen von Orientrepräsentationen in der dänischen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts', *Tijdschrift voor Skandinavistiek*, 30. (2010), 99-123.

⁵³⁶ PV to KCIX, 13.2.1900 and 3.1.1900, PVA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.8.2.

⁵³⁷ Nielsen, Aldrig, 68-73.

⁵³⁸ Gravers, Mikael, 'Den ædle dansker i "Orientens" spejl: Billeder fra det danske eventyr i Siam omkring 1900', in: Høiris, Ole (ed.), *Dansk mental geografi: Danskernes syn på verden og på sig selv* (Aarhus, 1989), 105-125.

⁵³⁹ Schneider, *Tale of two princes*; Id., *Sporting Hermes*.

Even Nicholas's Asianism and Georgios's Byzantinism, however, included visions of hegemonic expansion towards the East and ended in more or less fateful military campaigns. All "Sailor Princes" were ultimately also "imperialist exoticists" in the sense that they entertained a Eurocentric sense of superiority over their exotic "others" which implicitly justified imperialist domination or exploitation. Thus, Prince Valdemar, though he would come to epitomize the Danish break with provincialism, also represented Denmark's paternalistic attitudes towards the Greenlandic Inuit as well as the ex-slave population of the West Indies.⁵⁴⁰ Prince Alfred was well-versed in the art of receiving and courting the native tribes and princes of Africa, Australia or India and, to some extent, personified the idea of the racial and cultural equality of the "great white" queen's subjects. However, he was also renowned for his penchant for treating royal tours as big game safaris emblematic of the seigneurial attitudes of white-settler colonialism as well as amorous escapades emblematic of the shadowy sides of the European grand tour.⁵⁴¹ His enraptured account of the Tahitian beauties, moreover, was preceded by a contemptuous account of the Maoris of New Zealand, whom, against his expectations, he found "a cringing, talking, deceitful, barbarous nation and I don't think there will ever be peace in New Zealand until they are quite got rid of."⁵⁴²

Contemporary racist stereotypes can be found in all princes' accounts of their "others". Particularly the great losers of the imperial game in the East, the Chinese, were considered a "vile" people living in "filthy" conditions and "most cruel [...] to their own countrymen and fellow creatures". Prince Heinrich learned to be differentiating about them. Thus, he thought that "a well-trained Chinaman accustomed to European ways and modes of thinking" could be "a perfect man". But his appreciative language resembled that of a dog breeder and he blindly adopted stereotypes such as the "deceitfulness" of the Chinese upper classes notwithstanding the European powers' own shadowy politics.⁵⁴³

"Deceitfulness" was also one of the many stereotypes about the Japanese despite the progressive image that they managed to cultivate in the West. Even here, every appreciative remark made by Heinrich about the "little Japs" who were "very clever" and had "something confident in their yellow faces" carried chauvinist, racist undertones.⁵⁴⁴ On closer inspection, the prince admired Japanese culture and court life not so much for

⁵⁴⁰ Fredensborg; Jensen, 59-61.

⁵⁴¹ Reitz, 38; McCreery, *Transnational*; Pearl, 215-17.

⁵⁴² PA to QV, 10.7.1869, RA VIC/ADDA20/1292.

⁵⁴³ PH to CPV, 26.05., 22.07., 24.10.1898 and 3.3.1899, AHH Briefe 7/06-2.

⁵⁴⁴ PH to CPV, 17.7.1899, AHH Briefe 7/06-2; PH to WII, 10.9.1912, BArch-MA RM2/401.

their singular features, but for their degree of Westernization and particularly for their adoption of German influences.⁵⁴⁵ This very strength that caused the respect of the West eventually also created a new “disquiet about Japanese intentions and aggression” which was channelled into the spectre of the “yellow peril” conjured up by William II, among others.⁵⁴⁶

Neither Prince Heinrich nor any other “Sailor Prince” did much to counter the processes of delimitation or the climate of suspicion which prevailed in their era of accelerated globalization. Their privileged view of the world sparked cosmopolitan and exoticist mindsets which enabled them to negotiate the minefields of international diplomacy. But being children of their time rather than visionaries, they also entertained aggressively chauvinist, Orientalist attitudes which induced them to put their skills in the service of imperial expansion. The distinction between in- and outgroups limited the possibilities of cooperative imperialism. Within their national-imperial systems, however, they strengthened togetherness on yet another level.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the functions performed by “Sailor Princes” as mobile representatives of their monarchies. As has been demonstrated, their hybrid identities as sailors and princes on the move made them ideally suited to help their dynasties to position themselves in the complex world of oceanic empires. This world was characterized by a multiplicity of imperial systems, some large and expanding like the British, some disintegrating like the Danish and yet others lacking precise territorial borders like Greater Germany or Greater Greece. By spinning fine threads of belonging around disconnected colonies and diaspora communities, little by little, “Sailor Princes” helped to transform these systems into comprehensive imperial webs centred on the imperial crown.

Sometimes, the imperial projects that they thus catalysed preceded wider, societal-political awareness (for example the Greater-Britain thinkers or the Danish-Atlantic-Isles Association). At other times, they followed national imperatives, for example in Germany or Greece, where the empire-building project was a logical extension or even a decisive part of the nation-building process. At all times, however, the princes increased their monarchies’ perceived relevance in a period of intensified globalization. For by embodying the monarchical nation and by carrying it to the empire’s ends, they not only

⁵⁴⁵ PH to WII, 21.7.1899, LASH Abt.395, Nr.9; PH to CPV, 11.7.1899, AHH Briefe 7/06-2.

⁵⁴⁶ Wippich, Japan-enthusiasm, 75-77; Schepers, 100; Conrad, Globalisierung, 180ff.

united hitherto loosely-knit or entirely imagined wider homelands into at least virtual units, but they also unified their narrower homelands around the idea of a seaborne colonial empire. The conviction that such empires were essential resources of economic and human capital, great-power status and prestige was one of the guiding beliefs of the fin-de-siècle. By demonstrating that navy, nation, empire and monarchy were inseparable, the monarchy made itself indispensable.

The imperial systems within which the princes moved about and the fine threads that they were spinning crossed with other imperial webs and other fine threads spun by other princes, though. In this deep web of webs, “Sailor Princes” were still skilled and privileged go-betweens who could negotiate friendly relations as a basis for economic, political and cultural cooperation, informal penetration or white-imperialist solidarity. The language of royal diplomacy and the cosmopolitanism of the naval officer helped them to bridge culture gaps and interact on an equal footing with the elites of countries as diverse as Hawaii, Japan or Siam. In their missions the princes were, moreover, supported by the fact that, though they were somehow responsible to their home governments, they did not have explicit political agendas; they were professionals or royal tourists who happened to have access to the highest circles of their host societies. Their hybrid identities which put into question the myths of meritocracy and professionalism thus proved a unique asset in the hybrid world of empires. However, this hybridity also manifested itself in torn attitudes towards the “other” typical of late-nineteenth-century empire roamers. The princes were “cosmopolitan nationalists” and “exoticizing” or even “imperialist exoticists” who ultimately viewed the world from a Eurocentric, nationalist perspective of competition and an all-legitimizing superiority over their European and particularly non-European “others”.

This shows that, although their mobility enabled them to connect with the peripheries, the princes were still and predominantly agents of the imperial centre. They reached out to colonial subjects and alien royal courts, but their journeys were ultimately staged for the eyes of their audiences at home. As such agents, the princes fit nicely with the “postcolonial turn” in historiography, which has drawn attention to the interdependencies between Europe’s metropolises and their colonial peripheries. Postcolonial scholars address not only the question of how colonial rule impacted on colonial societies, but also how encounters with the exotic “other” in imperialist contexts were reflected and

represented in metropolitan everyday life.⁵⁴⁷ “Sailor Princes” actively participated in these interchanges. They embodied the exotic dreams and colonial fantasies, the racist stereotypes and imperialist schemes of their home societies, imposing colonial rule on their foreign hosts. And, as travellers commanding huge publicity, they brought the empire back home from their journeys, re-shaping and often re-enforcing those mindsets as well as representing intoxicating power fantasies.

Johannes Paulmann has drawn attention to the fact that the physical omnipresence of nineteenth-century monarchs facilitated by royal progresses and international state visits was accompanied by an omnipresence in the media and the consumer market – which discovered the marketing opportunities of mass spectacles and royal celebrities.⁵⁴⁸ The royal tours of “Sailor Princes” were undoubtedly some of the most exotic, adventurous and entertaining spectacles which the monarchy had to offer. They were therefore ideally suited not only to extend the monarchy’s mobility and visibility to the ends of empire and beyond, but also to reach a mass audience at home. The frequent physical absences of “Sailor Princes” were thus accompanied by a striking omnipresence in the media and the popular imagination, as will be shown in the last chapter.

⁵⁴⁷ E.g. Thompson, Andrew, *The Empire strikes back?: The impact of imperialism on Britain from the mid-nineteenth century* (Harlow, 2005).

⁵⁴⁸ Paulmann, *Peripatetische Herrschaft*, 455-461.

4 Princes living on the edge: Celebrity and the markets

One day, while stationed on-board HMS *St George* in the North Sea in the summer of 1862, Prince Alfred disembarked at Yarmouth “with the intention of playing a quiet game of cricket”. As he reported home, he was “no sooner on shore than in a simple language I was mobbed by the whole of the population of Yarmouth and half that of Norwich who had come down by train”. The prince eventually had to take refuge in a friend’s house. “[T]he crowd remained before the door”, though, and even when he escaped “the back way”, his freedom did not last long. After a short stroll through town, he and his company were “discovered again” and finally “braved the crowd”.⁵⁴⁹ An even more bizarre situation occurred at the same time in Norwich where the false rumour of an incognito visit by the prince sent “hundreds” of citizens to the Cathedral “in the delusive hope of finding him there”.⁵⁵⁰

40 years later, Prince Heinrich travelled to the US aboard the *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, a brand-new ocean liner of the North German Lloyd shipping company. His passage aboard an ordinary express mail steamer provided the other approximately 1000 passengers with a rare opportunity to experience a royal personage up close. As the journalist Victor Laverrenz noted, a “gentle siege” on the part of the female travellers ensued. The ladies would follow the easy-going prince to the smoking room and a “veritable cult” developed around him. Even more than by ordinary citizens, though, Heinrich was surrounded by a crowd of journalists and illustrators from both sides of the Atlantic who became bolder with every passing day. Initially, they discreetly drew their sketches under the table. As they realized the cooperative spirit of the prince, however, they began to take open sessions. Only when an intrusive photographer crossed the boundaries of decency by placing his giant camera close to the princely table and producing an uncomfortable cloud of smoke, did the long-suffering prince rebuke this impertinent intruder.⁵⁵¹

As these episodes indicate, “Sailor Princes” were definitely celebrities. Wherever they appeared – even if only rumour had it – people gathered to see them. Their activities attracted the attention of the news-hungry (mass) media and their journeys became major media events.

At first glance, this is easy to explain. As members of their respective royal families, the princes formed part of what Chris Rojek has termed “ascribed celebrity”: they belonged

⁵⁴⁹ PA to QV, 15.6.1862, RA VIC/ADDA20/1212.

⁵⁵⁰ The Times (3.6.1862).

⁵⁵¹ Laverrenz, 18-26.

to a select group of people who enjoy a status of automatic fame by lineage. For centuries, monarchs and their families had been undisputed centres of public attention. In the nineteenth century, their gradual emergence from arcane seclusion and the growing curiosity of a widening reading public even meant that the most trivial details of royal everyday life could reach the news in the court circular sections of the press. In this scenario, princes were public attractions and media stars not because they had done anything special, but simply because they were princes.⁵⁵²

However, one could also argue that “Sailor Princes” belonged to a second group: those who had “achieved celebrity”. There had always been men who were not famous from birth, Rojek explains, but who had won public acclaim through their personal “accomplishments [...] in open competition” (soldiers, authors, artists). As the middle classes rose to power, modern societies democratized and the expanding mass-media and consumer markets craved more food, this group of ‘meritocratic’ celebrities grew in size and increasingly challenged the traditional elites to compete for the centre of attention.⁵⁵³

In the second part of the nineteenth century, the publicity achieved by revolutionary heroes such as Giuseppe Garibaldi, musicians such as Richard Wagner or scientists such as Charles Darwin equalled or even surpassed that of Queen Victoria or Emperor William II.⁵⁵⁴ Monarchs thus had to learn to speak to their audiences in new ways in order to retain the public attention which had once been taken for granted and which increasingly became a sign of continued relevance. As public discourse began to question the newsworthiness of court circulars and the worthiness of princes in public office, “Sailor Princes” added a new lustre of “achieved celebrity” to the monarchy. Their meritocratic professionalism and connection with cutting-edge naval technology, the ways in which they mingled with the crowd, but most of all their dangerous lives at sea and their exotic world tours all seemed to entitle them to public attention in their own right. “The prince is not a prince”, remarked one excited American journalist about Prince Heinrich, “He is a capital fellow!”⁵⁵⁵

It is the central argument of this chapter that “Sailor Princes”, by achieving a celebrity which complemented and enhanced the celebrity ascribed to them by their birth, made a

⁵⁵² Rojek, Chris, ‘Courting fame: The monarchy and celebrity culture’, in: Bentley, Tom/Wilsdon, James (eds), *Monarchies: What are kings and queens for?* (London, 2002), 105-10, 105.

⁵⁵³ Rojek, Chris, *Courting fame*, 105-6; Rojek, Chris, *Celebrity* (London, 2001), 13-19.

⁵⁵⁴ Riall, Lucy, ‘Garibaldi: The first celebrity’, *History Today*, 57.8 (2007), 41-47; Browne, Janet, ‘Looking at Darwin: Portraits and the Making of an Icon’, *Isis*, 100.3 (2009), 542-570; Vazsonyi, Nicholas, *Richard Wagner: Self-promotion and the making of a brand* (Cambridge, 2010).

⁵⁵⁵ Laverrenz, 24-5.

decisive contribution to the public portfolio of the monarchy as the one kind of celebrity became eclipsed by the other. Over recent years, a number of innovative studies have investigated the ways in which nineteenth-century monarchs positioned themselves in the emerging mass media society. The gist of their findings is that while many monarchs increased their immediate visibility, were attentive to their media representation and indeed learned how to harness modern communication strategies, there were also a range of European sovereigns who misjudged the importance of public relations or were unable to find an up-to-date approach to their audiences' expectations.⁵⁵⁶ Eva Giloi, for example, has detected a “communication gap” in the media strategies of Emperor William II, who is often considered a quintessential “media monarch”. According to her, there was a marked discrepancy between William’s own autocratic self-representation and the sentimental projections of his subjects.⁵⁵⁷ Lucy Riall even considered the entire monarchical establishment of Europe unable to produce a royal equivalent to the dashing romantic adventure heroes of the kind epitomised by Garibaldi that became so widely popular in the period.⁵⁵⁸ One could argue, though, that the public persona “Sailor Prince” was exactly the dynastic response that the monarchy needed in order to cater for the wishes of the mass market. It bridged the gaps which naturally arose between the self-representation of single monarchs and the diverse expectations of their many audiences. Especially the princes’ dangerous lives at sea and their journeys to exotic lands added a dimension of romantic adventure to the dynastic portfolio which seems very Garibaldian indeed.

This chapter examines how the public persona “Sailor Prince” was moulded, received, appropriated, and (re-)invented by a series of agents and audiences. First, it analyses how the figure of the seafaring prince fitted into the cultural environment of the “Age of Adventure”, when maritime and colonial adventure novels invaded the popular print markets of Europe. How did the narratives and media of this cutting-edge genre mould the representation of the princes? In a second step, the chapter enquires into the ways in which the monarchy and its PR-advisors actively shaped and influenced this popular representation and how they interacted with other mediators to this end. Were royals passive, almost reluctant celebrities as the Yarmouth episode suggests – or did they

⁵⁵⁶ Plunkett; Urbach, Victoria; Müller, *Our Fritz*, 105ff.; Kohlrausch, *Monarch im Skandal*; Id., ‘Der Mann mit dem Adlerhelm: Wilhelm II., Medienstar um 1900’, in Gerhard, Paul (ed.), *Das Jahrhundert der Bilder, 1900-1949* (Göttingen, 2009), 68-75; Id., *Monarchischer Kult*, 117-137.

