

# A Funeral Pyre or a Comforting Shimmer of Peace?

The World of the Congress of Rastatt (1797-1799)  
and the End of the First Reich

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**Table of Contents**

<i>List of Maps and Figures</i> .....	iii
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	iv
<i>Glossary and Note on Names and Translations</i> .....	v
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>I. The Perks of Being Prince</b> .....	13
i. <b>Death, Taxes, and the Crisis of the Small States</b> .....	13
ii. <b>The Versailles on the Rhine</b> .....	23
iii. <b>Royal Dynasties</b> .....	30
<b>II Politics by Other Means</b> .....	36
i. <b>The <i>Reichsreformdebatte</i>: Between Princely Greed and <i>Reichspatriotismus</i></b> .....	36
ii. <b>The Weak Suffer What They Must: <i>Realpolitik</i></b> .....	50
<b>III Culture Clashes and Bribery: Rastatt as a Farce?</b> .....	64
i. <b>French – the Lingua Franca</b> .....	64
ii. <b>Negotiations <i>Dessous-de-Table</i></b> .....	76
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	86
<b>Appendices</b> .....	92
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	101

## Maps and Figures

### Maps

- The Holy Roman Empire in 1789 – vi  
The Circles of the Holy Roman Empire in 1800 – vii  
The Confederation of the Rhine 1806 – viii  
The German Confederation 1815 – ix  
Swabian Circle in the Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century – 17  
Baden-Württemberg in 1789 – 31  
Baden-Württemberg in 1815 – 31  
Detail of the Imperial Knights Territories South of Mainz 1789 – 78

### Figures

- The Funeral for the Empire – 2  
Schloss Rastatt – 24  
Tiddy-Doll, The Great French Gingerbread-Baker – 59  
Assassination of the French Plenipotentiaries – 87

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I give permission to Lauinger Library to make this thesis available to the public.

## Glossary

**Note on Names and Translations:** Throughout this work, the English spelling of widely known places, i.e. Nuremberg, and figures, i.e. Frederick the Great, is employed. For more obscure figures and places, the German or French spelling is retained. For certain terms listed below, the English and foreign term are used interchangeably, i.e. *Reichsstadt* and *Imperial City*. Unless otherwise noted, all translations were done by the author with the original text provided in the footnotes. Anyone familiar with German and French as they are used today will note variations in spelling and slight differences in word meaning in comparison with the older texts.

- Arrondierung** – “Rounding off” of state borders, typically through secularization and mediatization
- Consulate** – The executive French government established following Napoleon’s coup of Brumaire on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1799; it lasted until the proclamation of the French Empire on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1804
- Deutsche Freiheit** – German freedom: the privileges and rights accorded to specific corporate or class groups opposed to a modern, centralized, and impersonal state
- Directory** – The committee governing France from November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1795 until November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1799 when it was replaced by the Consulate
- Mediatization** – The loss of independent status for various minor self-ruling entities of the Holy Roman Empire. Agreed upon at Rastatt and carried out primarily between 1800-1814
- Reich** – The Holy Roman Empire
- Reichsdeputationshauptschluss** – The Imperial, or Final, Recess of March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1803 which led to significant land consolidation through mediatization and secularization
- Reichskreis** – Imperial Circle: administrative division of the Empire that had a Circle Diet which organized defense and the collection of imperial taxes
- Reichspatriotismus** – Imperial patriotism or the loyalty of the Estates to the Empire
- Reichsreformdebatte** – A series of debates in publications and at the Imperial Diet throughout the Holy Roman Empire over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries centering on the question of the need for political and economic reform
- Reichsritterschaft** – The Imperial Knights: a corporate noble class of landowning elites who had imperial immediacy but who were not represented at the Imperial Diet
- Reichsstadt/Reichsstädte** – Imperial City/Cities: a sovereign estate of the Holy Roman Empire with representation at the Imperial Diet
- Reichstag** – The Imperial Diet or deliberative body of the Empire representing the Imperial Estates located at Regensburg
- Reichsunmittelbarkeit** – Imperial immediacy or the privileged position of only being accountable to the Emperor and no lesser lord
- Reichsverfassung** – The Imperial Constitution
- Ritterakademie** – Knight or Noble Academy for diplomatic training
- Secularization** – The annexation of ecclesiastical states to neighboring secular principalities or their transformation into secular fiefs under the rule of dispossessed princes
- Third Germany** – The term for all of the German powers outside of Prussia and Austria, pejoratively referred to as the “Kleinstaaterei” in traditional German historiography
- Treaty of Lunéville** – The peace treaty signed on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1801 between the Holy Roman Empire and France where it was decided the dispossessed princes would be compensated (see Reichsdeputationshauptschluss)

## Maps

### The Holy Roman Empire in 1789<sup>1</sup>



*A simplified map of the territories of the Holy Roman Empire on the eve of the French Revolution: one can see the vast territorial fragmentation, especially in the south and west. Hundreds of smaller entities are not depicted due to their minuscule size. The red territories represent the Imperial Cities; the light purple territories represent the ecclesiastical states; the territories of the Imperial Knights are not shown (too small and dispersed).*

<sup>1</sup> Robert Alfery, "Map of the Holy Roman Empire, 1789," map, Wikipedia, June 8, 2008, accessed March 28, 2019, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cc/Map\\_of\\_the\\_Holy\\_Roman\\_Empire,\\_1789\\_en.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cc/Map_of_the_Holy_Roman_Empire,_1789_en.png).

## The Circles of the Holy Roman Empire in 1800<sup>2</sup>



*This map from 1800 was produced in Paris and depicts the Circles (“Kreise”) of the Holy Roman Empire. When Germans created maps of the Empire, they too usually depicted it in such a manner. One can see the French annexation of the left bank of the Rhine – the primary point of discussion at the Congress of Rastatt.*

<sup>2</sup> Eutstache Hérisson, et. al, *Carte de l'Empire d'Allemagne, divisé en ses cercles: contenant aussi le Royaume de Bohême, la Silésie etc.*, 1800, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018588040/>.

### The Confederation of the Rhine 1806<sup>3</sup>



By 1806, Napoleonic France had succeeded in destroying the Holy Roman Empire and creating the Confederation of the Rhine (“Rheinbund”) in its place. The new structure was dependent on France and acted as a satellite for Paris. One can see the consequences of the Reichsdeputationshauptschluss of 1803.

<sup>3</sup> Ziegelbrenner, “Map of the Confederation of the Rhine, 1806,” map, Wikipedia, January 19, 2010, accessed April 1, 2019, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d6/Rheinbund\\_1806\\_political\\_map.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d6/Rheinbund_1806_political_map.png).



## The German Confederation 1815<sup>4</sup>



*The map of the territories of the German Confederation following the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815. By comparison with a map of Central Europe in 1789, one can see the consequences of mediatisation and secularization: the Arrondierung of borders, the territorial aggrandizement of Bavaria, Prussia, Austria, etc., and the abolition of many tiny polities.*

<sup>4</sup> Ziegelbrenner, "Der Deutsche Bund," map, Wikipedia, July 17, 2006, accessed March 28, 2019, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutscher\\_Bund.svg#/media/File:Deutscher\\_Bund.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutscher_Bund.svg#/media/File:Deutscher_Bund.png).

## Introduction

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1798, the German philosopher and satirist Johann Joseph von Görres read an obituary for the Holy Roman Empire to the German Patriotic Society in Koblenz. It proclaimed: “On 30 December 1797, on the day of the transfer of Mainz [to France], at three in the afternoon, the Holy Roman Empire, supported by the sacraments, passed away peacefully at Regensburg at the ripe old age of 955 years, 5 months and 28 days, in consequence of senile debility and an apoplectic stroke.”<sup>5</sup> Görres included a sketch of the Empire’s funeral with an accompanying poem to be on the gravestone, reproduced on the following page. Although the Reich did not officially fall until August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1806 – when Emperor Franz II<sup>6</sup> abdicated – Görres had already heard its death knell. It had sounded from Rastatt, a village of 5,000 inhabitants nestled between the Rhine and the Black Forest.

In the frigid, short days of November and December 1797, post-chaise carriages and royal stagecoaches for 519 diplomats<sup>7</sup> from across the Holy Roman Empire and the French Republic poured into Rastatt.<sup>8</sup> Among them was the forthcoming master of Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte,<sup>9</sup> whose successful military campaigns in Italy were the cause of the occasion. After a stunning series of victories against external and internal enemies, revolutionary French forces had conquered the Austrian Netherlands and the left bank of the Rhine. The Austrians sued for

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<sup>5</sup> Johann Joseph Görres, *Das rothe Blatt: eine Dekadenschrift* (Koblenz: Lausalx, 1798), 73. Full quotation: “Am dreysigsten December 1797 am Tage des Uebergangs von Maynz, Nachmittags um drey Uhr starb zu Regensburg in den blühenden Alter von 955 Jahren 5 Monaten, 28 Tagen, sanft und seelig an einer gänzlichen Entkräftung, und hinzugekommenen Schlagflusse, bey völligem Bewußtseyn, und mit allen heiligen Sakramenten versehen, das heilige römische Reich, schwerfälligen Andenkens.”

<sup>6</sup> He was known as Franz I after he became the first Emperor of Austria in 1804. In this work he will only be referred to as Franz II, however.