⁵⁵⁷ Giloi, Eva, ‘Copyrighting the Kaiser: Publicity, piracy, and the right to Wilhelm II’s image’, *Central European History*, 45 (2012), 407-51, 423-28.

⁵⁵⁸ Riall, *First celebrity*, 41.

actively promote themselves through subtle cooperation with the press as indicated in the anecdote about Prince Heinrich? To gauge the true extent of monarchical agency, a particular focus has to be put on the many co-designers of the monarchical brand “Sailor Prince”: the journalists, artists, entrepreneurs, and ordinary citizens who were involved in its creation and re-invention either by explicit invitation or on their own initiative. What were their guiding motives and strategies? Finally, the chapter investigates how “Sailor Princes”, like many other commercialized popular heroes and personality brands of the Age of Empire, helped to convey subtle ideological messages to their diverse audiences. How, if at all, did they help to popularize the navalist vision, the imperialist mission, and the monarchical idea? And did they thus contribute to the stabilization of the political system?

Underlying all of these inquiries is the issue of the popular reception of the phenomenon “Sailor Prince”. The question of how we can measure the popular appeal of monarchy in general or of individual royal personalities in particular for periods predating the advent of the opinion poll has long puzzled historians. One possible criterion would be the immediate turnout at royal events. While some scholars are convinced that there is a relation between mass attendance and mass allegiance⁵⁵⁹, others have conceded, though, that it is virtually impossible to draw any reliable conclusions from public practices vis-à-vis the crown.⁵⁶⁰ The crowds that stalked Prince Alfred could have been motivated by all kinds of impulses, from curiosity to entertainment, without being monarchists. This study takes into account this ambiguity of popular attitudes. Another possible criterion of popularity is, of course, the frequency and nature of appearances in the print media. Newspaper commentaries and illustrations are certainly the most frequently used basis for this kind of assessment. Historians have pointed to the discrepancies between published and public opinion, though, and drawn attention to the tendentiousness and sycophancy of the press resulting from the varying conditions within which it operated.⁵⁶¹ This study does not suggest a naïve deduction of popular attitudes from published texts. What it does, though, is acknowledge the many ways in which sales-oriented media and self-confident readers interacted with each other and thus contributed to the creation of common “imaginative landscapes”⁵⁶². To arrive at a more nuanced picture of these landscapes, this

⁵⁵⁹ Colley, 121.

⁵⁶⁰ Büschel, Hubertus, *Untertanenliebe: Der Kult um deutsche Monarchen, 1770-1830* (Göttingen, 2006).

⁵⁶¹ E.g. Giloi, *Monarchy*, 1-5.

⁵⁶² A term adopted from Dawson, 145.

chapter finally focuses on a variety of further media which reached circles beyond the average literate middle-class adult man: family magazines, children's literature and the illustrated penny press, cinematography and exhibitions, consumer goods, advertising and "fan mail".⁵⁶³

What emerges from this multi-layered analysis is a complex picture of the "imaginative landscapes" of European societies in the Age of Empire and of the ways in which the monarchy featured within them both as an agent and object. It is a picture which avoids simple top-to-bottom accounts of public opinion. Yet, it also acknowledges that seafaring adventure princes, by drawing on the stately pomp and colourful imageries of empire, by representing the navy in all its splendour and lofty possibilities, and by keeping up the hierarchical political order, were centrally involved in a series of late-nineteenth-century projects which carried within them both reason for unbounded optimism and the seeds of future destruction.

Ad-ventures of empire

When the *Dublin University Magazine*, in January 1869, published its remark about the "royal prince, who is also a sailor" cited in the introduction of this study, it was actually commenting on a book which was widely reviewed in the British press that winter. "*The cruise of HMS Galatea*", authored by the naval chaplain John Milner, was generally considered a monotonous account of the first part of Prince Alfred's world cruise. It tediously detailed endless receptions and lacked the royal insights that many of its readers had been looking for.⁵⁶⁴ As the magazine wittily observed, though, it also held the potential of what one might call an adventure novel. "And what loyal Briton, of either sex, would leave unread a narrative in which England's sailor Prince plays the part of sole hero!" it remarked and then cited the three most exciting incidents from the book: First, there is the "rough weather" which every sailor must brave and which, in the *Galatea's* case, is epitomized by "a nasty engagement with a cyclone". Then there is the prince's "royal liking for sport of all kinds" which becomes most dramatic during an elephant hunt when Alfred reserved "his fire until the formidable beast is close upon him. Will not that

⁵⁶³ Cf. Giloi, Monarchy; Unowsky, Daniel, *The pomp and politics of patriotism: Imperial celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916* (West Lafayette, 2005), 120ff; Richards, Thomas, *The commodity culture of Victorian England: Advertising and spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford, 1990). Regarding fan mail, cf. Berenson, Edward, 'Charisma and the making of heroes in Britain and France, 1880-1914', in: Id./Giloi, Eva (eds), *Constructing charisma: Fame, celebrity and power in 19th-century Europe* (New York, 2010), 21-40; Schwarzenbach, Alexis, 'Royal Photographs: Emotions for the People', *Contemporary European History*, 13.3 (2004), 255-80.

⁵⁶⁴ Milner, John, *The cruise of HMS Galatea* (London, 1869).

thrill the hearts of loyal British maids and matrons, especially when they find the story told over again by the Duke in his own words?” Finally, there “comes the narrowest escape of all, when the assassin’s pistol is deliberately pointed close to the Duke’s back”.

What the *University Magazine* was doing in this review was to draw attention to some of the most popular aspects of nineteenth-century “Sailor Princes”. “*The cruise of HMS Galatea*” was probably the dreariest in a range of works whose sales figures profited from the priceless combination of royal hero and adventurous plot. In the period following the Napoleonic Wars, adventure stories featuring terrible shipwrecks, exotic animals, and all kinds of combat scenes gained such widespread appeal in the popular literature of Europe that the nineteenth century has justly been called the “Age of Adventure”.⁵⁶⁵ Editions and translations of Daniel Defoe’s “Robinson Crusoe”, James Fennimore Cooper’s “Leatherstocking” or Jules Verne’s “20.000 leagues under the sea” sold like hot cakes all over the continent, just as did melodramatic romances or colportage novels which met the sensationalist tastes of the audience. The narrative structure of the adventure novel – departure, danger, proving oneself – and its motifs, both gripping and reassuringly familiar – dangerous travels, exotic encounters – particularly appealed to the increasingly literate and affluent middle and working classes. For the propertied bourgeoisie, they provided a thrilling contrast to their secure lives, for the less well-off a quick escape from the monotony of their working existence.⁵⁶⁶

The language and imagery of adventure were so influential that they reached the entire popular print-market including news stories and scientific reports.⁵⁶⁷ Even the most serious – and tedious – travelogues could not escape this appeal. Thus, the news coverage and public reception of “Sailor Princes” were automatically framed in corresponding terms. Both the commissioned chroniclers of their voyages and the journalists and readers who participated from a safe distance tended to jump at any exciting, romantic episode from their seafaring lives which could be moulded into an adventure narrative. In Germany, there even appeared a number of novels for young people featuring Prince Heinrich as a hero. Through their dangerous and exotic lives, all of the “Sailor Princes” could satisfy their audiences’ interest in the extraordinary in the sense of both ascribed

⁵⁶⁵ Steinbrink, Bernd, Abenteuerliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland: Studien zu einer vernachlässigten Gattung (Tübingen, 1983), 56-9.

⁵⁶⁶ Steinbrink, 1-5; Dawson, 53; Behrman, 91-95; Carpenter, Kevin/Butts, Dennis (eds), Ausbruch und Abenteuer. Deutsche und englische Abenteuerliteratur von Robinson bis Winnetou (Oldenburg, 1984).

⁵⁶⁷ Fiedler, Matthias, Zwischen Abenteuer, Wissenschaft und Kolonialismus: Der deutsche Afrikadiskurs im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert (Köln, 2005), 124-70.

(royal) and achieved (adventurous) celebrity – and this at a time when their royal relatives, by meeting the demands of “civic publicness” and “embourgeoisement”, had arguably become too ordinary to generate excitement. It was the hint of adventure that sold the “*Cruise of the Galatea*” despite its literary shortcomings. And there were many other books, goods and ideas that adventure helped to sell as well.

The main feature which linked “Sailor Princes” and adventure was definitely the theme of travel. According to Margaret Cohen, the nineteenth-century adventure novel was a “travelling genre” in more than one sense. On the one hand, its plots were essentially travel narratives which translocated their protagonists to the ends of the known world (to the sea, to transoceanic continents and exotic wildernesses, to space or to the parallel worlds of science fiction). Ever since Homer’s “much suffering master mariner” Odysseus, seaborne travel was especially closely associated with adventure: with the risks incurred by ship owners, passengers and crews when putting to sea and with the dangers lurking in the deep which had to be overcome by means of nautical skills. It was from mariner’s yarns and voyagers’ reports that fictional sea novels and Robinsonades emerged, which in turn, together with picaresque and historical novels, formed the immediate ancestry of the modern adventure novel.⁵⁶⁸

On the other hand, the (sea) adventure novel was also a “travelling genre” in the sense that it spread all over Europe from the 1820s onwards. James Fenimore Cooper’s “The Pilot”, Captain Frederick Marryat’s and Eugène Sue’s naval romances were the first of a series of modern, mass-produced takes on an ancient theme which ushered in a craze for adventure fiction. Starting from the maritime nations Britain, France and the US, (sea) adventure novels invaded the popular literatures of all of Europe, first in the shape of translations in literary magazines or book series, then in independent, national-language versions.⁵⁶⁹ In Germany, adventure authors such as Friedrich Gerstäcker or Charles Sealsfield were widely successful as early as the 1840s. In Denmark and Greece, English and French adventure novels were likewise devoured from the 1840s and 1870s, respectively. It was only in the 1880s, though, that Niels Juel Hansen began to write Robinsonesque novels and only in the 1900s that Prince Valdemar’s colleague Walter Christmas became the first Danish serial adventure author. In Greece, Penelope Delta

⁵⁶⁸ Cohen, 3-10, 133-170; Rediker, *Outlaws*, 10-27.

⁵⁶⁹ Cohen, 8-10, 133-170.

started out even later (from 1909), although one could count Dimitrios Vikelas' autobiographical novel "Loukis Laras" (1879) as a maritime adventure of sorts.⁵⁷⁰

As professional travellers whose blueprint had spread through Europe not unlike the adventure novel, "Sailor Princes" fitted remarkably well with this travelling genre. Their media representation was largely modelled on adventure plots. As detailed in the first two chapters, their public image built on the cultural re-invention of naval officers as courageous gentleman heroes and epitomes of national virtue which had been catalysed by the maritime novels of Captain Marryat. Despite their noble origins, the princes were imagined as participating in the egalitarian, meritocratic world of the ship that naval romances liked to depict. Like the cabin boys of popular fiction, they had to endure every possible hardship, live within the colourful microcosm of shipboard society, face all kinds of challenges, and only once their true skills had been tested, could they climb the famous ladder from cadet to admiral.

What the princes shared with adventure fiction was not only naval romance and the myth of the mariner's craft, though, but also the exotic nature of their travels. As discussed in chapter three, strange places, animals and people exerted a strong fascination on popular audiences all over Europe for reasons ranging from self-reassurance to simple curiosity. The thirst for pleasing sensations of difference or for more knowledge about the world was met by a variety of media ranging from travel books, illustrated papers and family magazines (some with an explicitly geographic-ethnographic focus such as *Über Land und Meer*) to world exhibitions or human zoos.⁵⁷¹ Adventure novels also often took their readers to foreign places imagined as wild and less civilized, where the imagination could roam freely: the Wild West, the Orient, or South America. To separate themselves from the gory tastes of trashy literature, many colportage novelists (such as Karl May) interspersed their gripping narratives with historical or ethnographic excursions on the visited places which were meant to underline the didactic worth of their books.⁵⁷² The lines between travel literature adopting adventure themes and adventure literature adopting ethnographic elements thus became blurred. It was within this grey zone that the coverage of "Sailor Princely" travels was located.

⁵⁷⁰ Cf. Steinbrink, 131ff; Weinreich, Torben: *Historien om børnelitteratur: Dansk børnelitteratur gennem 400 år* (Copenhagen, 2006); Zervas, *Informal learning*, 207-19.

⁵⁷¹ E.g. Harnisch, Antje, 'Der Harem in Familienblättern des 19. Jahrhunderts: Koloniale Phantasien und nationale Identität', *German Life and Letters*, 51.3 (1998), 325-41; Mogensen, Margit, *Eventyrets tid: Danmarks deltagelse i verdensudstillingerne, 1851-1900* (Kerteminde, 1993).

⁵⁷² Steinbrink, 8.

The travel books, magazine serials, and adventure novels written about the princes all dwelt on the exotic encounters which they made during their journeys. Thus, a nine-part serial in *Über Land und Meer* covering Prince Heinrich's first world cruise featured a peculiar trade exchange with the natives of the Chilean Tierra del Fuego described as hairy, tattooed fiends clad in loose animal skins.⁵⁷³ Alexander Svedstrup's book about Prince Valdemar's first cruise to Asia in 1899/1900 and the ten-part serial report published in the family magazine *Illustreret Tidende* contained numerous drawings and photographs of exotic people with a particular focus on Arab and East Asian cities and women.⁵⁷⁴ One of the best-loved themes from Prince Alfred's world tour, which even made it to the working-class *Penny Illustrated Paper* and the German illustrated ethnographic journal *Globus*, was a Coroborree dance which the native inhabitants of Australia (called "the black children of the wild") performed before their "picaninny prince" one dark night.⁵⁷⁵ Exotic animals also exerted considerable fascination on the British readership: Thus, Jacko, the pet monkey of HMS *Galatea* who was drowned on the journey to Australia, "Tom, the Duke of Edinburgh's elephant" who was brought to London by the prince from India, and the Australian kangaroos, emus and Wonga-Wonga pigeons which Alfred gave to his brother the Prince of Wales all made it to the headlines of illustrated papers or children's magazines.⁵⁷⁶ The scenes of marine life and exotic encounters were then seasoned with whatever could be used as classical adventure narratives.

According to Bernd Steinbrink, probably the most important maxim of nineteenth-century adventure fiction was the theme of "living on the edge" ("*gefährlich leben*"). Typical adventure plots consisted of endless dangerous challenges which the protagonists had to master on their way to fame and fortune. Motifs like ships in distress, shipwrecks, survival in the wilderness, close encounters with death on precipitous mountain edges or in ambush attacks followed in quick succession.⁵⁷⁷ Dolf Sternberger has interpreted this general fascination with threatening themes as an expression of both the pioneering spirit and insecurity felt by many middle-class citizens in Europe's "*Gründerzeit*". In his essay on "*Stormy Seas and Shipwreck*" as an "*epoch-making image of the Gründerzeit*" he analysed how one of the central motifs of adventure fiction functioned as an emblem of crisis (and

⁵⁷³ *Über Land und Meer*, 17/37 (1878/79).

⁵⁷⁴ Svedstrup, 32-59, 206-77; *Illustreret Tidende* nrs. 7, 12, 18, 20, 22, 24 (1899/1900).

⁵⁷⁵ 'Ein weißer Prinz und die schwarzen Leute in Australien', *Globus* (1868), 122; 'The Duke of Edinburgh in Australia', *Penny Illustrated Paper* (25.1.1868).

⁵⁷⁶ 'A monkey overboard', *Kind Words* (25.3.1869); 'Tom, the Duke of Edinburgh's elephant', *The Graphic* (27.1.1872); 'Australian Birds and animals at Sandringham', *Illustrated London News* (31.10.1868).

⁵⁷⁷ Steinbrink, 56-9.

its overcoming) in a period when many small-scale businessmen constantly faced the spectre of entrepreneurial shipwreck. Much more than a real danger, though, adventurous shipwrecks also represented a genre which carried the fascinating counter-world of the “completely different” into the living rooms of the civilized and secured bourgeoisie. Adventure novels provided a “peephole into the dangerous life” otherwise closed to their readers.⁵⁷⁸ An escapism of a slightly different kind was also the prime motif of lower middle-class and working class authors and readers for writing and buying cheaply produced adventure fiction. For them, the familiar and gripping stories of individual heroes who travel to far-off exotic places, survive all kinds of dangerous challenges and finally make their fortune were a means of escaping the monotony of their everyday working existence. Sales-oriented serial authors like Karl May catered for these “fantasies of outbreak” while simultaneously realizing their own.⁵⁷⁹

The maritime travels of “Sailor Princes” also provided a convenient “peephole into the dangerous life”. As sailors engaging with the elements and with all kinds of exotic others, the princes fulfilled the wishes of their various readers for adventure heroes to identify with. Yet, as princes they also represented two alternatives to bourgeois shipwreck and lower-class escapism. On the one hand, they were superior adventure heroes who mastered the dangerous life at sea and abroad and thus embodied the saviour figure Sternberger termed the “man at the helm”.⁵⁸⁰ On the other hand, they were heroes of the establishment who could counteract the subversive effects of lower-class “escapologists” (*Ausbruchshelden*). As adventure became a genre increasingly addressed to young readers, social reformers and ideologues critical of trashy literature (“*Schund*”) began to try and realize its educational potential. They wrote about the “real adventures” of “Soldier Heroes” like Lord Kitchener or other great men of empire like the German Emin Pascha who represented bourgeois, patriotic or Christian virtues rather than the antiauthoritarianism of colportage.⁵⁸¹ The travels of “Sailor Princes” formed part of this canon of literature aimed at channelling the popular appetite for sensational reading. As the *University Magazine* observed, their mildly exciting, edifying adventures could thrill every “loyal Briton”, “maids and matrons”, in short all ages, sexes and classes. For they were dashing modern knight errands contributing to the legitimization of the monarchical

⁵⁷⁸ Sternberger, 229-45.

⁵⁷⁹ Steinbrink, 1-5, 13. Dawson, 53. Behrman, 91f; MacKenzie, John, *Propaganda and Empire: The manipulation of British public opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984), 17-19.

⁵⁸⁰ Sternberger, 36.

⁵⁸¹ Steinbrink, 13; MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, 2-5, 17; Bowersox, Jeff, *Raising Germans in the Age of Empire: Youth and colonial culture, 1871-1914* (Oxford, 2013); Dawson.

establishment; yet the occasions on which they proved their courage lacked the bloodshed of combat which had once formed a mainspring of monarchical legitimacy, but which might have hurt the delicate feelings of some readers.

There were essentially three adventure scenarios which the press, literature, popular song and poetry liked to depict with regard to “Sailor Princes”, all cleverly described by the *University Magazine*. The first and most popular was that of the ship in distress epitomised by Prince Alfred’s “nasty engagement with a cyclone”. Almost every royal naval journey entailed at least one or two occasions when the princes and their crews were challenged to cope with adverse weather conditions. Reports of these would promptly reach the daily and weekly newspapers, reappear in travel books and reviews, and then be reinterpreted in the romanticizing, if not apotheosizing language of popular poetry and fiction. Thus, the *Illustrated London News* reported about the “violent cyclone [...], or revolving hurricane” which the HMS *Galatea* “fell in with” on her passage from the Cape to Australia as early as January 1868, accompanying its matter-of-fact description with a giant, two-page engraving of a tiny ship tossed about by wind and waves.⁵⁸² The scene also featured in Milner’s “*Cruise of the Galatea*” and it probably induced the author of one popular song to extoll “our Prince who nobly braves/wild leaping waters, foam crest waves/the dangers of the deep”.⁵⁸³ Part seven of the sequel published about Prince Heinrich’s first world tour in *Über Land und Meer* likewise featured a colourful description of a typhoon, “that worst of storms”, encountered by HMS *Prinz Adalbert* on the way to Yokohama, together with another engraving of a small ship in violent weather as well as a two-page depiction of sailors and officers working on-board a vessel severely listing.⁵⁸⁴ The most symptomatic and influential scene, however, was an episode from Heinrich’s second world cruise when the prince, on watch during a storm in the Bay of Biscay, saved his ship, the HMS *Olga*, from capsizing by quickly leaping to the helm when the helmsmen were washed overboard. The episode was taken up by the semi-official Prussian *Provinzial-Correspondenz* in November 1882. From there, it made its way to adventure fiction, most notably C.V. Derboeck’s *Prinz Heinrich in Central-Amerika*, where the storyline was colourfully expanded. Around 1900, the second stanza of a famous popular song still commemorated the scene asking “Who, as watch-keeping officer/leaps down to the helm/when the helmsmen one stormy night/have been washed

⁵⁸² ‘HMS *Galatea* in a cyclone in the Indian Ocean’, *Illustrated London News* (4.1.1868).

⁵⁸³ Baldrey/Stradiot, *Welcome our Sailor Prince* (1868).

⁵⁸⁴ *Über Land und Meer*, 25 (1878/79), 499.

overboard by a breaker?” The riddle was solved in the refrain: “It’s Prince Heinrich, [...] the Kaiser’s Admiral!”⁵⁸⁵ In Prince Valdemar’s case, the most famous danger scene was not a tempest, but a major fire on the island of St Croix during which the prince proved his heroic qualities by daringly leading a naval rescue squad. He was afterwards celebrated by all the papers of the Danish West Indies.⁵⁸⁶

Next to the elements, wild animals were the most popular challenges of adventure princes. Big-game hunting was one of the favourite pastimes of all (royal) empire travellers, and it was also a newspaper attraction for readers back home. Both as a topos of exoticism and as an enactment of European superiority, the shooting of exotic animals fitted into contemporary imperialist discourse. As becomes obvious from the *University Magazine*’s terminology (“sport of all kinds”), the act of hunting was valued as a physical activity where white men could prove their bravery, athleticism, and manliness.⁵⁸⁷ Prince Alfred’s greed for hunting trophies therefore provided unending food for the press. An account of the famous elephant hunt in South Africa where he waited until the last moment until he fired his shot circulated around the London newspapers as early as November 1867, together with a series of detailed engravings.⁵⁸⁸ The episode recurred in *The Cruise of the Galata*, where it was generally acknowledged as the best piece of the entire book because Milner had managed to insert a rare first-person narrative by the prince himself. The widespread appeal of animal hunts and the particular interest of the lower classes were further illustrated by the coverage the *Galatea* voyage received in the *Penny Illustrated Paper*. This cheap, mass-circulation weekly which copied the success of the *Illustrated London News* focused almost exclusively on hunting scenes. Apart from the elephant hunt, featured in two editions in 1867 and 1868, the paper published a lengthy account of the hunting trips undertaken by the prince in Australia. The detailed descriptions and illustrations of a kangaroo- and an emu-hunt were marked by both a strong fascination with the act of killing and by an admiration for the fast and intelligent creatures which nevertheless had to succumb to the superior skills of the hunters.⁵⁸⁹

The final adventure scenario, epitomised by “the assassin’s pistol” in the *University Magazine*, was that of ambush attacks made on the princes’ lives by “wild” people. When

⁵⁸⁵ Neubner, Ottomar, *Des Kaiser’s Admiral* (c. 1900).

⁵⁸⁶ Fredensborg, 10.

⁵⁸⁷ Gissibl, Bernhard, *Jagd und Herrschaft: Zur politischen Ökologie des Deutschen Kolonialismus in Ostafrika*, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 56 (2008), 501-20, 503; Reitz, 37-40.

⁵⁸⁸ E.g. *Illustrated London News* (2./9.11.1867), *Penny Illustrated Paper* (16.11.1867/21.11.1868).

⁵⁸⁹ *Penny Illustrated Paper* (16.11.1867, 21.11.1868; 25.1.1868).

the Fenian activist O'Farrell shot Prince Alfred in the back in Sydney in 1868, the phenomenon of politically motivated terrorism which would plague the latter part of the nineteenth century was still in its infancy.⁵⁹⁰ Yet, the news of the “criminal attempt” by a “cold-blooded murderer” attracted considerable media attention, with details of the progression of events as well as of the prince’s wounds filling the news for days and countless (amateur) poets contributing their share.⁵⁹¹ The so-called Otsu incident of 1891, when Prince Georgios saved the life of the Russian Tsarevich following a sword attack by a Japanese policeman, attracted even wider media attention. Not only Greek papers, but the entire (sensational) press of Europe reported about it. Colourful lithographs depicting Georgios in the act of hitting the assassin, some rather accurate, others clearly influenced by the imaginative landscape of adventure, circulated through the papers.⁵⁹² Even the satirical Athenian magazine *Asty* published a fairy-tale account of events accompanied by a giant front-page drawing of the prince.⁵⁹³ By the fin-de-siècle, assassinations of famous personages had become an everyday reality and the figure of the secret agent entered the adventure scene. Thus, the German juvenile fiction author Major von Krusow could frame his novel *The Travels and Adventures of Tsarevich Nicholas of Russia* as an adventure plot in which the Japanese villain was hired by Russian anarchists.⁵⁹⁴

The attraction and selling potential of adventure, of naval romance, exotic encounters and danger plots evidenced by these episodes did not stop with the news media and literary fiction, though. As a number of post-colonial scholars have stressed, mass papers and adventure novels formed part of a wider mass commercial culture which was heavily infused with elements of popular colonialism. The themes of travel, transport technology and exploration, of exotica and suspense were also exploited to raise the sales figures or improve the brand image of all kinds of consumer goods, (service) businesses or associations.⁵⁹⁵ Through its extensive use of visual and material culture, of advertisements, billboards, almanacs, special packagings, themed cigarette cards, memorabilia or toys, the expanding consumer industry of the nineteenth century was able to both respond to and

⁵⁹⁰ Hoffmann, Rachel, *The Age of assassination: Monarchy and nation in nineteenth-century Europe*, in: Rieger, Jan/Wachsmann Nikolaus (eds), *Rewriting German history* (Basingstoke, 2015), 121-141.

⁵⁹¹ *Illustrated London News* (2./23.5.1868); Jukes, *Song of welcome*.

⁵⁹² *Report*, 17.5.1891, PA AA, RZ 201, R7475; *Skandamis*, 39; *Le petit Parisien* (24.5.1891); *The Graphic* (23.5.1891); *Asty* (28.5.1891); *Le petit Journal* (30.5.1891).

⁵⁹³ *Asty* (6.5.1891).

⁵⁹⁴ Krusow, Major, *Die Fahrten & Abenteuer des Thronfolgers Nikolaus in Japan* (Berlin, 1898).

⁵⁹⁵ MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, 16-28; Zeller, Joachim, *Bilderschule der Herrenmenschen: Koloniale Reklamesammelbilder* (Berlin, 2010); Ciarlo, David, *Advertising Empire: Race and visual culture in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge/MA, 2011).

create popular tastes. The used strategies helped to stimulate people's desire to buy and simultaneously contributed to the proliferation of a variety of imageries. Collectibles, posters and wrappings depicting famous personages or imperial heroes, stirring military or exploratory events, modern vessels or exotic peoples conveyed romantic, adventurous associations and, at the same time, manufactured encounters with the extraordinary even for those who could not read or afford to buy papers, books or other luxury goods.⁵⁹⁶

Europe's monarchs were an essential part of this consumer culture both as sought-after associations and as brands in their own right. Like adventure, empire and navy, their images enhanced the value of certain products and at the same time these products provided free promotion for them.⁵⁹⁷ The relationship between public consumption and public opinion was not always as clear-cut as in Athens, where, according to the travel journalist William Miller, photographs of the royal family "disappeared from the shop windows" during times of crisis only to be "carefully hidden away by time-serving tradesmen in the drawers of their counters" until "the next turn in the tide of popular opinion".⁵⁹⁸ Nevertheless, we can draw some wider conclusions on the popular reach and general brand image of royal personae from their appearance in the shops.

By combining the well-known insignia of the naval officer with elements of naval-colonial adventure and exoticism, "Sailor Princes" not only became popular celebrities in the news, but also some of the most recognizable and widespread monarchical brands of the period. Next to the royal couple and the Prince of Wales, Prince Alfred in sailor's suit was one of the favourite subjects of Staffordshire porcelain figures in the late 1850s-1870s.⁵⁹⁹ Especially during the *Galatea* voyage – which partly coincided with the climax of the sheet-music boom – he featured in several popular songs⁶⁰⁰ as well as on a number of commemorative medals and other patriotic ephemera.⁶⁰¹ Prince Georgios's likeness adorned picture postcards of Crete as well as stamps, coins, and medals.

Prince Heinrich, finally, was a veritable marketing phenomenon in Wilhelmine Germany. Particularly from the late 1880s, the prince was depicted on countless picture postcards surrounded by such typical elements as impressive state-of-the-art naval vessels, waving sailors, wind-swept seas, seagulls, anchors and oars. German consumers could buy Prince

⁵⁹⁶ McKenzie, *Propaganda*, 23-29; Zeller, 7-20, 53; Bowersox, 6.

⁵⁹⁷ E.g. Richards; Kohlrausch, *Adlerhelm*, 70; Paulmann, *Peripatetische Herrschaft*, 455-6.

⁵⁹⁸ Miller, 279.

⁵⁹⁹ E.g. <http://www.worldcollectorsnet.com/articles/historical-staffordshire-pottery/>.

⁶⁰⁰ E.g. Glover; Baldrey/Stradiot; McKenzie, *Propaganda*, 30-32.

⁶⁰¹ E.g. commemorative medals from Australia (1867) and Tasmania (1868) or a bronze-gilt belt buckle engraved with Alfred's picture and inscribed "Our Sailor Prince", c.1870.

Heinrich cigars, cigarettes or knives adorned with similar iconographies. From 1887 to 1916, at least 15 ships (among them several mail steamers of the North German Lloyd or Hamburg-America line) as well as at least 29 taverns, restaurants and hotels all over Germany were named after the prince or his wife. His travels to East Asia, the US or to South America were particular marketing boosters. Thus, a veritable host of commemorative ephemera like medals, cups, pins or postcards were put on the market on both sides of the Atlantic in 1902. In 1900, the Berlin department store N. Israel dedicated its entire promotional calendar, called *Album 1900*, to Prince Heinrich's stay in East Asia. There were also a number of collectible cards, most notably two sets about *Prince Heinrich's journey to China* and *Prince Heinrich's America cruise* published by the chocolate company "Aulhorn's Nähr-Kakao" and the children's stone building blocks company "F.A.D. Richter & Cie.", respectively. These six-part series resembled graphic versions of travel books, focusing on adventurous or exotic scenes like "The steamer *Kronprinz Wilhelm* in a storm", Prince Heinrich's special train passing a group of workers sitting around a Wild West fire, the landing of a naval battalion in Kiautschou, or "Prince Heinrich's audience with the Chinese Emperor". They demonstrate the widespread nature of the "imaginative landscape" of royal adventure.⁶⁰²

Thomas Nicklas has recently labelled the monarchs who emerged from the House of Saxe-Coburg as perfectly cast for the "theatrical" nineteenth century: Restricted in their sovereign power, they became consummate "Kings of the Imaginary" pleasing their subjects-turned-citizens with powerful "appealing images".⁶⁰³ This verdict could also be applied to the other royal families of this study. For the public persona "Sailor Prince" that they produced was certainly an "appealing image". In the "Age of Empire", when rational persuasion, according to Eric Hobsbawm, no longer sufficed to create political allegiances but had to be supplemented by emotional, enticing elements, the princes posed as admirable adventure heroes in the print media and as accessible bic-a-brac objects on the mantelpiece. They thus helped the monarchy to adapt to the styles of the emerging mass media and advertising industries, which, as Hobsbawm observed, also catered emotions for the masses and therefore served as an inspirational model for all kinds of public institutions.⁶⁰⁴ As intimated in the introduction, though, a number of scholars have queried whether the majority of nineteenth-century monarchs really were such famed

⁶⁰² LASH Abt.395 Nr.76-79.