<sup>7</sup> Franz Georg Karl von Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799* (Karlsruhe and Rastatt: Macklots Hochbuchhandlung, 1799), 279.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Montarlot and Leonce Pingaud, eds., *Le Congrès de Rastatt (11 Juin 1798-28 Avril 1799): Correspondance Et Documents*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Paris: Alphonse Picard Et Fils, 1912), 1:36.

<sup>9</sup> Marco Müller, “Unterschiedlichste Nutzungen: Das Rastatter Schloss von 1771-1918,” in *Schloss Rastatt - Schloss Favorite: Menschen Geschichte, Architektur*, eds. Wolfgang Froese and Martin Walder (Gernsbach: Casimir Katz Verlag, 2011), 161-162. Napoleon visited Rastatt for the opening of the Congress from November 25<sup>th</sup> until December 2<sup>nd</sup>. In under two years, Napoleon would successfully organize the Coup of 18 Brumaire, overthrowing the Directory and eventually establishing of the First French Empire in 1804.

peace and, as stipulated in the ensuing Treaty of Campo Formio from October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1797, prepared to negotiate terms with the French at Rastatt.<sup>10</sup> On December 9<sup>th</sup>, in the village's baroque palace, the Second Congress of Rastatt began.<sup>11</sup>

The Funeral for the Empire<sup>12</sup>



*Von der Sense des Todes gemäh't, athemlos und bleich,  
Liegt hier das heilige römische Reich.  
Wandrer, schleiche dich leise vorbei, du mögest es wecken  
Und der Erstandne uns dann, von neuem mit Konklusen bedecken.  
Ach! Wären die Franzosen nicht gewesen,  
Es würde nicht unter diesem Steine verwesen.  
Requiescant in Pace*

<sup>10</sup> John G. Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation: The Holy Roman Empire as Idea and Reality, 1763-1806* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 189.

<sup>11</sup> Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:4. The First Congress of Rastatt took place in 1714 to conclude the War of the Spanish Succession.

<sup>12</sup> Görres, *Das rothe Blatt: eine Dekadenschrift*, 91. "Mowed by the scythe of death, breathless and pale, / Here lies the Holy Roman Empire. / Wanderer, sneak by, you want to wake it up / And the Lord will then cover us anew with conclusions [the word "Konklusen" is unclear] / Oh! If the French had not been, / It [the Empire] would not rot under this stone. / Rest in Peace."

The Congress ended in failure. By November 1798, hostilities had broken out between the Austrians and the French in the War of the Second Coalition.<sup>13</sup> Although negotiations at Rastatt continued into the spring of 1799, most of the diplomats had abandoned the Congress by March. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, after having successfully used their diplomatic immunity to spy on German troop movements,<sup>14</sup> the French plenipotentiaries decided to return to Paris. Suddenly shots rang out into the dark, rainy night. Two French diplomats lay dead, assassinated either by Austrian soldiers or by French royalists disguised as Austrians.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the tragic end to the Congress, the delegates reached agreements that would serve as the foundation for the future reorganization of Central Europe. In particular, delegates at Rastatt settled on the principles of secularization and mediatization. These terms refer to the loss of sovereignty which many political entities in the Holy Roman Empire experienced and their subsequent integration into larger polities.<sup>16</sup> In essence, secularized and mediatized territories were to be given as a form of compensation to rulers who had lost territory to the French. The principles of Rastatt were later implemented in the Treaty of Lunéville of 1801, in the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss* of 1803, and in the creation of the Confederation of the Rhine in 1806.<sup>17</sup> From a mosaic of over 1,800 sovereign or semi-sovereign polities,<sup>18</sup> only 39 German states remained by the conclusion of the Congress of Vienna in 1815.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:34.

<sup>14</sup> See the letters of the French diplomats in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 2:345-405.

<sup>15</sup> Jean-Marie Heurtault De Lamerville, *Discours Prononcé Au Conseil Des Cinq-cents, Par Heurtault-Lamerville, Ex-president, Sur l'assassinat Des Ministres De La République Française à Rastadt* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1799).

<sup>16</sup> See maps, pages vi, viii, ix, and 31. Mediatization, or mediatisation, comes from the German “Mediatisierung,” a term which originated in the French “médiatisation.” To render an “immediate” (unmittelbar, sovereign) state “mediate” (a vassal).

<sup>17</sup> Steven Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815: France Against Europe* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books Doubleday & Company, 1969), 230.

<sup>18</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Ross, *European Diplomatic History*, 365.

Whatever the ideal may have been, real territorial restructuring was wildly imbalanced. Some states won territory without having incurred any losses, while others gained far more than had been lost. In general, the secular principalities – including entities like Hessen-Darmstadt, Württemberg, Baden, and Bavaria – benefitted the most, while almost all of the Imperial Cities (the *Reichsstädte*), the Imperial Knights (the *Reichsritterschaft*), and the ecclesiastical states lost everything.

This study analyzes the transformation of Central Europe and the role that the Congress of Rastatt played in that process. In many ways, the Congress exposed trends that had been underway for decades. Tension among the imperial estates persisted after the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and the subsequent Peace of Westphalia. Enlightenment ideas, the genesis of nationalism, and a pervasive sense of decline challenged the structures and legitimacy of the Empire. Over the course of the eighteenth century, intellectuals engaged in a rich public discourse, the *Reichsreformdebatte*, concerned with balancing the need for internal reform and the maintenance of German freedom, *deutsche Freiheit*.<sup>20</sup> Negotiations at Rastatt provided culminations and resolutions to larger transitions as different types of polities struggled to adapt to new cultural, political, and economic landscapes.

In a secret agreement from December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1797, Austria agreed to deliver the fortress of Mainz, an ecclesiastical state, to France in return for Venice, Bavarian territory east of the river Inn, and the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg. The representative of Mainz, Franz von Albin, did not learn of the agreement until after the document had been signed.<sup>21</sup> It was this incident that Görres referenced in his proclamation on the death of the Empire. The Austrians apparently cared little for the Empire. At Rastatt, the secular princes, too, were accused of self-interest at the

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<sup>20</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 55.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 188-189.

expense of the Empire. Historians and scholars have oft-repeated that criticism, arguing that the Reich had long been obsolete and of little importance to its members.

The Congress is thus significant for its relevance to the longstanding historiographical dialectic concerning the viability and relevance of the Empire as a whole since at least 1648. Throughout the nineteenth century, and the majority of the twentieth, scholars argued that the Reich became both passive and ineffective since at least 1618, if not earlier. Academics tended to agree with the political philosopher Samuel Pufendorf (1632-1697), who argued that the Empire was a historical mistake, a failed attempt at a monarchy, and, famously in his *De Statu Imperii* from 1667, “ ‘much like a monster.’ ”<sup>22</sup> Even following the Second World War, when scholars began to reinterpret German history in light of the recent violence stemming out of Berlin, the narrative of the Holy Roman Empire as weak dominated – as British historian G. P. Gooch put it, the Empire “ ‘perished unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.’ ”<sup>23</sup>

A serious revision of the history surrounding the Holy Roman Empire began in the 1960s, and since then interest in the Empire has waxed and waned. The renaissance of renewed historical investigation into the Reich can be dated to Karl Otmar Freiherr von Aretin’s monumental 1967 book *Heiliges Römisches Reich, 1776-1806*.<sup>24</sup> Well-argued with convincing sources, Aretin asserted that the inhabitants of the Empire in its last decades continued to identify quite strongly with imperial structures.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, Peter H. Wilson has noted that historical change has favored revisionism to some extent: following the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany the idea has taken shape that federalism, rather than Prussian autocratic rule, is ‘natural’ to Germany.<sup>25</sup> The growth of the European Union has also led to increased interest in the Holy

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 41. Quotation from page 41.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., xi.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., x.

<sup>25</sup> Peter H. Wilson, *Heart of Europe* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 681.

Roman Empire: whether the state can be interpreted as a blueprint for the EU has been the subject of debate in recent years.<sup>26</sup> Several leading German historians, including Werner Heun and Wolfgang Reinhard, have however expressed alarm at the growing equation of the Empire with the EU, believing that such a comparison could stir fears of German hegemonic ambitions.<sup>27</sup>

Following Aretin's lead, one group of post-1960s historians has argued that the Empire was really a precursor to the modern German state, rather than the weak and divided polity which traditional national historiography suggested. Chief among this group is Georg Schmidt, who published an influential history of the Reich as 'state and nation' in 1999.<sup>28</sup> Most recently, Joachim Whaley has defended the idea that there was a deep sense of patriotism for imperial institutions among its inhabitants, suggesting that even in 1806 the Reich was a limited monarchy. He described it as a diverse but legally ordered state, rather than a collection of sovereign entities.<sup>29</sup>

Against this view are historians such as Peter H. Wilson, whose 2016 book *Heart of Europe: A History of the Holy Roman Empire* best expresses contemporary interest in the Empire. He argues that while indeed national historiography concerning the Reich was deeply flawed, Whaley goes too far in claiming the Empire as a limited monarchy. The Holy Roman Empire was a patchwork of various political entities with wildly particular traditions and policies. He sees the Empire as a framework for protecting the weak against the strong and as a structure centered around consensus. Other historians, such as Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger,<sup>30</sup> go

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<sup>26</sup> Historical context also helps explain why academic publications on the Empire declined sharply following German Unification in 1989, a phenomenon noted by historian John Breuilly in his article "Napoleonic Germany and State-formation" from 2003.