⁶⁰³ Nicklas, Thomas, *Das Haus Sachsen-Coburg: Europas späte Dynastie* (Stuttgart, 2003), 217.

⁶⁰⁴ Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*, 105-107.

“Kings of the Imaginary” as Nicklas and others would have them to be. The princes’ coverage in the print media and in material culture has to be reviewed once more to find out who were the true authors of the myth of the “Sailor Prince” as an adventure hero and brand.

The making of a brand

Scholars of modern monarchy have been torn regarding the question how much influence the sovereigns of the nineteenth century had over their public image. Some of the leading studies agree that there was at least a large element of active self-promotion involved in the media representation and branding of prominent monarchs: Both Margaret Homans and John Plunkett take the view that Queen Victoria was an active agent of her representation as a bourgeois family queen through the employment of paintings, photographs and court circulars which spread the word about her civic engagements.⁶⁰⁵ Frank Lorenz Müller has drawn attention to the astonishing media awareness of Crown Prince Frederick William of Prussia and the many strategies of visual art and public performance that he used to fashion the popular icon “Our Fritz”.⁶⁰⁶ Martin Kohlrausch has demonstrated how Emperor William II became a media star around 1900 through the cultivation of his prominent looks and his never-ending, heavily publicized activities, although the media attention that he invited eventually overpowered him.⁶⁰⁷ Daniel Unowsky, finally, has illustrated the degree to which even the Austro-Hungarian government were able to guard the public image of Emperor Francis Joseph during the popular celebrations and despite the massive merchandizing surrounding his golden jubilee in 1898.⁶⁰⁸ On the other hand, Eva Giloi has argued that the entire Hohenzollern dynasty failed to develop a proactive stance towards truly popular political myths or commemorative ephemera.⁶⁰⁹ All scholars, moreover, agree that it was virtually impossible for Europe’s sovereigns to control the social, political and commercial forces that shaped their public manifestations or the ways in which they were received and appropriated by the masses. By studying how “Sailor Princes” were turned into popular adventure heroes and brands – and by whom – we can shed some new light on the question of monarchical agency.

⁶⁰⁵ Plunkett, 1-6; Homans, Margaret, *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British culture, 1837-1876* (Chicago, 1998), xix-xxx.

⁶⁰⁶ Müller, *Our Fritz*, 105-48.

⁶⁰⁷ Kohlrausch, *Adlerhelm*.

⁶⁰⁸ Unowsky, 113-142.

⁶⁰⁹ Giloi, *Monarchy*, 267ff; *Id.*, Copyrighting.

Defining the various agents involved in the making of popular myths, heroes and brands is a complex undertaking. Myths often cannot be reduced to one single origin; they evolve, are shaped by their political and cultural environments, are re-interpreted, embellished and manipulated by varying agents and media.⁶¹⁰ Heroes can be “self-fashioning subjects” who use their looks, clothes and all kinds of media to promote themselves, but also “objects of contemporary [or posthumous], political and cultural dynamics” like the nineteenth-century personality cult, the sensationalist tastes of the mass media or nationalism’s need for graspable embodiments of the nation.⁶¹¹ Brands, finally, evolve in a complex system of supply and demand. They are designed to sell something, but they also have to be bought, which gives consumers unique power over their form and content. The questions of agency, of buyer and seller thus become blurred. “Sailor Princes” were certainly products – and sometimes themselves agents – of a complex system of dialectical processes. Their public personae were shaped by and neatly fitted into a number of contemporary cultural trends, such as the lure of the sea or the adventure craze. Yet, they were also positioned in this environment by a number of distinct agents: There were monarchs and court advisors who anticipated popular trends, launched pictures and stories and cooperated on them with a range of middle-class professionals such as editors, journalists or illustrators. There were authors, entrepreneurs and ideologues who used the royal aura, naval romance, exoticism and adventure to sell their own works, products and messages. They all shaped the tastes of their audiences, who in turn projected their wishes onto the monarchy and onto the mass (media) market. The following pages contain an analysis of the motives, methods and interactions of these various agents.

As mentioned before, all sovereigns of this study used a range of classic public staging and media strategies to market their sons’ careers. They staged the princes’ embarkations as festive giving-away ceremonies and issued paintings, drawings or, as a more modern option, carte-de-visite photographs of their youthful offspring in naval uniform. Apart from these comparatively traditional representations, there were also a number of other, literary, pictorial, museal or news projects which, by responding to popular cultural trends and by granting more intimate views of the princes’ exotic journeys, helped to fashion the image of adventurous celebrities.

⁶¹⁰ Becker, *Mythos*, 129-48; Germer, 40-48; Behrman, 157.

⁶¹¹ Lukenda, Robert, “‘Viva Garibaldi!’: Heldentum und mediale Inszenierung am Übergang zur politischen Moderne”, *helden.heroes.héros: E-Journal zur Kultur des Heroischen*, 2 (2014), 93-105, 93-100; McKenzie, *Propaganda*, 213.

First of all, there was what one might call official royal travel literature. As the first “Sailor Princes” circled the world, their royal parents’ need to have their (teenage) sons’ extensive travels documented was increasingly complemented by the realization that self-confident citizens felt entitled to participate in the lives of royal personages and that this public attention was worth to be cultivated. Queen Victoria’s publication of her “*Highland Journals*” in 1868 as well as her commission of books on “*The early years*” (1867) and “*Life of the Prince Consort*” (1874-80) are generally considered some of the first instances of a carefully crafted personal opening-up to the public. Her bid for the power of interpretation was also supported by the advent of the royal travel book as epitomized by “*The cruise of HMS Galatea*” (1869).

The idea of publishing a volume on Prince Alfred’s voyage around the world – which fitted well with a large market of travel writing – probably came from his naval chaplain John Milner. In 1867, Milner had already managed to publish a widely acclaimed account of Alfred’s visit to Tristan da Cunha in the magazine *Good Words*. His success would be repeated by other careerist courtiers, for example the Reverend John Dalton, who penned an account of the world tour undertaken by his two charges, Prince Albert Victor and Prince George of Wales, in 1886.⁶¹² Milner was almost certainly acting in the royal family’s interest, though. For he was able to obtain all the required information from the people responsible and not only was he allowed to cite from the letters and journals of ordinary sailors, but also from one letter written by the prince himself. From among the documents originally destined for the eyes of the royal family only, his compilation included a number of chromolithographs and graphotypes from sketches taken on the spot by Oswald Brierly. This famous marine painter, who had attracted Queen Victoria’s attention through the sketches he had drawn of the 1856 Spithead naval review, had actually been engaged to undertake the private documentation of the journey. Together with the Australian illustrator Nicholas Chevalier, who accompanied Alfred on the second part of his voyage, he compiled a considerable collection of drawings, which the queen could inspect with her son on his return.⁶¹³ The recognition that the artists wanted to exhibit their works, though, and that there was a widespread interest in the cruise led to their inclusion into the travelogue and a public exhibition, respectively.

⁶¹² Dalton, John, *The cruise of HMS Bacchante, 1879-1882* (London, 1886).

⁶¹³ Reitz, 36, 92; Bassett, Marnie/Smith, Bernard, ‘Brierly, Sir Oswald Walters’ and Tipping, Marjorie, ‘Chevalier, Nicholas’, in: *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/brierly-sir-oswald-walters-3054/text4495> (last accessed 9.7.2016); QVJ, 3.8.1871.

A similar constellation was also at the heart of the early travel reports about Prince Heinrich. When the prince went on his first world cruise in autumn 1878, he was accompanied by the marine painter Carl Saltzmann, whose recent exhibition of a number of naval paintings had attracted the attention of the crown princely couple.⁶¹⁴ The artist was engaged to produce drawings of the long journey, but apparently for financial reasons he was also encouraged to contact some illustrated papers regarding the occasional publication of his drawings as well as his remuneration. The editorial staff of “*Über Land und Meer*” eagerly accepted the proposal and what emerged was the nine-part serial mentioned above. The first instalment was written by the paper’s editor-in-chief, Emil Dominik, while the subsequent texts were composed by an anonymous participant of the voyage. As Heinrich’s governor Seckendorff remarked to General von Stosch, the articles were meant to “respond to the interest felt for the cruise [...] in wide circles”.⁶¹⁵ The armchair traveller Stosch realized as early as 1875 that “landlubbers love to occupy their idle fantasy with the worlds across the ocean, with our emigrants and the like”. This induced him to propose a more forceful naval and colonial propaganda to his friend and public-relations advisor Gustav Freytag.⁶¹⁶ In 1878, the Chief of the Admiralty still meant to harness the propaganda potential of exotic colonial fantasies. Both he and Seckendorff were also anxious, however, that the articles about the royal world cruise should “avoid any official appearance” and that they should “never have any personal content”.⁶¹⁷

This mixture of popularizing purpose and worries about the image of the monarchy explains both the largely ethnographic focus of the magazine articles and the tedious logbook style of *The Cruise of the Galatea*. By the mid-nineteenth century, most royal families still justified their opening-up to the public by their mission to make their exclusive experience of the world available to wider audiences. Didactic aspects thus stood in the foreground, although it was often exotic and personal details which enticed their readers to buy. This trend is also visible in the second form of modern monarchical representations evolving from the world cruises of “Sailor Princes”: museal exhibitions. The nineteenth century was characterized by the advent of public museums as institutionalized memories of the material history of the nation and as meeting places for the bourgeoisie seeking instructive leisure pursuits. While royal reformers such as Prince

⁶¹⁴ Ottma, Martin/Mahnkopf, Christina (eds), Carl Saltzmann: Potsdamer Landschafts- und Marine-maler (Berlin 2000).

⁶¹⁵ Seckendorff to Stosch, 17.8.1878, BArch-MA RM2/397.

⁶¹⁶ Stosch to Freytag, 22.4.1875, cited by Sieg, 281.

⁶¹⁷ Seckendorff to Stosch, 17.8.1878, and Stosch to Seckendorff, 22.8.1878, BArch-MA RM2/397.

Albert made huge contributions to the sector, measures like the opening-up of palaces and parks or projects focusing on the monarchy such as the Hohenzollern museum remained rare, though.⁶¹⁸ The exhibitions of private souvenir collections from the journeys of “Sailor Princes” represent early and rare examples of glimpses into royal curiosity chambers.

The first exhibition of this kind was opened in the South Kensington Museum on 24 January 1872 and featured both numerous watercolours of Prince Alfred’s *Galatea* world cruise as well as countless artefacts collected by the prince himself. Like most of his royal naval colleagues, Alfred enjoyed gathering “curiosities” which he could show to his family.⁶¹⁹ As *The Graphic* remarked in its critique of the “Duke of Edinburgh’s Museum” in March 1872, he had used the advantage of his exalted status (that “the best and rarest of everything is within his reach”) to bring home “an unrivalled collection”. The prince distinguished himself from other privileged travellers, though, by offering this collection to the museum co-founded by his father “in order that his stay-at-home countrymen might partake in his enjoyment”.⁶²⁰ Prince Albert had used the revenues generated by the Great Exhibition in 1851 to initiate the building of a large museum complex in central London dedicated to public instruction. It was here that for two months in early 1872 members of London’s middle- and working-classes, enticed by free admissions and late opening hours, could inspect the collection of the Prince Consort’s son. It mixed didactic elements with adventurous pleasures, displaying the impressive marine subjects of Oswald Brierly (including the *Galatea* in distress), Nicholas Chevalier’s exciting drawings of hunting scenes, foreign costumes and landscapes, as well as countless exotic state gifts and natural history items.⁶²¹ The exhibition subsequently moved to Dublin and parts of Alfred’s collections were later given to a variety of public institutions in the duchy of Saxe-Coburg.⁶²² Prince Heinrich likewise lent a number of Asian model ships to the *Deutsche Schiffbau-Ausstellung* hosted in Berlin in 1908. The valuable samurai armours he had received from the Japanese Emperor were eventually given to the *Schleswig Landesmuseum*.⁶²³

⁶¹⁸ Müller, *Our Fritz*, 126, 141-45.

⁶¹⁹ PA to QV, 30.7.1869, RA VIC/ADDA20/1292.

⁶²⁰ *The Graphic* (9.3.1872).

⁶²¹ *The Graphic* (9.3.1872); *Art Journal* (2.1872).

⁶²² Reitz, 57-9; Brockhoff, Evamaria/Henker, Michael (eds), *Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen: Coburg in Bayern und Europa*, vol.2 (Regensburg, 1997), 46, 254-327.

⁶²³ LASH Abt.395 Nr.84; Freudenberg.

While guarded self-promotion on the part of the monarchy and exoticist curiosity on the part of the audience merged with educational purposes in the case of museal exhibitions and travelogues, the intentional launching of private letters in the press provided still more intimate views of the princes' travels and more clear-cut means to fashion a heroic image for them. As mentioned before, Prince Alfred's gripping first-person account of an elephant hunt in South Africa was one of the best-loved episodes from *The Cruise of the Galatea*. There were at least two further prominent occasions when the monarchy used the opportunity to actively market the princes' adventurous agency. The famous story of Prince Heinrich's helmsmanship in the Bay of Biscay thus actually originated from a private report filed by his governor Seckendorff as captain of HMS *Olga*. In a matter-of-fact language and in "complete objectivity", the naval officer informed the emperor, the crown princely couple and Stosch on 11 November 1882 of the "prowess" and "instantaneous, energetic action" displayed by the prince. Only two days later, probably on Stosch's initiative, the letter was published in the *Provincial-Correspondenz*, a semi-official newspaper supplement distributed across the entire Prussian provinces, in a slightly, but significantly altered version. Its nautical language was translated into more general terms and the agency of the prince was enhanced by the omission of the remark that he was responding to the shouted command "Quick to the helm!".⁶²⁴ This press article provided the template for all further versions of the story.

In May 1891, the Glücksborgs likewise shaped the popular perception of the so-called Otsu incident. A couple of days after the event, *Berlingske Tidende*, a Copenhagen daily close to the conservative government, published a letter sent by Prince Georgios to his father, King George, giving a detailed and personal account of the attempt on the life of his cousin "Nicky". The narrative, which provided the first testimony of a European eye-witness and simultaneously moved the focus more decisively on the agency of the Greek prince, was taken up by many other European papers, which celebrated the "plucky rescue". The unexpurgated depiction of the Russian Tsarevich running away from the aggressor may also have been one of the reasons why Georgios was subsequently banned from his cousin's entourage.⁶²⁵

By the time of Prince Valdemar's travels to East Asia (1899) or Prince Heinrich's visit to America (1902), cooperation with the press had become the norm. Thus, Alexander Svedstrup and Henrik Cavling, two journalists closely associated with the advent of exotic

⁶²⁴ Report Seckendorff, BArch-MA RM1/2913, 11.11.1882; *Provincial-Correspondenz* (13.11.1882).