<sup>27</sup> Wilson, *Heart of Europe*, 683.

<sup>28</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, x. Other historians who viewed the Empire as a unified pre-modern state include Gabriele Haug-Moritz, who argued that the Empire remained significant in the eyes of the Habsburgs' foreign policy goals, and Christof Römer, who studied the importance of the Empire's structures for smaller entities.

<sup>29</sup> Joachim Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2:12.

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, her book *Vormünder des Volkes? Konzepte landständischer Repräsentation in der Spätphase des Alten Reiches* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1999).

further, arguing the Empire possessed no political norms or procedures and thus could not claim to represent the German people.

A revived interest in the Holy Roman Empire can be seen in the variety of studies and books published in recent decades. William Godsey undertook an extensive analysis of the Imperial Knights at the turn of the nineteenth century in his work *Nobles and Nation in Central Europe: Free Imperial Knights in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850*. His interest in the decline and collapse of this corporate class touches on a lesser-studied field.<sup>31</sup> As he notes, “Especially in comparison to the few dozen houses of the imperial high nobility, the hundreds of knights with their scattered and complex territories and their obstruction, from a later teleological perspective of German national-geographical consolidation have made the subject unwieldy, unfashionable, and untimely.”<sup>32</sup>

Robert von Friedeburg has also added to the reexamination of the Empire in his 2016 book *Luther's Legacy: The Thirty Years War and the Modern Notion of 'State' in the Empire, 1530s to 1790s*. He asserts that the traditional understanding of state-formation through sovereign princes did not necessarily lead to the exploitation of inhabitants through absolutist measures. Rather, populations saw individual princes as villains, but not the idea of ‘state.’<sup>33</sup> In Germany, Harm Klueting and Wolfgang Schmale collected and published articles in the 2004 book *Das Reich und seine Territorialstaaten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. It examines diverse themes such as courtly culture, princely competition, aristocratic relationships, and dynastic

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<sup>31</sup> Godsey’s research follows a select few authors including Ronald G. Asch, *Der europäische Adel im Ancien Régime. Von der Krise der ständischen Monarchien bis zur Revolution (ca. 1600-1789)* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2001); Jonathan Dewald, *The European Nobility, 1400-1800*, New Approaches to European History, eds. William Beik and T. C. W. Blanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Rudolf Endres, *Adel in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte, ed. Lothar Gall, vol. 18 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993).

<sup>32</sup> William D. Godsey, *Nobles and Nation in Central Europe: Free Imperial Knights in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>33</sup> Robert von Friedeburg, *Luther's Legacy: The Thirty Years War and the Modern Notion of 'State' in the Empire, 1530s to 1790s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 5. Peter H. Wilson shares this view.



ambitions in the Empire. In France, Christine Lebeau composed a similar work, *L'Espace du Saint-Empire du Moyen Âge à l'Époque Moderne*, also in 2004. The contributing authors argue that the Empire's soft internal borders were conducive to the dispersal of ideas and cultures. Space and territory in the Reich were indeed particular, but ultimately helped define "Germanness" in the "third Germany."<sup>34</sup>

Despite a growing interest in various aspects of the Empire, Gagliardo is largely correct when he claims that "the average history student of today, especially the American student, may well see the last mention of the Empire after the Peace of Westphalia in his textbooks limited to the confirmation that it was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire."<sup>35</sup> Whaley notes that there is "still no modern study of the Reichstag after 1681" and that "little is known about imperial taxes."<sup>36</sup> In 2003, Andreas Fahrmeir regretted that historians have focused their efforts on studying the large and medium-sized polities in the Empire – such as Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, Hanover, and Württemberg. By contrast, practically "no attention has been paid to...the numerous tiny principalities which survived with limited territorial gains that did nothing much to alter their status, and those larger states which experienced little, if any, change" following the dissolution of the Reich in 1806.<sup>37</sup> Whaley is correct in his conclusion that the Reich's "rediscovery is still far from complete."<sup>38</sup>

This study adds to the growing research on the history of the Holy Roman Empire in post-Westphalian Europe. It examines in depth the diplomatic practices and conflicts surrounding the Congress of Rastatt, a topic which has been lacking in Anglo-American

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<sup>34</sup> Christine Lebeau, ed., *L'Espace du Saint-Empire du Moyen Âge à l'Époque Moderne* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires De Strasbourg, 2004). Of particular interest in this book is Friedrich Pfeiffer's article on the influence of economic policy in determining politics in the Rhine. Tariffs required a clear definition of 'space' in the Empire.

<sup>35</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, ix.

<sup>36</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:5.

<sup>37</sup> Andreas Fahrmeir, "Centralisation versus Particularism in the 'Third Germany'," In *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe*, ed. Michael Rowe, (New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 110.

<sup>38</sup> Whaley *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:650.

scholarship.<sup>39</sup> In continental Europe, too, the Congress has largely been overlooked – the most recent analysis of the subject can be traced to Hermann Hüffer’s 1878 book, *Diplomatische Verhandlungen aus der Zeit der französischen Revolution*. This work looks through the lens of multilateral diplomacy to explore inter-state relations among the entities of the Holy Roman Empire in the face of annihilation. Very few studies of the late Reich look through this framework,<sup>40</sup> which thus offers a unique perspective that adds to the debate about the viability of the Empire. Many of the sources have never before been analyzed, including two poems translated for the first time into English.

Scholarly neglect of the Congress is peculiar because the primary sources are abundant. This can be attributed to the great number of participants at Rastatt and the sophisticated literary culture that had developed in the Empire. On the French side, hundreds of diplomatic correspondences between Paris and Rastatt survived. Most of the letters involved the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, and the diplomats at Rastatt, Jean Antoine Debry, Jean-Baptiste Treillard, Antoine Bonnier d’Alco, and Claude Roberjot. They offer unique insights into the personal prejudices, perspectives, and concerns of individual French plenipotentiaries. On the German side, which had far more representatives, there was no Paris: Austrians reported to Vienna, Prussians to Berlin, Bavarians to Munich, etc.

As a consequence, it is far more difficult to collect and analyze all of the diplomatic letters stemming from the German side of negotiations; even if they all survived Central Europe’s tumultuous history, they would be widely dispersed throughout the archives of the cities of Germany and Austria. One of the best-preserved diplomatic records comes from

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<sup>39</sup> This could be forgiven for the fact that the Congress failed and did not involve England (except indirectly through Hanover), which remained at war with France until the Treaty of Amiens in 1802.

<sup>40</sup> The exception of course is intra-Empire diplomacy between Vienna and Berlin and, to a lesser extent, among the middle-sized courts of Dresden, Munich, Hanover, and Stuttgart. For an interesting look at Hanoverian-Austrian relations in Vienna, see Gerhard J Seifner, “The Hanoverian Embassy in Vienna 1764-1772,” (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 1982).

Hessen-Darmstadt in the political correspondences of the envoy August Wilhelm Rabe von Pappenheim. As a consequence, his opinions feature prominently in this work. For representatives from other states of the Empire, it has often been necessary to infer what their perceptions of the Congress would have been.

Nevertheless, many Germans who attended the negotiations at Rastatt published their thoughts on the course of events, often anonymously. They hoped that by adding their impressions to the public discourse on the Congress, they could influence its outcome by molding the opinions of those with power. To be most effective to this end, such authors usually called themselves “unbiased” and “objective”; they depicted themselves as intelligent, critical, and impartial contemporaries looking out for the interests of every party. Take, for example, the book *Zur kritischen Geschichte des Rastadter Friedens, von einem unpartheiischen Beobachter* (A Critical History of the Peace of Rastatt, by an Impartial Observer) written by Apollonius von Beilstein and published in Braunshorn in 1798.

In fact, Beilstein was a pseudonym for Johann Nikolaus Becker and the book was not published in the made-up “Braunshorn,”<sup>41</sup> but rather in Berlin. Becker, moreover, was no “impartial observer.” In fact, he was a self-confessed radical Jacobin and ardent supporter of the French Revolution. He made no secret of his hatred of the nobility and of the clergy and hoped to see the Revolution brought to the German lands. The entire book, purportedly an objective analysis of the Congress, is in fact nothing more than libel against the ambassador from Austria, Franz Georg Karl von Metternich-Winneburg-Beilstein. At one point he besought his readers to find a different Imperial Commissar for the German side of negotiations, asking with three

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<sup>41</sup> In fact a “Braunshorn” does exist, but in this time it had fewer than 500 inhabitants and it is highly unlikely to have supported a publishing company.

emphatic question marks, “*why Metternich???*”<sup>42</sup> As Metternich was one of the greatest threats to Republican France at the time, Becker hoped to see him replaced and thought his publication might help that cause.

Unfortunately, the writers could not be accurately identified for many of the primary sources used in this study. With this in mind, it is impossible to know the true motivations behind an authors’ argument. Was a defender of the ecclesiastical states himself a bishop? Was an ardent supporter of secularization really a prince hoping to annex his neighbor’s territory? Certainly, knowing the answers to such questions would allow for a more complete understanding of imperial patriotism and individual self-interest. Nevertheless, the desire for anonymity among so many contemporaries itself reveals the existence of an imperial public broadly interested in the conditions of the Reich as a whole. Even if the most zealous advocate of mediatization himself served to gain from such a course of action, he would always argue for it on the grounds of *deutsche Freiheit*. This fact demonstrates the existence of a collective identity among the Empire’s inhabitants and the widespread belief in a shared “German” destiny.

This work places itself in the context of ongoing debates concerning the nature of the Holy Roman Empire. The Congress is an attractive area of research for it included representatives from even the most insignificant of territories. Consequently, this analysis reveals how well-documented divisions – Catholic-Protestant, secular-ecclesiastical, Imperial City-Duchy, etc. – actually played out in diplomatic negotiations with a foreign (enemy) power. Was the Empire, as Schmidt suggests, a precursor to the modern German nation state imbued with what Whaley has called patriotism? Or was it, rather, an antiquated medieval structure which fell victim to the greed of sovereign princes?

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<sup>42</sup> Johann Nikolaus Becker, *Zur kritischen Geschichte des Rastatter Friedens, von einem unpartheiischen Beobachter* (Braunshorn (Berlin): Julius Knipperdolling Und Peter Ziffer, 1798), 27. Full quotation: “Aber unter uns: *warum Metternich???*” Emphasis is Becker’s.

An analysis of the Congress of Rastatt reveals that both interpretations of the Empire have merit. Austria, Prussia, and many secular princes put the interests of their states far ahead of those of the Reich, often secretly negotiated with the French to annex the properties of their ecclesiastical neighbors and of the Imperial Cities perforating their territories. Yet the smallest states, in fear of losing autonomy and privilege, fiercely advocated for the maintenance of the Empire's structure, indeed revealing a pre-modern patriotism. Furthermore, it was a widely popular belief throughout the Empire that secularization and mediatization were necessary for the health of the Empire. The picture of greedy princes working against the interests of the Reich lacks sufficient nuance, as does the picture of a patriotic population destroyed and divided by the French. Courtly culture, bribery, corporate interests, and personal ambitions were all factors contributing to decisions reached at Rastatt and to the ultimate end of the Empire.

This work is divided into three parts that provide context for the developments leading up to the Congress and that analyze its consequences. The first chapter examines structural transformations to the economy, governance, and culture within the Empire over the course of the eighteenth century. Together, these changes would increase the power of secular principalities and diminish the power of other imperial estates. The second chapter assesses the impact of novel ideas – the Enlightenment, nationalism, etc. – that challenged the institutions of the Reich and delegitimized various political entities. The significance of more than a century of perceived decline played out at Rastatt, where hard power trumped laws and institutions. In the last chapter, the specific nature of the Congress and of the diplomats is evaluated. Here it is clear how divided the Germans were: while some maintained their faith in the Empire, others resorted to bribery at the expense of the most vulnerable territories. A list of official delegates and of other recurring figures is located in Appendix I.

## I. The Perks of Being Prince

Over the course of the eighteenth century, structural and cultural transformations served to advantage certain estates of the Empire and to disadvantage others. A gradual process of agricultural innovations encouraged territorial consolidation and enriched states with adept and large bureaucratic apparatuses. The smallest states, burdened by growing debts, could not compete with their larger, temporal neighbors. In the realms of diplomacy and governance, the French model embodied by Louis XIV at Versailles dominated. Lavish palaces became a source of legitimacy and a symbol of power, but only sufficiently wealthy and absolutist princes could afford them. The ability to cultivate a prestigious, genteel image yielded a further benefit: alliances. Powerful princes could best court influential allies and succeeded in securing royal marriages. This option was not available to the Imperial Cities, the Imperial Knights, or the ecclesiastical states, which had very few – if any – advocates outside of the Empire.

### *Death, Taxes, and the Crisis of the Small States*

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1796, a Prussian battalion entered the walled and free Imperial City of Nuremberg, extinguishing its sovereignty.<sup>43</sup> But the soldiers did not come as enemies – rather, they had been invited into the city after a referendum from the preceding weeks. 3,242 citizens voted “to voluntarily give up their independence and to place themselves under the protection of the King of Prussia,” compared to just 373 votes against the measure and 61 in favor with restrictions.<sup>44</sup> The agreement came at a time when the French armies that had crossed the Rhine were beginning to retreat back into France following a vigorous and successful Austrian counteroffensive.

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<sup>43</sup> Leonhard M. Marx, *Geschichte der Reichsstadt Nürnberg* (Nuremberg, 1861), 398.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 397-398. Full quotation: “Die Stadt muß damals in der That auf das Aeußerste gebracht gewesen sein, dies zeigt der verzweifelte Entschluß, ihre Unabhängigkeit freiwillig aufzugeben und sich unter den Schutz des Königs von Preußen zu stellen.”

If Nuremberg was not threatened by the French, then why did its leading citizens vote to voluntarily surrender its envious status as an autonomous city? The answer relates to the city's financial situation. During the Rhine Campaign of the previous year, French General Jean-Baptiste Jourdan occupied and plundered much of southern Germany, including Nuremberg. The city government, already deeply in debt, sustained an additional 1,528,651 florins, 35 kreutzer, and 2 pfunds of damage.<sup>45</sup>

Nuremberg's case was far from unique in the Holy Roman Empire at the time of the Revolutionary Wars. Debts incurred by the conflict led to the annexation of many entities in the Reich – in particular, those of the struggling Imperial Cities and the wealthy but vulnerable ecclesiastical states. Such polities were already fiscally challenged by a changing economic landscape marked by protoindustrialization and by an agricultural transition that scholars have dubbed the Second Agricultural Revolution. The transformation disproportionately benefitted the larger secular principalities and encouraged territorial consolidation. Additionally, economic considerations influenced French policy in the Empire and would play a significant role in determining which polities expanded and which disappeared. An analysis of the political maneuverings surrounding debts, tariffs, taxes, and trade helps to clarify the results of territorial reorganization during and beyond the Congress of Rastatt.

Fortunately – or unfortunately – for Nuremberg, the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III did not agree to annex the city. The city's debts and distance were likely the chief factors behind his decision. Soon thereafter, the Prussian battalion left. A chronicler of Nuremberg's history, Leonhard Marx, described how upon learning of this, the populace erupted in celebration: "The joy with which this news was welcomed in Nuremberg gives, it seems to us, the best testimony that the attempt of 1796 to voluntarily surrender itself under foreign protection was really only

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. This amount would be roughly equivalent to the city's entire annual revenue.

aroused by the dreadful harshness and tribulation of the moment.”<sup>46</sup> Whether true or not, the city did not long remain independent. In 1806 Bavaria annexed the city, agreeing to accept Nuremberg’s enormous debt that then had grown to 12.5 million gulden.<sup>47</sup>

Of course, the war was expensive for every state of the Holy Roman Empire. Nevertheless, the Imperial Cities were already suffering from high levels of debt before the outbreak of war. One reason is that the ruling oligarchies mismanaged city finances and instituted unequal tax burdens which contributed to the decision to mediatize so many Imperial Cities at Rastatt.<sup>48</sup> More significant, however, was the onset of the Second Agricultural Revolution: a process which slowly transformed the structure of the Central European economy and rendered many once prosperous and populous *Reichsstädte* into the size of mere villages.

In the late eighteenth century, agriculture accounted for approximately 90% of the Reich’s economy.<sup>49</sup> Gradually, however, things began to change. Innovations originating in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom – the implementation of high labor intensity, crop rotations, better tools, and improved fertilization – reached the Reich. Moreover, the region witnessed the systematic abolition of feudalism and serfdom, measures that encouraged the consolidation of estates and the process of urbanization.<sup>50</sup> Concurrently, protoindustrialization meant the growth of centralized, large-scale enterprises requiring high capital investments. Although manufacturing remained modest by 1800, when only approximately 1,000 factories

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 402. “Die Freude, mit welcher in Nürnberg diese Kunde begrüßt wurde, gibt, wie uns scheint, das beste Zeugniß, daß der Versuch vom Jahre 1796 sich freiwillig unter fremden Schutz zu begeben, wirklich nur von der entsetzlichen Roth und Drangsal des Augenblicks hervorgerufen worden ist.”

<sup>47</sup> Steven Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815: France Against Europe* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books Doubleday & Company, 1969), 241.

<sup>48</sup> John G. Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation: The Holy Roman Empire as Idea and Reality, 1763-1806* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 221-222.

<sup>49</sup> Christoph Buchheim, *Einführung in die Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Munich, C. H. Beck Verlag, 1997), 62-63.