⁶²⁵ *Berlingske Tidende* (15.7.1891), reprinted and commented by Penny Illustrated Paper (1.8.1891).

travel reportages around 1900, were allowed to travel aboard Prince Valdemar's ship, the *Valkyrie*, and aboard the accompanying EAC cruiser *Assam*, respectively. Their articles and books would decisively shape the public perception of the enterprise. In 1902, a number of major German papers, among them the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, *Der Tag*, *Die Woche*, the *Illustrierte Zeitung* and the *Morgenpost*, even sent special correspondents on-board the *Kronprinz Wilhelm*. They received unique opportunities for close-up coverage and preferred treatment by Prince Heinrich. The extensive coverage of the journey to the US in the press – including adventurous drawings by the children's book illustrator Willy Stöwer, up-to-date photographs of the prince's encounters with the new world, and the novel medium of moving pictures shown in a selection of Berlin music halls – even induced media historian Iris Kronauer to call this the “first [German] political media event of the twentieth century”.⁶²⁶

The willing cooperation of all the men and media mentioned above can be explained by a variety of reasons. Particularly for the writers and artists directly engaged by the monarchy, the royal connection could bring immediate career advantages. Thus Carl Saltzmann would go on to become the personal art teacher and travel painter of William II before he was eventually offered the first German professorship in marine art at the Berlin Academy.⁶²⁷ Oswald Brierly was appointed marine painter to Queen Victoria and the Royal Yacht Squadron in 1874.⁶²⁸

Apart from these personal benefits, the many reports about the princes' adventurous journeys in the press also served a number of publishing interests and journalistic purposes. First of all, editors and journalists would win the trust of the monarchy through their favourable coverage. Especially in countries like Germany, where the press was closely monitored and where Emperor William carefully selected those correspondents who were given access to royal events, this confidence could translate into a unique selling feature. The papers would proudly advertise the exclusivity of their coverage and thus distinguish themselves from their competitors.⁶²⁹

The emerging mass-media market was fiercely contested. To woo their audiences away from their competitors, the growing number of family magazines, illustrated papers and mass dailies that sprouted in Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century also utilized

⁶²⁶ Kronauer, Iris, *Vergnügen, Politik und Propaganda: Kinematographie im Berlin der Jahrhundertwende, 1896-1905* (PhD, Humboldt-University Berlin, <http://www.iriscope.de/index>).

⁶²⁷ ‘Über den Wellen: Die Deutschen und das Meer’, *Der Spiegel* (16.5.1977).

⁶²⁸ Bassett/Smith.

⁶²⁹ Kronauer; Giloi, *Monarchy* 4-5.

royal sailors to attract attention. Ethnographic reports about the exotic places visited by the exalted travellers satisfied the curiosity, thirst for knowledge and colonial phantasies of the national-liberal bourgeoisie.⁶³⁰ Moreover, the adventure scenarios with which they were sprinkled added an extra touch of the sensational. Especially in Britain and France, the increasingly commercialized illustrated mass press (epitomized by competing papers such as the *Illustrated London News*, the *Graphic*, or *Le petit journal*) depended on a quick flow of exciting news and spectacular pictures which could attract and keep the readers' interest alive. Wars (like those connected to the Eastern Question), crimes (like the Whitechapel murders), massacres (like the Bulgarian atrocities), and all kinds of catastrophes (like shipwrecks) were the favourite subjects of newspaper sensationalism.⁶³¹

Royal events, celebrities, impressive new technologies and exotic themes also sold, though, especially when combined. "Sailor Princely" adventures were therefore definitely newsworthy items. The proliferation of sensational depictions of the Otsu incident in the European press illustrates how the different national media markets adapted to these novel influences and thereby converged. In Denmark, the journalists surrounding Prince Valdemar and the media-savvy Princess Marie were especially closely associated with this process of modernization along Anglo-French lines. Henrik Cavling in particular has been credited with revolutionizing the Danish media landscape by turning papers such as the liberal *Politiken* into modern-style *news*-papers instead of political organs. Both he and Alexander Svedstrup had been war correspondents during the Greco-Turkish War (1897) and they were famous for their exotic travel reporting with a special focus on the Near and Far East.⁶³²

Despite the seeming de-politicization of the mass press around 1900, publishers and journalists also sought to sell political messages with the help of "Sailor Princes". Both Cavling and Svedstrup, for example, were advocates of the new expansive policy of long-distance trade supported by Prince Valdemar and his circle of friends. Through their serial reports and travel books about the *Valkyrie* cruise they sought to throw the most favourable light on the enterprise.⁶³³ Likewise, the German publisher August Scherl, whose illustrated mass papers *Der Tag* and *Die Woche* were centrally involved in the massive media

⁶³⁰ Harnisch.

⁶³¹ Bulla, David/Sachsman, David (eds), *Sensationalism: Murder, mayhem, mudslinging, scandals and disasters in 19th-century reporting* (New Brunswick, 2013); Baleva, Martina, *Bulgarien im Bild: Die Erfindung von Nationen auf dem Balkan in der Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Köln, 2012), 23-31.

⁶³² Stangerup, Hakon, *Henrik Cavling og den moderne avis* (Copenhagen, 1968); Gade, Sven, *Journalisten: En biografi om Henrik Cavling* (Copenhagen, 2009).

⁶³³ Cavling, Henrik, Østen (Copenhagen, 1901); Svedstrup, *Danskes Vej*.

marketing of Prince Heinrich's journey to the US, was an eager supporter of Admiral von Tirpitz' naval policy. His coverage of the princely tour was meant to derive an economic benefit from the public interest in naval matters as well as promoting Tirpitz' ambitious fleet-building programme.⁶³⁴

The same mixture of economic and ideological interests also applied to the producers of children's fiction and consumer goods. Especially in Britain and Germany, there were a range of authors, often retired naval officers, soldiers or fortune hunters, who meant to make a profit from edifying literature for the children of the affluent middle-classes by speaking to their parents' patriotism. Their portfolios usually included everything that would be bought as a Christmas present or distributed as prizes by public schools: historical romances, popular biographies and instructive adventures in naval and colonial settings ("*Marine- and Kolonialromane*"⁶³⁵). These novels were generally suffused with a language of patriotic enthusiasm which, combined with lively tales, was likely to inspire a love of fatherland and the willingness to serve its naval and colonial missions in young readers. Sometimes, the profit stood in the foreground, but there were also some authors who were primarily motivated by their own ideological backgrounds (for example their allegiance to the Navy League). One particularly dignified version of these books was the Prince Heinrich literature.

It was arguably Carl von der Boeck, a retired soldier, adventurer and prolific writer of the 1880s, who first came up with the idea of appropriating the prince's travels for the sea adventure genre. In his decorative books about Heinrich's two world cruises in 1878-80 and 1882-84, the author merged the detailed itineraries, maritime scenes and ethnographic reports already known from official travel literature and the press with embellished versions of real and imagined adventures encountered by the prince and his (fictitious) companions. The most emblematic scene was probably his version of the storm in the Bay of Biscay, which was almost literally based on the article in the *Provincial-Correspondenz*. Boeck stretched it over several pages by introducing the boatswain Bruns, a likeable old fellow who spins a sailor's yarn about a giant tsunami. Other authors would introduce cabin boys as main or auxiliary heroes to create emotional identification. Thus, Konrad Fischer-Sallstein, in his narrative about Prince Heinrich's journey to Kiautschou (1900), put the adventurous cadet von Borlitz at the prince's side, who arouses his special interest and becomes an exclusive witness of Germany's colonial venture. Otto Elster,

⁶³⁴ Kronauer.

⁶³⁵ Christadler, 129-51.

another prolific author of the 1890s/1900s, invented “*Klaus Erichsen, Prince Heinrich’s sailor boy*” as his protagonist: a youngster who is saved by the prince during a shipwreck, is trained in the navy with the prince’s help, and, in the course of his steep career and many adventures, has several further encounters with the royal “*deus ex machina*”. The recipe for success was further repeated by two teachers-cum-authors, one Dr. Rothenberg and one Dr. Friedrich Netto. The latter even admitted in his introduction to an instructive, but completely fictitious travel report that he had chosen a princely journey as his subject because these tended to be bestsellers. Indeed, the travel books often went into several editions and some remained in print until the 1930s.⁶³⁶

It was the remarkable mix of royal, naval and colonial themes by which one could demonstrate one’s own patriotic spirit and at the same time entice likeminded consumers which also induced many manufacturers and entrepreneurs to seek the association with “Sailor Princes”. Prince Heinrich’s private archives contain a large number of requests from tradespersons (men’s outfitters, wine traders, publicans or ship owners), but also from choral or sports societies asking for permission to hold his royal warrant or bear his name and picture.⁶³⁷ The association was meant to confer some of the popular royal sailor’s prestige onto businesses and to advertise their products. As the individual motivational letters reveal, the prince was often chosen simply because he was a representative of the corporate brand of the monarchy (that “august ruling dynasty of Hohenzollern” which enjoyed “love and popularity [...] not only within the narrower Fatherland, but also far beyond its borders”). But he was also perceived as a personality brand in his own right (that “brave and noble Hohenzollern prince [...] who, as leader of the German military forces at sea, is destined to carry the fame of our Fatherland to all the distant worlds”).⁶³⁸ As such a double brand, the prince with his easily recognizable trademarks (captain’s beard, naval uniform, Prince Heinrich cap) was considered likely to enhance the market value of other brands and goods. The mechanism by which this association worked was visible on board the steamer *Kronprinz Wilhem*, where, according to Victor Laverrenz, the lady-travellers who followed Prince Heinrich about made a habit of ordering glasses “of exactly the same beer” that their royal fellow-passenger had just consumed.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁶ For a complete list of all the children’s novels cf. the relevant section of the bibliography. Regarding editions and numbers, see: www.ablit.de (last accessed 26.03.2015).

⁶³⁷ LASH Abt.395 Nr.76, 77, 79, 85.

⁶³⁸ Petition of an innkeeper from Berlin, 23.6.1887, LASH Abt.395 Nr.77.

⁶³⁹ Laverrenz, 25.

The correspondence found in Prince Heinrich's private archives shows that the prince was a careful brand custodian who applied restrictive rules to his brand-endorsement. The association with charitable organisations and events was also in the interest of the monarchy, which, in the nineteenth century, had to demonstrate its active commitment to the general welfare. Therefore, all "Sailor Princes" accepted a considerable number of presidencies, patronages and honorary memberships offered to them by the countless friendly societies, clubs and fairs which Europe's sociable middle-classes were happy to organize. The princes were especially responsible for the maritime sector of royal welfare work. Thus Prince Alfred became chairman of the committee on naval pension reform, acted as an advocate of the life boat cause or gave his patronage to the Royal Naval Exhibition in 1891.⁶⁴⁰ Prince Valdemar headed the Danish Seaman Association. And Prince Heinrich lent his name and support to institutions as varying as the German Maritime Search and Rescue Service, the Aid Committee for East Asia, the Flying and Automobile Club, a variety of children's hospitals and a range of smaller naval, sports and choral clubs.⁶⁴¹ The relevant causes and involved persons were always carefully scrutinized, though.

This was even more the case with non-charitable enterprises and consumer goods. Both Prince Heinrich and his advisors were anxious to protect the monarchy, its dignity and brand value from negative associations, commercialization or slander. An ancient tradition of secured brand-endorsement which simultaneously conferred special honours on trusted tradesmen existed in the form of royal warrants. These were exclusively granted to businesses actually purveying to members of the royal family. As the consumer market changed, though, and many other businesses also sought to benefit from the prestige of the monarchy, new strategies had to be developed. While the British monarchy had almost no legal means at all to interfere with the commercial use of Queen Victoria's image and while the Austro-Hungarian monarchy regulated the issue through detailed legislation, the Hohenzollerns adopted a middle course: Businesspeople seeking permission to use the name of royal personages had to conform to the standards decreed in an 1887 instruction manual regarding the conferral of royal warrants. The envisaged commodities had to pass a substantial quality control and local police offices had to issue clearance certificates

⁶⁴⁰ Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*; Conley, 53, 91; 'The Duke of Edinburgh advocating the life-boat cause', *Penny Illustrated Paper* (13.4.1882); Hamilton, 89-113.

⁶⁴¹ LASH Abt.395 Nr.79/85.

regarding the moral conduct and economic background of the individual entrepreneurs.⁶⁴² Only fifteen, usually larger shipping and steamship companies out of 25 applicants were therefore granted the right to give Prince Heinrich's name or those of his family members to their ships. Only 29 out of 41 inns, restaurants and hotels obtained similar permissions, the continued use of the name being conditional on the economic success of the enterprises. Regarding commodities, finally, only three out of nineteen recorded requests were accepted, all of them respectable luxury goods: cigars (produced by the tobacco company Geber), cigarettes (produced by the company Adler) and a brand of table water called "Prince Heinrich Fountain" sourced from a well near Rüdesheim. The association with inappropriate products like sparkling wines, beers, pastilles, sardines, chairs or fountain pens was rejected, even though some of the applicants went to great lengths to create attractive packaging designs.⁶⁴³

The popular consumption of the "Sailor Prince" was impossible to control, though. Although the right to bear a royal name could be withdrawn, the monarchy did not have the legal instruments to sanction unauthorised uses or abuses, especially not outside Germany. Moreover, the laws of the *Kaiserreich* allowed retailers to depict the images of famous personalities without even asking for their permission.⁶⁴⁴ While the monarchy tried to guard its exclusive, regal aura, its image could thus be appropriated and shaped to any desired purpose by entrepreneurs and consumers. As Eva Giloi has demonstrated, German picture-postcard designers, for instance, far from merely buying into William II's baroque, martial self-representation, also used the techniques of photomontage to create idyllic family portraits which met the public demand for intimate views and sentimental themes. This unauthentic, but appealing world of cheaply available images would shape the imaginative landscapes of wide sections of society just as much as authorized photographs. It fostered the illusion of an emotional proximity which even induced some children to actually send letters to the purported family man.⁶⁴⁵

Prince Heinrich was also subjected to a range of appropriation practices, from unauthorized inn or ship names through to postcards and the popular imagination. Letters addressed to the prince on the occasion of his mission to East Asia in 1897-98 reveal how

⁶⁴² Balmer, 17; Giloi, *Monarchy*, 338; Unowsky, 115-125; Kirschstein, Jörg, 'Hoflieferanten: Zur Ausstellung "Kaiserliche Geschenke" im Potsdam-Museum', *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten* (03.01.2009); Kohlrausch, Adlerhelm; LASH Abt.395 Nr.67.

⁶⁴³ LASH Abt.395, Nr.76/77/79.

⁶⁴⁴ Giloi, *Copyrighting*, 416. LASH Abt.395, Nr.77.

⁶⁴⁵ Giloi, *Copyrighting*, 423f.

strongly the public perception of the “Prince-Admiral” was influenced by his adventurized and exoticized representations in the press, in juvenile fiction and in consumer industry. In the over 140 congratulatory telegrams, letters and occasional poems that he received from patriotic associations and individual citizens in the fortnight before his embarkation, the senders imagined the prince in all kinds of dramatically inflated scenes: He would face the “dangers of the deep, of clime and maybe war” in “distant seas”, “in stormy, raging, infuriated seas”, “in storm and bad weather”, but he would brave them “with a fearless countenance”. In the formulaic style of popular songs and sea shanties, the excited men and women saw him venturing forth “to China’s shores” “for Germany’s glory and honour” and they were sure that he would “return as a Zollern hero”.⁶⁴⁶

In thus addressing “their” hero, the letter-writers engaged in a practice which Edward Berenson has termed creating “intimacy at a distance”. Ever since the advent of the modern personality cult in the Romantic era and particularly in the age of mass culture, ordinary citizens felt an increasing “sense of entitlement” to participate in the lives of the celebrities created by mass press and mass commercialization. By sending fan mail, they sought “emotional connection” and hoped to see “the world through their [heroes’] eyes”.⁶⁴⁷ They also appropriated the celebrities to their own wishes, however, and participated in the construction of public personae which had little to do with the real persons. Thus, Prince Heinrich, was almost apotheosized into an omnipotent High Commander of the German fleet, who, in the emblematic words of one Milly Reinhardt from Fulda seeking a naval career for her brother, “just ha[d] to say one word” and the doors would open for every willing recruit.⁶⁴⁸

Beliefs such as these were clearly inspired by cabin boy stories such as Otto Elster’s “*Klaus Erichsen*”. They had nothing to do with Prince Heinrich’s real powers or intentions, though. The prince could show remarkable generosity if his philanthropy was required, for example by standing godfather for more than forty babies from workers’ to aristocrats’ families between 1882 and 1918.⁶⁴⁹ Those seeking careers and advancements in the navy, however, were generally referred to the relevant recruitment bureaus if they had no previous connections. The countless delegations, telegrams and letters he received on his mission to East Asia, finally, even met with Heinrich’s derision and anger. “People

⁶⁴⁶ LASH Abt.395 Nr.6.

⁶⁴⁷ Berenson, 21-40, 32-36, 39-40; Berenson/Giloi, Introduction, 12.

⁶⁴⁸ LASH Abt.395 Nr.72.

⁶⁴⁹ LASH Abt.395 Nr.144.

pester me with telegrams and letters all day long and it wants an angel's pat to stand all this!" he confided to his mother on 14 December 1897. "[...] Besides I had to receive numerous idiotic people who came as deputations, meant very well but thought it a tremendous deed my going to China! Bless there (sic) hearts, but they are "asses"!"⁶⁵⁰ His sober, professional view of his duties did not correspond with the romantic visions of his audience.⁶⁵¹

The other "Sailor Princes" were similarly reluctant celebrities who felt pestered rather than gratified by the attention they received. Prince Alfred's main concern when he was mobbed by the people of Yarmouth in 1862 was that this "entirely frustrated the game of cricket" he had looked forward to. And Prince Georgios did not have a high regard for "those confounded newspapers" which put the royal families of Greece and Denmark on their title pages.⁶⁵² Many of the princes and their advisors were really more responsive than proactive in their approach to popular media and commodities, trying to safeguard their corporate and personality brands from brand dilution. The public personae they might create for themselves sometimes differed considerably from those constructed by journalists, authors, entrepreneurs and consumers, and there were hardly any instruments to control them.

One could argue, though, that this discrepancy between self-fashioned and appropriated images was not altogether as detrimental to the popular perception of the monarchy as Eva Giloi has proposed. In her view, the growing communication gap between Emperor William II's regal self-stylization and the sentimental tastes of his audience as epitomized by romantic picture postcards eventually led to a certain disillusion about the Hohenzollern monarchy and to its eventual demise.⁶⁵³ In the case of the "Sailor Prince", however, the romantic image of the youthful adventure hero or the omnipotent *deus ex machina* was really just a gradual development of the image of the noble professional scrupulously and competently performing his duty that the princes and their royal families liked to convey themselves in travel books, museal exhibitions and inspired letters. The wishful thinking and imaginative spirit of their audiences-cum-co-designers thus played into the hands of the monarchical establishment. One could even say that the princes' own attitude to the media and to the popular mass market did not matter much at all. For as long as they graciously accepted the remarkably willing help offered to them by the many

⁶⁵⁰ PH to CPV, 14.12.1897, AHH Briefe 7/06-2.

⁶⁵¹ LASH Abt.395 Nr.6.

⁶⁵² PG to KCIX/QL, 16./28.9.1890 and 14/26.1.1892, KCQLA, Kongehusarkivet, pk.12/59.

⁶⁵³ Giloi, Copyrighting, 444-50.

middle-class co-designers who happily tuned their image to popular taste, the monarchy was in little risk to lose its appeal. Only where this cooperation was missing – for example in Greece, where the Glücksborgs were unable to harness the support they gained in Denmark, Russia or Britain – did this indicate a wider stability problem.

Of course, the way in which journalists, authors and entrepreneurs styled the “Sailor Princes” as heroes, the zeal with which readers devoured the news about their adventures in illustrated papers, travel books and children’s fiction, the excitement with which the audiences attended embarkations, disembarkations, or film screenings, and the enthusiasm with which individual citizens wrote to their idols were not simply expressions of their patriotism or love of the royal family. The various, overlapping motivations for these practices included competitive economic thinking, ideological missions or the demands of genres and markets on the part of writers and businessmen. Sensationalism, exoticism and escapism, curiosity, passion for technological innovations and a general fascination with what was special, new or exciting: these were some of the leading motives of the broader audience. The letter-writers, finally, were also guided by the wish to be recognized by a famous individual, to enhance their personal and professional advancement or to gain financial support.

Yet, the conclusion can nevertheless be drawn that “Sailor Princes” occupied a certain place in the “centre of attention”, that vital realm over which the monarchy increasingly had to compete with other contestants. They were deemed worthy of news, of attracting huge crowds and of being addressed in petitions, qualities no longer taken for granted. Moreover, in the imaginative communication that ensued as a result of all of these practices and interactions with the princely celebrities, “a great many people”, to cite Edward Berenson, also “attached themselves to” the monarchy, the navy and “their countries’ empire”.⁶⁵⁴

Winning hearts and minds

All of the media studied above – children’s novels, travel books, illustrated papers, picture postcards, cinematography, advertisements and consumer goods – have been associated with the spread of popular myths and ideologies in nineteenth-century Europe. In ways much subtler and therefore much more pervasive than political speeches, pamphlets or journalistic commentaries, these softer media with their often rich visual elements reached

⁶⁵⁴ Berenson, 40; Schwarzenbach, 280.

even the remotest corners of society, all genders, ages and classes, and infused them with their easily graspable, emotionalized imageries and world views.⁶⁵⁵ As their protagonists, “Sailor Princes” were also involved in complex processes of knowledge production and propaganda. The three central themes of their adventurous depictions – sea travel, exotic encounters and royal life on the edge – served as platforms and screens for the proliferation and projection of three interlinking ideological complexes: navalism, imperialism and monarchism. First, the princes represented prominent prisms for the mediation of the maritime world and of navalist projects pursued by their seafaring nations. Second, they opened up new views onto the transoceanic world and the grandiose imperial futures to be found there. And third, their new type of adventurous heroism could be placed in a metaphoric landscape fit for the legitimization of monarchy in the modern era. In many ways, the princes thus contributed to the stabilization of the political systems in place at the time.

On a first level, the public persona “Sailor Prince”, by tapping into the popular theme of sea travel, contributed to the dissemination of – ideologically flavoured – knowledge about maritime life and the naval forces. The travel reports and adventure novels written about the princes’ journeys as well as the imageries that accompanied them usually introduced their audiences to the excitement of shipboard life and the many tasks and functions of the navy. Almost every report started with virtual tours of the usually state-of-the-art vessels on which they travelled. HMS *Galatea*, the *Valkyrie* or the ocean liner *Kronprinz Wilhelm* were all more or less brand new, elegant, efficient and luxuriously equipped examples of what Bernd Rieger has termed “modern wonders”: technologically innovative vessels which inspired their audiences with awe and the wish to experience them up-close.⁶⁵⁶ By taking their readers with them to the excitingly different world of the ship, by introducing them to masts, riggings and engine rooms and acquainting them with the nautical life, the reports gratified this wish. And they shed a favourable light on their subject. Ships were represented as “swimming fortresses”, sailors as “splendid-looking figures tanned by sun and weather”, officers as superior men combining “knowledge of the world, prudence, presence of mind and fearlessness”.⁶⁵⁷ By thus elevating the navy and its men, the books,

⁶⁵⁵ Behrman, 157; Bowersox; Christadler; MacKenzie, Propaganda, 15-35.

⁶⁵⁶ Rieger, Bernhard, Technology and the culture of modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945 (Cambridge, 2005); Id., ‘Modern Wonders’: Technological innovation and public ambivalence in Britain and Germany, 1890-1933, History Workshop Journal, 55 (2003), 153-176.

⁶⁵⁷ Netto, 12, 21; Boeck, Weltumseglung, 11.

illustrations and all other media helped to arouse interest and pride in the navy as a profession and as a symbol of national strength.

This could mean that public attention was drawn to the possibilities of a substantial maritime presence in the first place. Carl von der Boeck's early novels about Prince Heinrich, for example, explicitly embedded the prince's service missions into the wider duties of the Imperial Navy in order to legitimize the existence of the young institution in a predominantly land-based nation. On the first few pages, he informed his readers that the navy was supposed to "enforce Germany's prestige in distant countries" or to "assist German overseas trade both by protecting and by supporting it".⁶⁵⁸ Alexander Svedstrup and Henrik Cavling also used their publications to advertise Denmark's naval interests. As early as 30 November 1897, Cavling had used the front page of *Politiken* to call for a stronger presence of "The Danish flag on the seven seas". He regretted that despite growing business interest in East Asia no Danish ship-of-the-line had visited that area for the past 27 years. The cruise of the *Valkyrie*, which he accompanied on board the *East Asiatic Company's* ocean liner *Assam* and which he vividly reported about in both a series of articles and a travelogue enticingly entitled "*The Orient*", was meant to start a new era of Danish naval activities.⁶⁵⁹ In his travel book "*Path of the Dane*", Svedstrup equally formulated a programme for Denmark's resurgence as a marine power. The nation, he argued, had almost forgotten its seafaring and trading past. Yet the success of many individual Danes in foreign services proved that the small country was still able to join the ranks of the great nations. The cruise of the *Valkyrie* was meant to usher in "a new century, a new future for Denmark" by "directing the nation's attention [...] out to the sea".⁶⁶⁰

A second concern linked to this general seaward turn was the wish to reach and recruit especially young people. In "*The Orient*", Henrik Cavling blamed the lamentable reluctance of young merchant sons to represent Denmark abroad on their education, which failed to "arouse the boys' interest in foreign climes" and to "broaden the child's horizons".⁶⁶¹ Throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, it would be the special mission much more of juvenile literatures and the toy industry than of the classroom to win the hearts of the young for the naval profession and for colonial enterprises. The figure of the adventure prince was one means making "young hearts

⁶⁵⁸ Boeck, *Central-Amerika*, 20.

⁶⁵⁹ Cavling, Østen; Dall, 159-65; Larsen, 493-96; Bramsen, Christopher, *Open Doors: Vilhelm Meyer and the establishment of General Electric in China* (Richmond, 2001), 28-9.

⁶⁶⁰ Svedstrup, 3-7.

⁶⁶¹ Cavling cited and translated by Bramsen, 28-29.

beat/to man the Fleet”, as one popular song about Prince Alfred put it. The dashing princes who willingly took on the hard and dangerous life of seamen either functioned as role models themselves, or, in the case of adventure novels about Prince Heinrich, were accompanied by cabin boys and other identification figures whose quick rise through the ranks would encourage middle-class boys to join the navy.⁶⁶²

In the period of New Navalism between 1890 and 1914, the romantic, adventurous and exotic aspects about naval life which enhanced the sales figures of books, journals and consumer goods were finally also used by the advocates of larger-scale fleet-building programmes to gain some ground on the competitive political mass market. As the ideology of sea power spread throughout Europe, it induced decision-makers to expand their naval policies to an almost irrationally competitive level. Public pressure groups such as the British or German Navy Leagues (founded in 1894 and 1898, respectively) or institutions such as the so-called news office (*Nachrichtenbureau*) founded by the chief of the *Reichsmarineamt*, Admiral von Tirpitz, in 1897, were dedicated to the task of “enlightening” the wider public about the many functions of the navy. The ultimate goal was to convince both the parliament, in possession of substantial budgetary rights, and the general population of Britain’s and Germany’s needs for decisively expanded fleets as envisaged by the Naval Defence Act of 1889 or the Naval Laws of 1898-1912. The institutions skilfully took up the strategies of the mass consumer market by publishing lavishly illustrated books or journals, distributing impressive pictures or organizing major showpiece cruises. They were also able to enlist editors, journalists, authors and entrepreneurs for their purposes, thus fanning the flames of an already existing public fascination with all things maritime into a new naval enthusiasm.⁶⁶³

With his career effectively over by 1890, Prince Alfred could not be called intimately connected with the spirit of new navalism emerging in Britain after 1889. On the three occasions when he engaged in the navalist cause, during the jubilee naval reviews of 1887/1897 and the Royal Naval Exhibition of 1891, he did so merely as one of the members of the royal family.⁶⁶⁴ Prince Heinrich, however, was a central personality brand within the German navalist campaign. The promotional calendar distributed by the Berlin

⁶⁶² Christadler, 149-50; Meyer, Ursula, *Der kleine Kreuzer Emden: Literarische Verarbeitung seiner Geschichte in drei Jugendromanen*, in Glunz, Claudia/Schneider, Thomas (eds), *Literarische Verarbeitungen des Krieges* (Göttingen, 2010), 61-104.

⁶⁶³ Deist, *passim*; Geppert, Dominik, *Pressekriege: Öffentlichkeit und Diplomatie in den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen, 1896-1912* (Munich, 2007), 243-46.

⁶⁶⁴ Hamilton, 81-103; Marder, Arthur, ‘The origin of popular interest in the Royal Navy’, *RSI Journal*, 82 (1937), 763-71, 764.

department store N. Israel in 1900 provides a good illustration of how the propaganda machinery and the consumer industry worked hand in hand to enhance his image and that of the navy. This richly illustrated booklet handed out to costumers tapped into the public fascination with the prince's exotic mission to East Asia. It also spread the word about a cruise, though, which could be understood as a promotional tour of the Imperial Navy, showing its relevance for global politics.⁶⁶⁵

This view is underscored by the fact that the text was composed by Hans Graf Bernstorff, one of a number of retired naval officers who had enlisted as public speakers and authors for the Pan-German and Navy Leagues. The propagandists, among them also Reinhold Werner, used mini-biographies and travelogues of Prince Heinrich's journeys or other adventure stories published as cheap or free booklets to support the institutional interests of the navy.⁶⁶⁶ Together with all the other novels and trinkets produced to commemorate the prince's journeys, they helped to install Heinrich as a widely recognized figurehead of the German navalist movement. Although the prince's high-profile role as Protector of the German Navy League was a rather passive one, the American journalist Frederic Wile was therefore right in proclaiming Heinrich to be "actively identified with the propaganda by which the innermost recesses of the Fatherland have been converted to naval enthusiasm".⁶⁶⁷

As can be gauged from the language of most propagandists, the navalist and imperialist causes were closely interwoven. Men like Bernstorff and Werner were even working for both the Navy League and its colonialist counterpart, the Pan-German League. It is no wonder, therefore, that, on a second level, "Sailor Princes" and the adventurous print and consumer culture surrounding them also contributed to the propagation of the imperialist idea.

Travelogues, adventure novels and consumer goods not only took readers and consumers on-board majestic vessels, but also on exclusive virtual tours around the world. Every instalment, chapter or collectible card would offer another glimpse of excitingly exotic foreign cultures, wildlife or natural phenomena. Publications like Milner's *Cruise of the Galatea* or the 1871 South Kensington Exhibition clearly had primarily didactic aspirations. Magazines like *Über Land und Meer* or children's novels like those of von der Boeck aimed to meet the public desire for an early version of "edutainment". Yet the

⁶⁶⁵ Bernstorff.

⁶⁶⁶ Werner; Deist 92.

⁶⁶⁷ Wile, 47.

knowledge and amusement thus provided was accompanied by a range of more tendentious messages. By expanding the great wide world before the eyes of their audiences, Europe's popular print and consumer markets also helped to promote the prospects of imperial expansion. They familiarized their readers with ideas of a justified Western domination and with notions of national interest which superseded all other concerns.