<sup>50</sup> Michael Kopsidis, “Produktmärkte und Agrarentwicklung 1750 bis 1880. Die letzte Phase vorindustrieller Agrarentwicklung als erste Phase des säkularen landwirtschaftlichen Wachstums der Neuzeit und Moderne? Implikationen für Sachsen” in *UnGleichzeitigkeiten: Transformationsprozesse in der ländlichen Gesellschaft der (Vor-)Moderne*, eds. Ira Spieker et al., (Dresden: Bausteine aus dem ISGV, 2008), 65.



employed around 100,000 workers in the Empire, its development unevenly benefitted regions under the administration of regimes with sizable bureaucratic apparatuses.<sup>51</sup>

In general, larger and wealthier territories in the Empire – Austria, Prussia, and the middling secular principalities – profited the most from the structural changes of the Second Agricultural Revolution. Such states took advantage of their advanced integration into commercial trade routes and ability to make capital-intensive investments. In German-speaking Europe, the trend toward larger state bureaucracies with domestic free trade zones had begun, leaving small states behind. Its ultimate victory was confirmed first with the innovation of the Bavarian customs union (1808), followed by customs unions in Württemberg (1808), Baden (1812), Prussia (1818), and – with the Zollverein – in all of Germany (1834).<sup>52</sup>

It is no coincidence that the most politically fragmented region of the Reich suffered the most from the new economic landscapes. The small states confronted a range of challenges beyond the specific circumstances of the war. In particular, Swabia had the most administratively disintegrated territory in the Empire with the majority of the Reich's Imperial Cities and Imperial Knights' properties (see map on the following page). A plethora of tolls and tariffs, as well as a diversity of currencies, weights, and measures all stifled economic growth and the largest territory in the region, Württemberg, was in perpetual fear of being the victim of a tariff war conducted by its neighbors.<sup>53</sup> The increasing numbers of peasants who moved into the towns found unemployment and stagnation. Consequently, this region of the Reich accounted for some 80% of all German-speaking emigrants prior to 1815 who numbered more than 500,000.<sup>54</sup> As an

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<sup>51</sup> Michael North, "Von der atlantischen Handelsexpansion bis zu den Agrarreformen" (1415-1815), in *Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Ein Jahrtausend im Überblick*, ed. Michael North (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2000), 157.

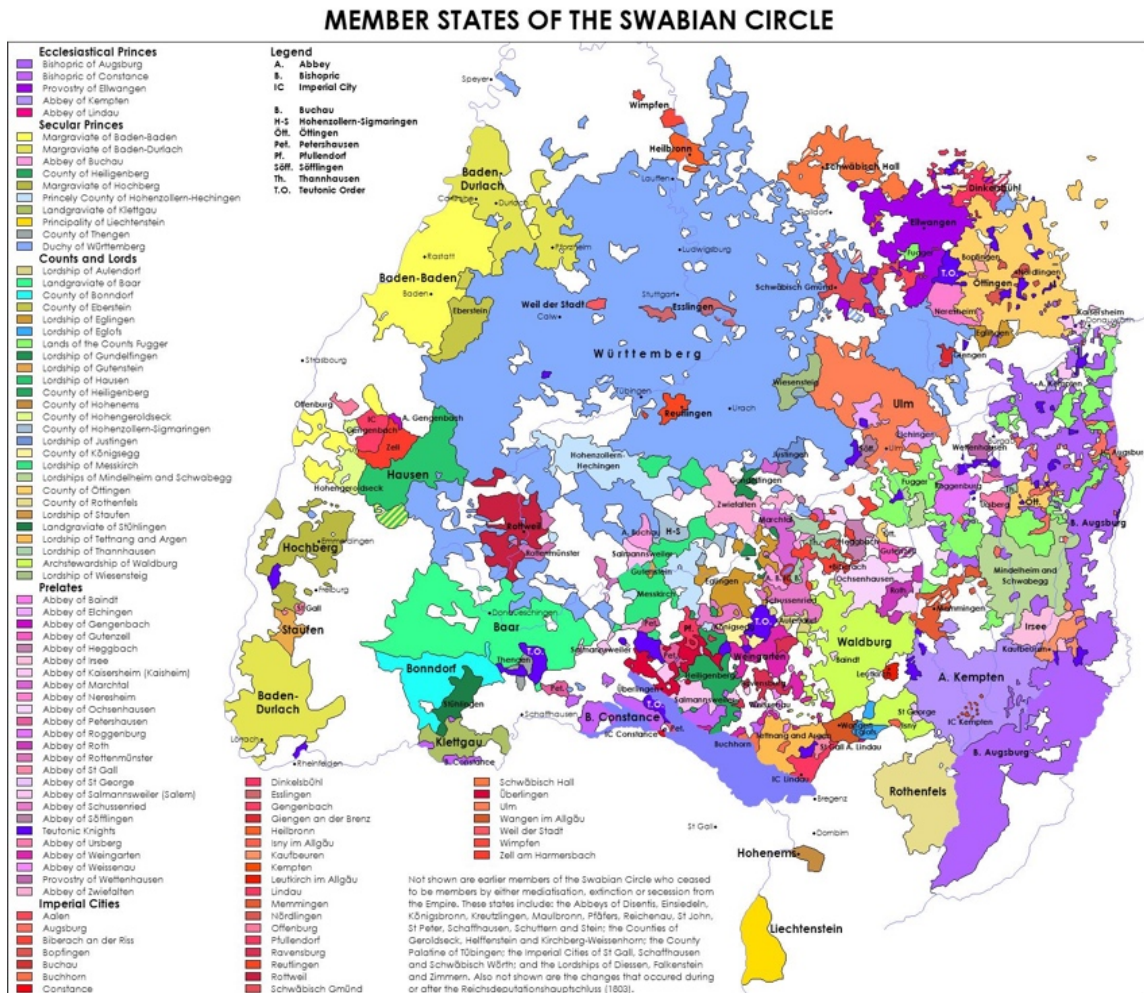
<sup>52</sup> Rudolf Boch, *Staat und Wirtschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004), 10. German states entered the Zollverein in subsequent decades until unification.

<sup>53</sup> Joachim Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2:275. This is one of the reasons that Württemberg was such a large proponent of territorial consolidation.

<sup>54</sup> Jochen Oltmer, *Geschichte und Zukunft der Gegenwart* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2017), 60.

example, 70,000 Swabians migrated to Southeastern Europe in the *Schwabenzüge*, Swabian treks, between 1763-1770 and 1782-1788 in search of economic opportunity.<sup>55</sup>

### Swabian Circle in the Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>56</sup>



*This map depicts the member states of the Swabian Circle in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, generally seen as the most efficient and successful of the Imperial Circles. The region shown is roughly comparable to the size of Switzerland and hosted around 600 sovereign polities. The white spaces perforating the map are primarily Habsburg properties.*

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>56</sup> “Member States of the Swabian Circle,” map, History Wikia, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://vignette.wikia.nocookie.net/history/images/9/90/Map-GHRECircle-Swabialabelled.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20070807122612>.

Small territories were ill-equipped to face the challenges of emigration, unemployment, debt, and corruption. The meager financial state of the Imperial Knights, ecclesiastical states, and Imperial Cities was one of the central reasons for their poor reputation throughout the Reich. Indeed, in addition to being subject to criticism for their supposedly unenlightened political nature in the *Reichsreformdebatte*,<sup>57</sup> these entities were further delegitimized for their economic backwardness. When war broke out with France, the economic hardship was only exacerbated. In the Imperial City of Rothenburg ob der Tauber, for instance, 1792-1793 added more than 1 million gulden to the government's debt and "again the city had to suffer abundantly and bear heavy burdens."<sup>58</sup>

At Rastatt and in other discussions concerning the restructuring of the Empire, proponents of mediatisation and secularization argued that such a resolution made sense economically. A Swiss diplomat at Rastatt, Karl Ludwig von Haller, asserted that "Although the French government far from aimed at Germany's welfare through their insistence on the principle of secularization," it has in fact been fundamental to the improvement of "the greater prosperity of the states."<sup>59</sup> Not only would dissolving indebted entities lead to a better financial situation for the local populace, but the annual incomes in particular from the ecclesiastical states could serve to compensate dispossessed temporal princes. As one anonymous delegate at Rastatt remarked, "The Swabian Abbeys are in this time a pretty treasure trove for secularists."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Explored in chapter 2.

<sup>58</sup> August Schnitzlein, *Aus Rothenburgs Vergangenheit: Kurze Geschichte der Reichsstadt Rothenburg* (Rothenburg Ob Der Tauber: C. H. Trenkle, 1913), 97. "Auch in den nachfolgenden französischen Kreigen (seit 1792/1793) hatte die Stadt wieder reichlich zu leiden und schwere Lasten zu tragen."

<sup>59</sup> Karl Ludwig von Haller, *Geheime Geschichte der Rastatter Friedensverhandlungen in Verbindung mit den Staatshändeln dieser Zeit: Nebst den wichtigsten Urkunden*. Vol. 1. 6 vols. (Germanien, 1799), 453. "Obgleich die französische Regierung bey dieser Beharrlichkeit auf dem Secularisationsprinzip das Wohl von Deutschland keineswegs beabsichtigen mogte" "den größeren Wohlstand der Länder."

<sup>60</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt* (1798), 85. Full quotation: "Die schwäbischen Prälaten hatten sich in Ochsenhausen (ein ominöser Name!) versammelt, um über die Mittel zu berathschlagen, wie ihre Inseln und Stäbe am sichersten aus dem Strudel der Zeit, der schon so manches unnütze Geräthe hinabschlang, gerettet werden möchten. Die schwäbischen Abteyen bieten in der Zeit eine hübsche Fundgrube für die Säcularisationslustigen dar, und der Seegen des Himmels ruht augenscheinlich auf diesen Gott geweihten Besitzungen."