Thus, Prince Alfred, though not a figurehead of New Navalism, was certainly recognized to be a "pioneer of [...] British imperialism" by the time of his death in 1900.⁶⁶⁸ By providing canonized versions of his grand tours around the British Empire, his public representations in the period 1858-1874 contributed to the popularization of the imperial programme envisioned by his royal parents. They fostered a broad awareness of the continued relevance and needs of Britain's neglected colonies long before the advent of "New Imperialism". Henrik Cavling and Alexander Svedstrup likewise advocated imperial integration and increased informal imperialist engagement for which a stronger naval presence was only a stepping stone. Before 1899, Cavling had already become famous for his reportage on the Danish community in America and on the West Indies. In 1899-1901, the close friend of the businessman H.N. Andersen hoped to support the *East Asiatic Company's* interests and to contribute to a new spirit of informal imperial enterprise through his vivid descriptions of (Danish) life in the exotic East particularly addressed at Danish youths.⁶⁶⁹ Both he and Alexander Svedstrup believed that Denmark, which was "not such a small" country "if you count in the sea", could become great again through "the new, peaceful conquests" of trade.⁶⁷⁰

While the Danish journalists hoped to entice their readers with an exoticizing depiction of East Asia, most other sources applied even more self-reassuringly Eurocentric, latently racist yardsticks. Especially the later novels and books about Prince Heinrich's travels were replete with common stereotypes about national character or hygiene. The hybrid attitudes of "Sailor Princes" as "cosmopolitan nationalists" who could appreciate and condemn foreign cultures did not trickle through to the general public. Instead, the popular representation of the princes invited their home audiences to engage in the one-sided practice of what one might call "negative armchair tourism": The encounters with excitingly different, but ultimately negatively evaluated "others" fabricated by the popular

⁶⁶⁸ 'The Sailor Prince', North-Eastern Gazette (1.8.1900).

⁶⁶⁹ Dall, 159-65; Larsen, 493-96; Bramsen, 28-9; Feldbæk, 328.

⁶⁷⁰ Svedstrup, 3-7.

print and consumer market helped European publics to build up positive images of themselves as modern, civilized peoples whose superiority legitimized colonial exploitation and imperial expansion. “Sailor Princes” were part of a row of commercialized imperial heroes who vividly personified this superiority through their dashing looks and daring exploits as well as their exalted status. And just as the princes themselves increasingly put the national interests of their home countries before their own dynastic internationalism, so their popular representations focused on their role as national figureheads pitted against other European powers. The (informal) colonization of the remaining few areas of the world was justified by the superior character traits and administrative or entrepreneurial skills displayed by the princes and by their countrymen. Thus, Konrad Fischer-Sallstein and Hans Bernstorff, through their accounts of Prince Heinrich’s journey to East Asia, contributed to the widespread representation of Kiautschou as a flagship colony. Their descriptions of the benevolent diplomat-prince and the exemplary administration of the protectorate suggested that Germany should continue its beneficial imperial expansion.

This interlinking navalist and imperialist propaganda centred on the public persona of the “Sailor Prince” did not fail to have an effect. To draw on Prince Heinrich’s private archives again, the letters the prince received on his departure for East Asia from many ordinary citizens are filled with enthusiastic expressions of patriotism, documenting the writers’ love of the fatherland, their belief in the German naval forces and their conviction of the righteousness of the Kiautschou cause. The lawyers, merchants, teachers and clerks who believed themselves to be representatives of “many German men” celebrated Heinrich as a “Germanic warrior” going forth to defend “the Fatherland’s interests in the Far East” and the “German honour in China”. “Full of enthusiasm for Pan-Germany in the Far East” and sometimes even explicitly referring to the “fleet lectures” presented by the Pan-German League, they hailed “a new era for Germany’s might and power”.⁶⁷¹ Many young people, moreover, asked the prince to advocate their entry into the naval forces or give his financial support. They explained their desire by pointing to the “attraction” which the “beautiful word” naval officer “exercises on the young” or by the love they felt “for our German navy” from their “first school years”. This navalist enthusiasm and the idea that Prince Heinrich could make everything happen by simply “issue[ing] a decree” was particularly and surprisingly strong in those federal states which were further removed

⁶⁷¹ Letters to PH, 7.-20.12.1897, LASH Abt.395 Nr.6.

from the sea, showing a clearly mediated, ideological rather than direct, social or geographical influence.⁶⁷² The cruise of the *Valkyrie* and Henrik Cavling's appeal at Danish youths were likewise subject to lively debates in the Copenhagen Stock Exchange. The period between 1901 and 1920 would indeed be characterized by an increased economic involvement of many young businessmen in the East – who liked to see themselves as “noble Danes” although they were also interested in making quick fortunes.⁶⁷³

The navalist and imperialist programmes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been interpreted as stabilization strategies by a variety of scholars. Particularly for the German case, they have been studied as diversionary tactics by which the political and social establishment tried to disguise the incomplete political and social modernization of German society. The politically disadvantaged and diverse middle- and working-classes were rallied behind a self-assertive foreign policy meant to distract them from their domestic impotence, to win their support for an autocratic *ancien regime* and to unite them behind one common national goal.⁶⁷⁴ More recent scholarship has complemented this thesis by pointing out that naval-colonial enthusiasm was not simply the result of targeted propaganda “from above”, but rather of a complex, multidirectional process merging government inculcation with the “self-mobilization of the masses”.⁶⁷⁵ In this revised version, the thesis seems to be all the more applicable to other countries as well: to the class-ridden society of late-nineteenth-century Britain, to a Greece that was, in the 1880s to 1900s, plagued by political instability and bankruptcy, or to Denmark during the constitutional conflict and the system shift. Almost everywhere, “Sailor Princes” participated in a general effort to achieve system stabilization by promoting the enticing “future projects” of navalism and imperialism and utilizing them for the popularization of the monarchy as demonstrated in Chapter One.

Yet, the princes' depiction as adventure heroes also contributed to the stabilization of the monarchical and general political system in a much more direct sense. For on a third and final level, it is hard to imagine any more widely popular, novel, and exciting way of spreading the word about the institutions of monarchy and dynasty and their claims to

⁶⁷² Deist, 52.

⁶⁷³ Bramsen; Gravers.

⁶⁷⁴ Kehr and Berghahn.

⁶⁷⁵ Hobson, 40-42, 320-30; Rüger, Naval game, 95-139; Eley, Geoff, ‘Reshaping the right: Radical nationalism and the German Navy League, 1898-1908’, *Historical Journal*, 21.2 (1978), 327-54; Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*, 105.

continued relevance than the themes and imageries of adventure. The adventure story was both an ancient and strikingly modern genre whose plots, as we have seen, were travel- and action-based and full of challenges to be overcome by heroes which combined the performance-oriented skills of the middle-classes with the idea of the innate superiority of the medieval knight errand. By representing “Sailor Princes” as adventure heroes, the popular media studied in this chapter automatically reinforced the qualities already inherent in the concept: its curious combination of ancient and modern, meritocratic and aristocratic, cosmopolitan and national themes.

The popular media did not only contribute to the creation of a political myth that reconciled a row of contradictory forces discussed throughout this study, though. By particularly focusing on the princes’ agency in the face of danger, they also tapped into a rich metaphoric landscape of its own. From Antiquity onwards, political philosophers and theologians liked to think of political communities and the Christian church as passengers on a ship sailing through time, led by Christ or his spiritual and secular representatives on this fearful journey.⁶⁷⁶ This ancient idea of the ship as a social microcosm and metaphor of church and state obtained a new political meaning in the Age of Navalism, when the ideology of sea power indeed gave rise to the impression that the future of all nations rested on their ability to build and maintain large fleets. Although monarchs like Emperor William II liked to adopt the imagery of the captain for themselves, it was “Sailor Princes” as professionally trained naval officers actually in charge of impressive “modern wonders” who could best embody their dynasties’ claims to metaphorical marine leadership.

The princes’ depiction as sea adventure heroes essentially achieved three connected feats. First, it merged the princes’ public personae with the existing mythical figure of the “man at the helm”, which, according to Dolf Sternberger, represented a popular counter-motif to the *Gründerzeit* theme of shipwreck. Next to stormy seas and ships in distress, Sternberger identified the image of the rescuer – the man who keeps his calm during the storm, takes charge of the helm or clings to the sinking mast and thus, with almost superhuman powers, saves shipwrecked crews or fainting maidens – as one of the best-loved themes of nineteenth-century popular art and literature.⁶⁷⁷ As demonstrated above, this was also a popular trope in the representation of “Sailor Princes”, particularly Prince Heinrich. In a symptomatic rescue scene from the novel *Klaus Erichsen*, Otto Elster

⁶⁷⁶ Maier, Friedrich, *Das “Staatsschiff” auf der Fahrt von Griechenland über Rom nach Europa: Zu einer Metapher als Bildungsgegenstand* (Munich, 1994); Wolf, Burkhardt, ‘Der Kapitän: Zur Figurenlehre neuzeitlicher Seeherrschaft’, *Arcadia*, 46. 2 (2012), 335-356; Corbin, 8.

⁶⁷⁷ Sternberger, 36.

described “the slim and superior figure of the young captain” standing on the conning bridge: “his blue eyes looked firmly out into storm and weather; he did not flinch as the lightning bolts came down; his feet did not waver at the rolling and pitching of the ship; and he gave his orders in a fresh, manly, clear and sharp voice.”⁶⁷⁸

Already a selling point in its own right, this representation of “Sailor Princes” as born heroes and natural commanders served two additional ideological functions. It propagated state-patriotic virtues and a sense of God-given hierarchy. Because of the state-ship metaphor the hierarchical order of the navy could be understood as a replication of the social order at large or vice versa. By inviting their audiences to participate imaginatively in the exciting shipboard life, adventure stories thus also encouraged them to adopt the hierarchical values of the navy. As Carl von der Boeck informed his readership, in the navy “every individual” had to “fulfil their precisely prescribed duties” and observe a “discipline” and “obedience which precludes contradiction”.⁶⁷⁹

This idea was finally complemented by the implicit proposition that the monarchy and the ruling dynasty rightfully stood at the top of this social order and chain of command. Often, the princes’ acts of rescue (both when they rescued others and when they were rescued themselves) were embedded into a religious context of divine grace. Von der Boeck even cited a superstition among Prince Heinrich’s colleagues that the planks on which he travelled would never go down. Such heavenly favour naturally invited subjects to flock around their divinely ordained royal families. It is no wonder, therefore, that many monarchs launched newspaper stories which depicted “Sailor Princes” as saviour figures. It is also no wonder that the letters received by Prince Heinrich were almost always not only full of enthusiastic effusions about the naval-imperial destiny of the German Fatherland, but also brimming with excited declarations of love for the throne, the emperor and the Hohenzollern dynasty. The prince was frequently linked to his father and grandfather as another representative of the heroic spirit of the Zollerns. And his subjects did not tire of declaring how they would “stand true to empire and throne”, to “Emperor Wilhelm and his house.”

⁶⁷⁸ Elster, 22-24.

⁶⁷⁹ Boeck, *Weltumsegelung*, 11.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how “Sailor Princes” complemented and expanded the public portfolio of the monarchy in the age of beginning mass democracy. As has been demonstrated, the princes added a peculiar lustre of “achieved celebrity” to their dynasties’ arsenals of appealing images which helped them to stay competitive in the increasingly contested public mass market. Apart from their meritocratic careers and diplomatic functions, it was particularly the princes’ adventurous lives which earned them the continued attention of wide readerships and consumer circles. Their sea travels, exotic encounters and heroic exploits fitted well with the imaginative landscape of adventure that took Europe by storm from 1820 onwards. The dangers they encountered at sea, in big-game safaris or ambush attacks distinguished the princes favourably from their “bourgeoisified” stay-at-home relatives. And it provided an exciting peephole into a completely different world for men, women and children from the (lower) middle and working classes. One could argue that it was the ability of the institution of dynasty to produce such a diversified cast of actors that helped nineteenth-century monarchies to defend their place at the centre of public attention.

Yet, as we have also seen, the popular image of the adventure prince only partly originated with the monarchy itself: in the shape of travel accounts, exhibitions and “inspired” newspaper stories. Much more significantly, the heroic figure was moulded, reinforced and appropriated by many (un-)commissioned co-designers and mediators who acted from a variety of motives. It was in this public sphere, tossed about by editorial interests and market forces, influenced by considerations of personal gain and propaganda and coloured in by the imaginations of diverse audiences that the popular brand of the “Sailor Prince” really took shape. Scholars like Eva Giloi have taken this exposure to public appropriation as a sign of the monarchy’s limited ability to control its image and the discrepancies between royal self-representation and popular reception as an indicator of monarchical decline. One could argue, though, that as long as there were imaginative landscapes that it fitted into and as long as there were co-designers willing to adapt its image to the prevalent cultural tastes, the monarchy stood in little danger of abolition. It is impossible to know exactly why Prince Alfred or Prince Heinrich were stalked in Norwich and aboard the *Kronprinz Wilhelm* – but it was certainly not because they were irrelevant to their audience.

There remains, of course, the question of how relevant the princes really were considered in relation to the wider mass-media and consumer market. Once we zoom out, our stars might be reduced to starlets in comparison to other heavenly bodies. A detailed comparison with other celebrities of the period (Bismarck, Garibaldi, Sarah Bernhardt) would exceed the confines of this chapter. A few concluding remarks can be made, though, regarding the popular reach of individual “Sailor Princes” in relation to each other as well as unravelled on a chronological timeline.

All “Sailor Princes” had their personal celebrity “heydays”, longer or shorter periods when they featured prominently in the news, usually centred around their entry into the navy, their major world tours and diplomatic missions or their most prestigious offices. Prince Alfred enjoyed unmitigated popularity in the early years of his career, became a special darling of the newspapers during his *Galatea* world cruise (1867-71), but then increasingly failed to create a dignified mature image for himself. Prince Valdemar, on the other hand, rose to particular public prominence only through the *Valkyrie* enterprise (1899-1901), but then – despite his comparatively low-key profile – kept a steady level of popularity with the Danish public until his death. Prince Georgios experienced a series of ups and downs: he had a short moment of (international) fame in 1891 and then again at the start of his High Commissionership of Crete; afterwards, he increasingly faded into the background. Prince Heinrich, on the other hand, trumped all his colleagues through a remarkably steady, if not steadily rising career as a media darling. Every mission, from Kiautschou to America increased his popular image as figurehead of Germany’s naval-imperial aspirations. In 1913, the journalist Frederic Wile thus even remarked that while the Germans had had “few national idols since Bismarck” Prince Heinrich was “one of them”: the “Admiral Royal holds a place in the affections of his Fatherland almost second to none.”⁶⁸⁰ As late as 1914-1918, when Heinrich was merely overseeing a secondary theatre of naval warfare in the Baltic, he was still accorded such a high symbolic importance that people could read on propaganda postcards for the navy: “*Wir durchkreuzen alle Welt/mit Prinz Heinrich, unserm Held.*” It is this unique longevity and widespread appeal, together with the remarkable size and accessibility of his archives, which explains why Heinrich has featured so prominently in this chapter. He exemplifies par excellence the ability of “Sailor Princes” to speak to large and diverse audiences over a long period of time.

⁶⁸⁰ Wile, 46.

Heinrich also embodies the propaganda potential of the royal sailor in the Age of Empire more than anybody else. His increasing popularity can be explained by the spread of the ideologies of navalism and new imperialism, which he himself helped to popularize through his royal aura and brand-endorsement. At the dawn of the twentieth century, sensationalist newspaper journalism, the genre of adventure fiction and a wide range of colourfully packaged consumer goods both profited from the adventurous and exotic connotations of naval and colonial themes and subtly carried them into the hearts and minds of their diverse audiences. The spread of these new media and styles across borders led to a certain unification of tastes in European mass culture. Yet, mass papers, adventure novels and consumer goods also contributed to the proliferation of national stereotypes and ideologies of national-imperial greatness which seemed to pit Europe's powers against each other in a fierce struggle for naval supremacy and global dominance at the cost of so-called inferior races. Ultimately, the "Sailor Prince" brand thus also contributed to the spread of a competitive, hostile climate of international and inter-imperial rivalry.

Conclusion: A brand enters series production

In February 1900, *Munsey's Magazine*, the first mass-market weekly in the United States, published an article entitled "Sailor Princes of today". It provided a richly illustrated overview of a range of, as the subtitle stated, "Royal boys who may one day command some of the navies of the world, from the great armadas of Britain to the petty squadron of Siam". The children and teenagers covered included Prince Edward, the eldest son of the Duke of York, Prince Adalbert of Prussia, the third son of Emperor William II, Prince Wilhelm, the second son of the Swedish Crown Prince, and Prince Charkabron of Siam, to name but a few.

In many ways, the article confirmed the success of the monarchical brand "Sailor Prince" in the long nineteenth century. First of all, it documented that, by 1900, the naval education of younger royal princes had become a tradition. The concept of the "Sailor Prince" had become an established term. Secondly, the article laid open the global reach of the myths and tropes encapsulated in the phenomenon. Not only had the monarchs of countries as diverse as Britain, Sweden or Siam decided to align with their respective national navies and thus with the virulent ideology of sea power. The ideas conveyed by the naval uniforms of the royal youngsters also appealed to a people as deeply republican as the Americans. Many democrats, the author of the article, Fritz Morris, explained, were convinced "that royalty is an obsolete institution, and that the royal families of Europe are physical degenerates". Yet, "Sailor Princes" were "a remarkably lively lot of little fellows" proving the opposite: "Blood will tell". They were, this is the third and final observation to be drawn from *Munsey's Magazine*, one of the most cogent arguments in favour of the institution of monarchy.⁶⁸¹

This study has sought to explain how the trademark "Sailor Prince" became so successful in helping Europe's monarchies to assert themselves in the increasingly contested political mass market. To this end it has analysed four of the first fully-fledged prototypes of the series: Prince Alfred, Prince Valdemar, Prince Heinrich and Prince Georgios. Essentially, these princes were national variants of one Europe-wide phenomenon. Their public personae emerged in response to a variety of converging cultural and political trends of the nineteenth century: nationalism, imperialism and navalism, the rise of the middle classes, the beginning of mass democracy and the emergence of the popular mass market. By educating their sons in the navy and thus laying the foundation for a powerful

⁶⁸¹ Morris, Fritz, 'Sailor Princes of today', *Munsey's Magazine* (February 1900).

monarchical brand, Europe's royal families were able to adapt to these trends both on a general and on a nation-specific level. To comprehend this process, a primarily panoramic approach was chosen. The case studies have not simply been examined comparatively according to a set schema. Rather, they have been treated as discrete illustrations of a wider phenomenon. Sometimes, some or all of them were subjected to an additional comparative analysis (for example, when naval careers were examined). At other times, the transnational relations between the different royal figures, nations and empires stood in the foreground (for instance, in the case of dynastic hand-me-down strategies or the travelling adventure genre). Primarily, however, the four princes were presented as part of a kaleidoscopic panorama with all its asymmetries and incongruences. Brought together in a synoptical confrontation, the four individual personae merged to reveal one underlying ideal-type pattern.

The end result is a reconstructed assembly plan of sorts involving four essential steps or constituent myths. First, the public persona "Sailor Prince" was centred on a core brand message of national identity. It aligned foreign or transnational dynasties with the glorious mythologies and traditions of their seafaring nations as well as with the manifold hopes for the future that their contemporaries in the age of nationalism and navalism placed in seaborne trade and colonial expansion. To this was added a second brand promise: social identity. By adopting a profession associated with middle-class ideals of honest toil, meritocracy and professionalism, "Sailor Princes" demonstrated that they and their aristocratic families were willing to transcend the barriers of class and to become one with their people in an age of nascent mass democracy. That their brand was not merely decorative, but functional, thirdly, was proven by the princes' travelling activity. They united disparate colonial empires and diaspora communities and represented their nations' interests in the globalizing world of empires. All of these brand features were finally wrapped up in the colourful packaging of the imaginative landscapes of sea adventure, exoticism and celebrity consumerism. Within the shopping window of the political mass market, this "bling-bling" could attract the attention of wide audiences and consumer circles both for the corporate brand monarchy and for other brands.

What is brand success, though, and how do we measure it? One could simply argue that the "Sailor Prince" brand was successful because it provided the monarchy with a suitable tool for repositioning itself strategically in a changing world. On the one hand, it increased the monarchy's symbolic relevance by presenting royal families as symbols of the nation, as symbolic centres of the empire and as symbolic heads of the ship-of-state in symbolic

alliance with the middle classes. On the other hand, it also augmented the actual power and influence of individual sovereigns and their dynasties by strengthening their hold on traditional prerogatives such as foreign policy and the military forces, by enabling them to participate actively in current discourses on national defence and colonial expansion or by opening up new fields of activity such as private commercial enterprise.

How, though, do we know that these possibilities inherent in the brand were also successful in the sense that they convinced newly-empowered citizens of the continued relevance of the monarchy? Another possible measurement of brand success would be longevity. As *Munsey's Magazine* indicated, the “Sailor Prince” brand quickly entered series production. Both Prince Heinrich's son Waldemar and Prince Valdemar's sons Aage and Axel became naval officers. Naval education also became a tradition for other younger royal princes and even crown princes. Thus, Prince Alfred's nephews Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, and George, Duke of York, the oldest sons of the Prince of Wales, both received their basic training in the Royal Navy, with George continuing as a professional naval officer and, eventually, as a “Sailor King”. Prince Carl, the second son of the Danish Crown Prince Frederik (VIII), likewise trained in the navy before he was elected King Haakon VII of Norway in 1905. Prince Adalbert, the third son of Emperor William II, was destined for a naval career. In Greece, both King George I's youngest son Christopher and Crown Prince Constantine's third son Paul followed in Prince Georgios's footsteps. This suggests that the public persona continued to speak to wide audiences.

How, though, did these audiences respond? This study has analysed a range of sources – from newspaper coverage to children's fiction, consumer products and fan mail – to assess the popular reception and appropriation of “Sailor Princes”. Aware of the futility of retrospective opinion polling, it has approached the subject mainly through relating it to the question of agency. Who were the agents involved in the creation of the “Sailor Prince” brand?

Royal personages like Prince Albert, King Christian, Crown Prince Frederick William or King George , who shared the basic assumptions of their age, chose to adapt to foreign countries or new political configurations and remodelled the tradition of royal military service. None of these, however, really intended lifelong middle-class professions for their sons nor could they truly anticipate the hype that would surround them. There were also the princes themselves, who chose to join the navy, grew into self-professed career officers and interacted with their audiences at home and abroad. Some of them were charismatic

figures, but none actively sought the publicity they received. The study has also focused on the supporting agents of royal families – men like Stosch, Seckendorff or Cowell, who oversaw and marketed the professionalization of their charges, or the many artists and literary men who were engaged to document the princes' journeys. They were certainly foremen on the assembly line. Yet, this is the striking end result, the most valid reasons for the success of the "Sailor Prince" brand were the many willing hands that co-designed it: the non-commissioned journalists and authors, middle-class entrepreneurs and tradespeople, ordinary spectators, readers, consumers etc. who, for varying reasons from economic self-interest to ideological commitment, contributed to the creation, multiplication and retail of the product brand. It was the monarchies' ability to enlist these customer-audiences – the YouTubers of yesterday – to do the marketing for them that is the best measurement of their success.

When did this success end then? Strolling through Vienna shortly after the end of the Habsburg monarchy in 1918, the journalist Alfred Polgar observed how "the K. and k.", the imperial-royal initials which had been omnipresent in the Austro-Hungarian consumer world, were "vanishing from the cityscape": "The royal purveyors cover their former glory, once resplendent in its gold letters, with bashful pieces of paper. And the bronze, wood or plaster double eagles that used to decorate house facades and company signs fall down to the pavement as if shot in the heart".⁶⁸² The First World War has generally been cited as the one force which brought to an end Europe's last monarchical age with all its consumerist trappings. In the view of many historians, this was even a natural process. To them, the Habsburg monarchy was only the most prototypical of a range of anti-modern and anachronistic regimes which, after one last burst of splendid revival, eventually succumbed to a process of modernization and democratization which had started in 1789.⁶⁸³

This study has already argued that, contrary to this interpretation, Europe's major royal houses stood their ground rather well in the nineteenth century: through the employment of their dynastic personnel, through a combination of up-to-date myth-making and media strategies and through the help of wide circles of society. Neither the monarchies that vanished in the prelude, turmoil and aftermath of the Great War nor the institution of

⁶⁸² Alfred Polgar cited in Brunold, Georg (ed.), *Nichts als die Welt: Reportagen und Augenzeugenberichte aus 2500 Jahren* (Berlin, 2010), 297.

⁶⁸³ Deak, John, 'The Great War and its forgotten realm: The Habsburg monarchy and the First World War', *Journal of Modern History*, 86.2 (2014), 336-80; Mayer, 6, 129; Machtan, Lothar, *Die Abdankung: Wie Deutschlands gekrönte Häupter aus der Geschichte fielen* (Berlin, 2008).

monarchy as such were doomed to failure prior to 1914.⁶⁸⁴ Moreover, neither the reformed corporate brand of the monarchy nor the monarchical brand “Sailor Prince” comprehensively lost their appeal after 1918. Rather, it was merely the citizens of those countries on the losing side of the war who, after reassessing the functionality of the institution, cancelled their cooperation with the monarchy and demolished all the signs of their political and commercial partnership. Everywhere else, the success story of the monarchical brand “Sailor Prince” continued.

Thus it was actually Prince Heinrich, once the most popular “Sailor Prince”, who experienced the steepest downfall. The prince who had been welcomed by a giant procession of the citizens of Kiel on his return from East Asia in February 1900 had to leave the city under the gunfire of the mutinous sailors whose rebellion ushered in the end of the Hohenzollern monarchy in November 1918.⁶⁸⁵ As the war was inevitably lost and as the monarchy increasingly stood in the way of a successful peace treaty, its functionality had gone. Although initially turned into a public scapegoat, Heinrich would eventually regain a high level of popularity, though, compared with other Hohenzollerns.

In the other countries addressed by this study, the “Sailor Prince” phenomenon was not dealt an abrupt blow. The history of the Greek monarchy after 1918 was certainly turbulent, especially since King Constantine eventually failed to establish a Greater Greek Empire during the Asia Minor campaign (1919-1922). Although the functionality of the monarchy – which had largely rested on its ability to achieve this “Great idea” – gradually faded, King Paul I (1947-1964), could still garner some public support from his role as a “Sailor King”. In Britain, the “Sailor King” George VI (1936-1952) – and his brother, George, Duke of Kent – were even more certain of public approval for their profession and corresponding demeanour. King Frederik IX of Denmark (1947-1972) greatly surpassed the popularity of any of his predecessors from the Glücksborg dynasty by becoming an approachable, open-minded “Sailor King” who publicly espoused his naval identity.⁶⁸⁶

As these examples show, some of the major parameters of the long Age of Empire which had led to the creation and widespread popularity of the public persona “Sailor Prince” did not vanish after the First World War. Europe’s navies, which had seen little action despite

⁶⁸⁴ Deak, 348-80; Clark, Christopher, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to war in 1914* (London, 2013), 65-78; Yapp, 92ff.

⁶⁸⁵ Mirbach, 455-8.

⁶⁸⁶ Skipper, Jon, *Sømandskongen: En biografi om Frederik IX* (Copenhagen, 2005).

their high symbolic importance, might have lost their status as the most prestigious military forces of the age. They made way for new military technologies such as the air force or for new elite units of often amphibious character. Yet, for island and archipelagic nations such as the British, the Danish and the Greek, the sea, the sailors and the navy remained strong symbols of national identity. It was as late as 1956 that King Frederik IX coined the term “sea folk” to address his people. Imperialism might have stopped to be a Europe-wide driving force of foreign policy by 1918. Yet, Britain and Denmark retained major parts of their colonial empires or at least established close ties with those colonies that left for independence. Royal visits to (former) colonies and Commonwealth states as well as international diplomacy would continue to be some of the primary functions of mobile royal personages.⁶⁸⁷ In 1930, the Danish revue singer Osvald Helmuth thus regaled his audiences with a hugely popular song about the official visits that Crown Prince Frederik, his sailor brother Knud and his sailor cousin Axel paid to Siam, China and Japan aboard the EAC’s ship *Fiona*: “Three dashing princes from the far North” (*Tre raske prinser højt fra Nord*).⁶⁸⁸ In many ways it tapped into the jolly image of the sailor that prevailed in the fiction, musical theatre and film industry of the 1930s-1950s epitomised by the Popeye cartoons. By then, Europe’s middle classes were no longer the only social group whose social-political values had to be accommodated by monarchical regimes. Their quest to appeal to the aspiring working classes meant that Europe’s royal families could gladly fall back on the image of the sailor as a skilled labourer as well as middle-class professional.⁶⁸⁹

Only gradually did royal naval education become replaced by training in other, often airborne military branches. In today’s de-militarized societies, military careers for royal princes no longer suffice to guarantee public success. Rather than presenting a sign of the monarchy’s modernity, the employment of Prince Harry in the British Army Air Corps or of Crown Prince Frederik in the elite Danish Frogman Corps represent a very traditional idea of royal service to the nation. Europe’s remaining monarchies have not tired of producing new, up-to-date brands, though. One could even argue that many of the popular

⁶⁸⁷ E.g. MacDonnell, Tom, *Daylight upon magic: The royal tour of Canada, 1939* (Toronto, 1989); Sapire, Hilary, ‘African loyalism and its discontents: The royal tour of South Africa, 1947’, *Historical Journal*, 54.1 (2011), 215-40.

⁶⁸⁸ Bjerne, Karen, “‘Three dashing princes from the far North’: Three Danish princes’ visit to Japan in 1930”, in: Laderrière, Mette (ed.), *Danes in Japan: Aspects of early Danish-Japanese contacts* (Copenhagen, 1984).

⁶⁸⁹ Hayman, Mark, ‘Labour and the monarchy: Patriotism and republicanism during the Great War’, *First World War Studies*, 5.2 (2004), 163-179.

aspects once embodied by the “Sailor Prince” – honest toil and meritocracy, modernity and celebrity – have moved on to the sports sector.

Most of the “Sailor Princes” of this study were already associated with new sports movements such as athleticism, car racing or yachting.⁶⁹⁰ As the twentieth century progressed, royal participation in national sports cultures and international sporting events became even more important. Since 1896, several royal princes and princesses have served on Olympic organizing committees.⁶⁹¹ The number of royal contestants – usually in yachting and riding events – is even more astonishing, ranging from King Constantine II of Greece (1960) to King Felipe of Spain (1992) or Prince Albert of Monaco (1988-2002). The focus has shifted from modern professionalism to amateurism. Yet, the monarchy has proven its continued ability to make full use of its dynastic personnel and to craft new brands at the intersection of dynastic tradition and modernity. The “Sailor Prince” was one of the first such brands.

⁶⁹⁰ Schmidt, Christina, , ‘Technik, die begeistert: Prinz Heinrich und der Fortschritt seiner Zeit’, in: Hering/Schmidt, Prinz Heinrich, 137-57.

⁶⁹¹ Schneider, Sporting Hermes.

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<http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org>

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TNA The National Archives, Kew

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KCQLA (my abbr.) King Christian and Queen Louise's Archives

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N160 Nachlass Freiherr Gustav von Senden-Bibran

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LASH Abt. 395 Nr. 84 Ausstellungsangelegenheiten

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PA AA Politisches Archives des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin

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StdtA Kiel Stadtarchiv Kiel

StdtA Kiel Akten der Stadverwaltung Nr. 1534 Begrüßung des Prinzen Heinrich von Preußen bei seiner Rückkehr aus China am 15. Februar 1900

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