The diplomat from Hessen-Darmstadt, August Wilhelm Rabe von Pappenheim, was one such “secularist” who hungrily eyed his state’s weaker neighbors. On February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1798, he wrote to Landgrave Ludwig X: “If the imperial city of Frankfurt am Mayn [sic] should also be destined for compensation, it is indispensable to us from the point of view of its [Frankfurt’s] situation, owing to its great burden of debts and considerable annual expenses, however lucrative it may be.”<sup>61</sup> Even though Frankfurt was a wealthy city, it had fallen into considerable debt and therefore deserved to lose its sovereignty. Further into the letter, Pappenheim provided similar reasoning to explain why Ludwig X should annex the Bishopric of Worms and the Bishopric of Mainz. His justification mirrored that of the other secular princes, and he baldly concluded that it was in Hessen-Darmstadt’s interest “to abolish the ecclesiastical states” in order to take possession of “their assets.”<sup>62</sup>

Ultimately, the parties at the Congress agreed that the secular rulers who had lost territory on the left bank of the Rhine to France would primarily be compensated through the properties of the ecclesiastical states and the Imperial Cities. Many contemporaries, of course, found the decision to be a shameless act of greed on the part of the princes. “With what rights can it be demanded that only the imperial immediate goods of the spiritual and minor states should alone serve as sacrifices?” wondered one anonymous delegate at Rastatt.<sup>63</sup> For him, all of the estates of the Reich should share the costs: he wrote, “Rather, it would be more natural and cheaper if

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<sup>61</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Landgraf Ludwig X von Hessen-Darmstadt, February 28, 1798, in Uta Ziegler and Eckhart G. Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs: Die Berichte Des hessen-darmstädtischen Gesandten August Wilhelm von Pappenheim aus Paris und Rastatt, 1798-1803, 1806*, (Darmstadt: Hessischen Historischen Kommission, 2007), 2. Full quotation: “Sollte die Reichsstadt Frankfurt am Mayn ebenfalls zur Entschädigung bestimmt sein, so ist Uns dieselbe aus Rücksicht ihrer Lage, so wenig einträglich auch selbige wegen ihrer grossen Schuldenlast und beträchtlichen jährlichen Ausgaben ist, unentbehrlich, und alsdann auf deren Erhaltung für Uns ein hauptsächlichliches Augenmerk zu richten.”

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. Full quotation: “Auch dürfte es zu erlangen sein, daß es in Unser Belieben gestellet werde, die in den cedirten Geistlichen Landen subsistirende Geistlichen Stifter und Corporationen nach Unserer Gefälligkeit, zu welcher Zeit Wir wollen, aufzuheben, und deren Güter und Gefälle an Uns zu ziehen.”

<sup>63</sup> *Denkschrift an den Friedenskongreß zu Rastatt* (1798), 3. “Mit welchem Rechte kann man fordern, daß nur die reichsunmittelbaren Güter der geistlichen und geringern Reichstände allein zum Opfer dienen sollen?”

relative monetary or property contingents from all of the temporal and spiritual imperial estates were made for the indemnification of the losers.”<sup>64</sup>

Another anonymous delegate came to a different conclusion. According to him, the ecclesiastical states and Imperial Cities should not be involved in the indemnification process at all. The debts incurred by the princes due to the war “are not a matter of the whole Empire, but only of the debtor.”<sup>65</sup> In other words, the princes had no right to the wealth of the church or of other actors. He continued by claiming that if any corporate class should be compensated by the Reich, it should be those that contributed the most to the imperial treasury – namely the estates that had always been most loyal to the Reich, the Imperial Cities and Imperial Knights. By contrast, “the German princes, counts, and lords pour nothing from *their* treasuries into the imperial coffer.”<sup>66</sup>

While fiscal concerns were fundamental to the compensation agreements reached at Rastatt, and subsequently implemented, economic considerations also influenced French actions and policies regarding the Empire. On October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1798, for instance, Roberjot wrote to Talleyrand that it would be in French interest to maintain the sovereignty of the Imperial City of Bremen, “whose commercial relations with the Republic were going to expand.”<sup>67</sup> Worried by its own vast war debts, Paris was keen to negotiate agreements that would improve its own financial state, and similar reasons were given to explain the details regarding the future status of other

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 2. “Natürlicher und billiger würde es vielmehr seyn, wenn von allen weltlichen und geistlichen Reichständen entweder verhältnißmäßige Geld- oder Güterbeyträge zur Schadloshaltung der Verlierenden gemacht.”

<sup>65</sup> *Skizzen zum reifen Nachdenken über die richtige Bestimmung der bey dem Rastatter Reichsfriedenskongreß abzuhandelnden Indemnitions- und Säkularisationsbasis* (1798), 19. Full quotation: “Die Schulden, welche die bisherigen Besitzer auf derley Güter und Einkünfte kontrahirt haben, sind keine Sache des ganzen Reiches, sondern nur der Schuldner.”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 15. “Die deutschen Fürsten, Grafen und Herren schütten von ihren Kammeralgefällen nichts in die Staatskasse ein.” Emphasis added.

<sup>67</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, October 4, 1798, in Paul Montarlot and Leonce Pingaud, eds., *Le Congrès de Rastatt (11 Juin 1798-28 Avril 1799): Correspondance Et Documents*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Paris: Alphonse Picard Et Fils, 1912), 2:15. “la ville de Brême, dont les rapports commerciaux avec la République allaient augmenter.”

imperial polities. Under Napoleon in particular, who hoped to weaken Britain through his Continental Blockade, the French role in restructuring Central Europe was highly sensitive to the demands of commerce.

German diplomats also appealed to economic arguments to convince the Congress of any particular territorial reorganization. Addressing the French government, an anonymous delegate at Rastatt wrote that France must interfere to prevent Austria from annexing Salzburg and parts of Bavaria. After detailing the tax revenues, product costs, and population numbers of territory that might be assigned to Vienna, the author concluded that “The wisdom of the French government cannot oppose these calculations. One only wants add here that taxes in Austria are five times greater than those in Bavaria.”<sup>68</sup> Munich offered fair prices for goods like tobacco, according to the author; if Austria expanded into such and such territory, then Vienna would raise the prices and the French consumer would suffer.

In particular, the delegate expressed concern about the impact of the mediatization of Salzburg on the salt industry. He detailed how Bavaria paid 2 florin and 24 kreuzer per Zentner of salt, whereas Austria “sells to its subjects one Zentner of salt at 8 fl. 24 kr. What for a profit, if it came into possession of such salt sales, and the price generally increased!”<sup>69</sup> In such a scenario, not only would the Bavarians have to pay more for salt, but so too would the French, Franconians, Swabians, and Swiss. The author continued: “In possession of the salt works in Wielütschka [Wieliczka] in Poland, in Halle in the Inn Valley, [and] in Tyrol, Austria would

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<sup>68</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt*, 20. “Der Weisheit des franz. Gouvernements können diese Berechnungen nicht entgegen. Man will hier nur noch bemerken, daß die Auflagen im Oesterreichischen fünfmal stärker als in Bayern sind.”

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 19. Full quotation: “Bayern braucht 250,000 Centner Salz, die es gegenwärtig den Centner zu 2 fl. 24 kr. erhält. Oesterreich verkauft seinen Unterthanen den Centner zu 8 fl. 24 kr. Welcher Gewinn, wenn es in den Besitz dieses Salzverkaufs käme, und den Preis allgemein erhöhte!” Zentner, or Centner, was a unit of mass; florins and kreuzer were types of currency.

extend its salt monopoly from the Vistula and the Black Sea to the Rhine without any competition.”<sup>70</sup>

Just as the author appealed to the French by means of an economic argument against a certain foreign policy, he also hoped to attract the support of the Franconians, Swabians, and Swiss in opposition to Austrian expansion. Indeed, such arguments were prevalent throughout the Congress and always drew on people’s fear. The Protestant Enlightenment theologian and attendant at Rastatt who worked in the service of Revolutionary France until 1800, Andreas Riemer, gave special attention to finances in his 1798 book, *An den Congress zu Rastadt* (On the Congress of Rastatt).

In it, Riemer demonstrated keen opposition to any territorial reorganization that would lead to the profit of France’s enemies. In particular, he wanted to ensure that the important financial centers of the few wealthy Imperial Cities not be assigned to Prussia. Concerning the *Reichsstadt* Hamburg, Riemer wrote that the city “is a large depot for German and Nordic trade and, as it were, the key to the Elbe. Under the hands of Prussian custom officials, a mighty impediment would be placed in the way of the common trade in Europe.”<sup>71</sup> In a similar vein, Riemer opposed Prussian extension into other Imperial Cities. He stressed the danger that would result should Berlin take over trade centers like the Imperial Cities of Augsburg and Nuremberg: “at the least, the trading nations would become too dependent on Prussia.”<sup>72</sup> Rather than abolishing them, it would be in Europe’s – and specifically France’s – commercial interest to uphold their independent statuses.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 20. “Im Besitz der Salzwerke zu Wielütschka in Polen, zu Halle im Innthal, in Tyrol, würde Oesterreich von der Weichsel und dem Schwarzem Meer bis zum Rhein sein Salzmonopol, ohne irgend eine Concurrrenz, ausdehnen.”

<sup>71</sup> Andreas Riemer, *An den Congress zu Rastadt* (Leipzig, 1798), 145. “Hamburg ist ein großes Depot für den deutschen und nordischen Handel und gleichsam der Schlüssel zur Elbe. Unter den Händen preußischer Zoll-Beamten würde dem allgemeinen Handel von Europa ein mächtiges Hinderniß in den Weg gelegt werden.”

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 146. “wenigstens würden die handelnden Nationen zu abhängig von Preußen.”

When war dispossessed the princes of the left bank of the Rhine, and produced massive debts among all corporate estates, the Empire was hard pressed to find compensation. The resolution that was ultimately agreed upon – the secularization of the ecclesiastical states and mediatization of the Imperial Cities and Imperial Knights – was fundamentally a political decision. Nevertheless, its proponents buttressed their position through economic arguments. Commercial interests remained a significant, if peripheral, element to both French and German strategy at Rastatt and after. The weak financial state of the territories of the Empire that were eventually secularized and mediatized not only delegitimized them but hindered their ability to culturally compete with the secular princes.

### *The Versailles on the Rhine*

In the late summer of 1683, 150,000 Ottoman soldiers surrounded and besieged Vienna. Infamously, Jan Sobieski and his Winged Hussars rushed into the Turkish forces – the largest cavalry charge in history – defeating the enemy and saving the city. Aiding Sobieski in a brilliant sally, the chief commander of the imperial army, Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden, would continue to defeat the Turks again at Niš in 1689 and at Slankamen in 1691.<sup>73</sup> To demonstrate to the world his power and prestige, Ludwig Wilhelm – who came to be called *Türkenlouis*<sup>74</sup> – ordered the construction of Schloss Rastatt, the first baroque palace erected in southern Germany.<sup>75</sup> The building's construction was also inspired by Ludwig Wilhelm's ploy to win the election of the Polish throne.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Uwe A. Oster, "Feldherr Und Reichsfürst: Markgraf Ludwig Wilhelm Von Baden (1655-1707)," in *Schloss Rastatt - Schloss Favorite: Menschen Geschichte, Architektur*, eds. Wolfgang Froese and Martin Walder (Gernsbach: Casimir Katz Verlag, 2011), 15. Oster, "Feldherr Und Reichsfürst," 15.

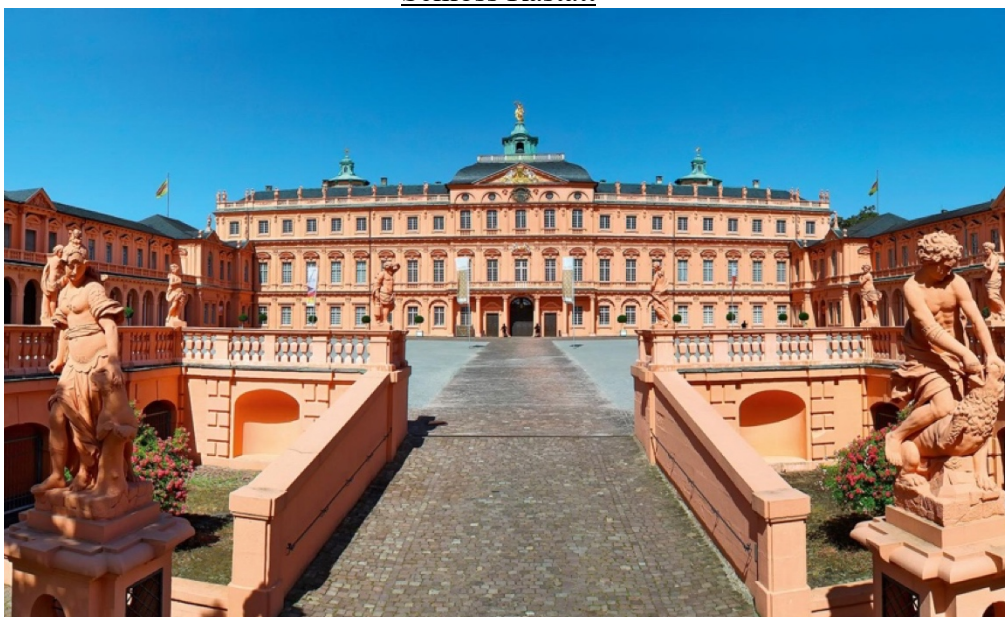
<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>75</sup> Martin Walder, "Baumeister des barocken Rastatt: Domenico Egidio Rossi (1659-1715)," in *Schloss Rastatt - Schloss Favorite: Menschen Geschichte, Architektur*, eds. Wolfgang Froese and Martin Walder (Gernsbach: Casimir Katz Verlag, 2011), 15.

<sup>76</sup> Christian Benedik, "Die Architektur als Sinnbild der reichsstaatlichen Stellung," in *Das Reich und seine Territorialstaaten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Wolfgang Schmale and Harm Klüeting (Münster: Lit Verlag Münster, 2004), 102. The election was lost to Augustus II the Strong of Saxony who built the Zwinger Royal Palace in Dresden for similar reasons as Ludwig Wilhelm.



### Schloss Rastatt<sup>77</sup>



The Italian architect Mathias de Rossi designed and built the sumptuous palace and garden between 1699 and 1707 in the image of Versailles for an astonishing 12 million florins.<sup>78</sup> Only sufficiently wealthy rulers – especially temporal princes – could afford such high costs. In 1772, over 1100 paintings adorned the interior. Yet, while Schloss Rastatt did serve as the residence for the Margraves of Baden-Baden until 1771, Türkenlouis did not construct it merely for luxury.<sup>79</sup> Rather, the palace’s extravagance played an important role in cultivating a prestigious image of Baden-Baden at a time when courtly display reinforced the ideal of the prince as a great ruler and convinced rivals that the state was more powerful than it may actually

<sup>77</sup> Monika Schlagen, “Residenzschloss Rastatt,” digital image, Staatliche Schlösser Und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, accessed March 29, 2019, [https://www.schloss-rastatt.de/fileadmin/Presse/pressebilder/33\\_rastatt\\_rsl/33\\_Rastatt\\_RSL\\_Aussen\\_Nr.\\_1\\_Schloss\\_Rastatt\\_foto-AERO-SUEDWEST\\_in\\_Rastatt\\_Frau\\_Monika\\_Schlangen\\_2600.jpg](https://www.schloss-rastatt.de/fileadmin/Presse/pressebilder/33_rastatt_rsl/33_Rastatt_RSL_Aussen_Nr._1_Schloss_Rastatt_foto-AERO-SUEDWEST_in_Rastatt_Frau_Monika_Schlangen_2600.jpg).

<sup>78</sup> Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:37. 12 million florins is roughly equivalent to 275 million dollars in today’s money.

<sup>79</sup> Sandra Eberle, “Gemälde, Möbel, Kostbarkeiten: Ein Rundgang durch das Rastatter Schloss am Ende der Residenzzeit,” in *Schloss Rastatt - Schloss Favorite: Menschen Geschichte, Architektur*, eds. Wolfgang Froese and Martin Walder (Gernsbach: Casimir Katz Verlag, 2011), 89. On October 21st, 1771, the Markgrafschaft of Baden-Baden ceased to exist as the 65-year-old Margrave August Georg died. The land and titles were inherited by Margrave Karl Friedrich of Baden-Durlach, who reigned in Karlsruhe. This unification of Baden-Baden and Baden-Durlach led to the state simply called Baden.

be.<sup>80</sup> The appearance of grandeur was meant to convince potential allies and enemies that the prince – or margrave, as it may be – was worthy of lofty titles, additional territory, and esteem.<sup>81</sup>

A sophisticated court housed in an ornate residence and fluent in the intricacies of diplomatic protocol provided states – especially small states – with the ability to influence the international stage.<sup>82</sup> Over the course of the eighteenth century, the medium-sized and tiny entities of the Holy Roman Empire witnessed with fear the onset of professional and large militaries which they could not sustain. Records demonstrate how up until the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), the smaller and medium-sized polities made up about 40-50% of all troops within the Reich's borders. In the 1740s, their contributions fell to under 30%, and by 1792, just 13%.<sup>83</sup> Less capable of mustering a sufficient military to defend their sovereignty, and acting in an era defined by enlightened despotism and the partitions of Poland, rulers of small states obsessed over status, prestige, and appearance.<sup>84</sup> Establishing one's territory as the most cultured compensated for one's lack of real military power.

Rastatt had a significant diplomatic role in both intimidating and impressing Baden-Baden's neighbors. The palace was thus site of the First Congress of Rastatt in 1714, which concluded the War of the Spanish Succession.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1797, the *Geheimrat*, the highest advising official in the court, of Baden, Emmanuel Meier, promoted Rastatt as the site for peace negotiations and enthusiastically accepted the French proposal.<sup>86</sup> It is conceivable

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<sup>80</sup> Peter H. Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 28.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>83</sup> Peter H. Wilson, "Military culture in the Reich, c. 1680-1806," in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Scott Hamish and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 43. On the eve of the French Revolution, the Empire had approximately 798,700 soldiers.

<sup>84</sup> Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793*, 27.

<sup>85</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 207.

<sup>86</sup> Müller, "Unterschiedlichste Nutzungen," 161. Meier's role in the overcompensation of Baden at the Final Recess is substantial, not least because he helped rescue the French Ambassador Rosenstiel on the night of the assassinations. He participated in the Reichsdeputationshauptschluss in Regensburg and his son fought in and survived the Russian campaign of 1812.

that the Congress taking place in the opulent Schloss Rastatt helped legitimize Baden's eventual territorial overcompensation.

One manifestation of 'cultural competition' within the Empire was the *Barockisierung*, the "baroquifying," of the courts.<sup>87</sup> In 1704 Duke Eberhard Ludwig of Württemberg (1676-1733) built the baroque Residenzschloss Ludwigsburg outside of the capital Stuttgart in the same manner that Versailles lay outside of Paris, in part motivated by his desire to become an Elector.<sup>88</sup> Similar palaces were constructed around the same time, including Nymphenburg (1675), Mannheim (1689), and Karlsruhe (1715).<sup>89</sup> Friedrich I, the first King of Prussia, sought to raise his reputation by cultural means as well through the creation of the Charlottenburg gardens, the purchase of an antique collection, and the expansion of the Stadtschloß.<sup>90</sup> Extraordinary residences often masked a state's true power – after visiting Ludwigsburg in 1730, the Prussian Baron von Pöllnitz estimated the size of Württemberg's military to be double its actual number!<sup>91</sup>

A later Duke of Württemberg, Karl Eugen (1728-1793), wanted to craft an image of a *staatliche Verfassung*, an "imposing state," which implied a large court, a powerful army, and well-ordered finances.<sup>92</sup> To do so, he sometimes took absurd measures: in 1782, in the hopes of impressing the Grand Duke of Russia, Paul Alexandrovich, Eugen spent no less than 345,000 florins. For such an occasion, Eugen ordered that the men of his garrison regiment change uniforms on separate days to create the impression of inflated troop numbers.<sup>93</sup> Smaller states seemed especially convinced by Jean Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's *contrôleur général*, who

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<sup>87</sup> Whaley *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:225. Rulers were architecturally influenced by Versailles, the Italian architect Bernini, and – especially in the North – the Dutch.

<sup>88</sup> Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793*, 29.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Benedik, "Die Architektur als Sinnbild der reichsstaatlichen Stellung," 15.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. He estimated the army to be 5,000 strong.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 27. The term was coined by Eugen's chief minister, Count Montmartin and literally means "state constitution."

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 30.

argued that “ ‘nothing does more to signal the grandeur of princes than buildings, and all posterity measures them by the yardstick of the superb palaces which they construct during their lifetime.’ ”<sup>94</sup> Indeed, while expenditure at the Viennese court represented around 8.5% of state revenue, expenditure at the court in Württemberg represented 25% of state revenues in the mid-late eighteenth century.<sup>95</sup> In Prussia, despite Friedrich’s efforts, the court remained so dramatically austere in comparison with virtually every other court that diplomats considered it a misfortune to be assigned to Berlin and grasped at the earliest opportunity to transfer out.<sup>96</sup>

Ludwig I of Bavaria was the epitome of a ruler who used culture as a diplomatic tool. He explicitly stated: “ ‘as Bavaria is far too small for me to become a great prince; nothing else remains but to become the art patron of Europe.’ ”<sup>97</sup> True to his word, Ludwig spent over 10.6 million gulden from his personal fortune on art between 1825-1848 and claimed, “ ‘even when at last everything has sunk into nothingness, art will remain eternal.’ ”<sup>98</sup> Thereafter, Munich became a true destination with a far-reaching reputation – in the mid-nineteenth century, for instance, British architects looked to emulate Munich in the construction of the Houses of Parliament.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, Ludwig believed that art would help fashion a Bavarian identity and smooth the integration process of Bavaria’s 85 new territories, acquired after the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> As quoted in Emma Winter, “Between Louis and Ludwig: From the Culture of French Power to the Power of German Culture, c. 1789-1848,” in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Scott Hamish and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 349.

<sup>95</sup> Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793*, 36.

<sup>96</sup> Scott Hamish, “Diplomatic culture in old regime Europe,” in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Scott Hamish and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 81-82. The diplomat Karl von Zinzendorf criticized Berlin court culture on the grounds that envoys habitually dined at home rather than at the court.

<sup>97</sup> As quoted in Winter, “Between Louis and Ludwig”, 350-351.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* Quotation from page 350.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

Negotiations for the Congress of Rastatt took place within the palace.<sup>101</sup> The beauty of the surroundings beguiled many of those present, including those determining the fate of Baden. The French plenipotentiary Jean Debry, for instance, visited Karlsruhe and the spa town of Baden in 1798. He remarked that “the small town of Karlsruhe, where he [the Margrave Karl Friedrich von Baden] has his residence, is ornate, well built, its surroundings well planted, a meticulous culture. Especially the palace gardens.”<sup>102</sup> On his visit to the nearby Schloss Favorite, he recounted how the concierge told him that soon the Margrave would arrive to dine, sleep, and survey his meadows in the morning. Amazed, Debry exclaimed “I thought I was at King Alcinous’ house.”<sup>103</sup>

German diplomats, too, noted the splendor of Rastatt. In 1798, Metternich called the palace “a beautiful building, and worthy of being seen by anyone passing through.”<sup>104</sup> He then detailed the wonderful sources of entertainment in the city: dances, concerts, bookstores, art galleries, a café appropriately named *Caffé du Congrès*, and even a casino.<sup>105</sup> There were extravagant balls, a French book store, and excellent hiking trails.<sup>106</sup> Theatrical spectacle, especially opera, were compulsory for the rulers of the eighteenth century.<sup>107</sup> To this end, Metternich lauded the French theater performances directed by Demern von Strasburg at the

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<sup>101</sup> Müller, “Unterschiedlichste Nutzungen,” 162.

<sup>102</sup> Address of Jean Debry to the Consulate, August 8, 1800, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:153. “La petite ville de Karlsruhe, où il fait sa résidence, est ornée, bien bâtie, ses alentours bien plantés, une culture soignée. Les jardins du château surtout.”

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. “Je crus être chez le roi Alcinoüs.” Alcinoüs is a reference to an Ancient Greek king famous for his hospitality and wealth.

<sup>104</sup> Franz Georg Karl von Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799* (Karlsruhe and Rastatt: Macklots Hochbuchhandlung, 1799), 233. “ein schönes Gebäude, und verdient von jedem Durchreisenden gesehen zu werden.”

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 241-242.

<sup>106</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congress zu Rastadt*, 12-13

<sup>107</sup> Mark Berry, “Power and Patronage in Mozart’s *La clemenza di Tito* and *Die Zauberflöte*,” in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Scott Hamish and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 325.

*Hoftheater*.<sup>108</sup> Another delegate wrote at length about the excellent rendition of Rousseau's opera, *Le devin du village*.<sup>109</sup>

A performance of Antonio Sacchini's *Œdipe à Colone* is particularly noteworthy for its effect on one diplomat. Friedrich Lothar von Stadion, from the Bishopric of Würzburg, officially represented the interests of the ecclesiastical states at the Congress. In light of the popular sentiment at Rastatt favoring the secularization of ecclesiastical states, Stadion's position appeared hopeless. In a letter to Talleyrand from June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Debry affirmed that after having watched *Œdipe à Colone*, Stadion proclaimed "Never have I felt better. It is true that some time ago our health was threatening ruin, but now everything is well and will be even better."<sup>110</sup> Cultural surroundings and the appearance of grandeur had a significant, if indirect, influence over representatives at Rastatt.

In an era when individual diplomats possessed greater leeway in negotiations and spoke the same cultural language, a cultivated image was powerful. The Margrave of Baden took the Congress as an opportunity to demonstrate the enlightened and refined nature of his polity – one which grew by more than 235 square miles and over 200,000 people by the end of the Revolutionary Wars.<sup>111</sup> While clearly Baden had the greatest advantage at Rastatt, other states with impressive courts were at an overall advantage as well, as they could attract the support of powerful allies. Thus Württemberg, Bavaria, and other absolutist princely states expanded through territorial compensation, while those without the ability to craft an appearance of grandeur – like most ecclesiastical states,<sup>112</sup> Imperial Cities, and Imperial Knights – lost the

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<sup>108</sup> Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799*, 240. The "Hoftheater" was the court theater inside Schloss Rastatt.

<sup>109</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congress zu Rastadt*, 12-13

<sup>110</sup> Jean Debry to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, June 30, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:201-202. "Jamais je ne me suis mieux porté. Il est bien vrai qu'il y a quelque temps notre santé menaçait ruine, mais maintenant cela va bien et ira encore mieux."

<sup>111</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 195.

<sup>112</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:228. Some exceptions included Bamberg, Würzburg, and Mainz.

most. Such imperial estates had a further, related disadvantage: their inability to secure extra-Empire allies by means of arranged marriages.

### *Royal Dynasties*

A map of Central Europe following the Congress of Vienna reveals the existence of a tiny principality wedged between Baden and Württemberg (see the maps on the following page). The miniscule Fürstentum Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen survived the onslaught of mediatizations which witnessed the disappearance of nearly all of its neighbors. Today, the region is famous for its castles – Schloss Sigmaringen and Burg Hohenzollern – and, indeed, these landmarks reveal the reason the principality survived.

The names of the castles identify them as the historical property of the prominent Hohenzollern dynasty, which unified Germany in 1871. In 1576, the family divided into the more famous Franconian branch – which came to rule Prussia – and the lesser-known but related Swabian branch. It was the timely intervention of the Franconian Hohenzollerns in Prussia that saved Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen from demise.<sup>113</sup> The case demonstrates the significance of dynastic ties in European diplomacy at the turn of the nineteenth century. Although the brief rule of the French Directory threatened the existence of all monarchies, by the coronation of Napoleon Bonaparte, family connections once again proved critical in determining the course of mediatizations.

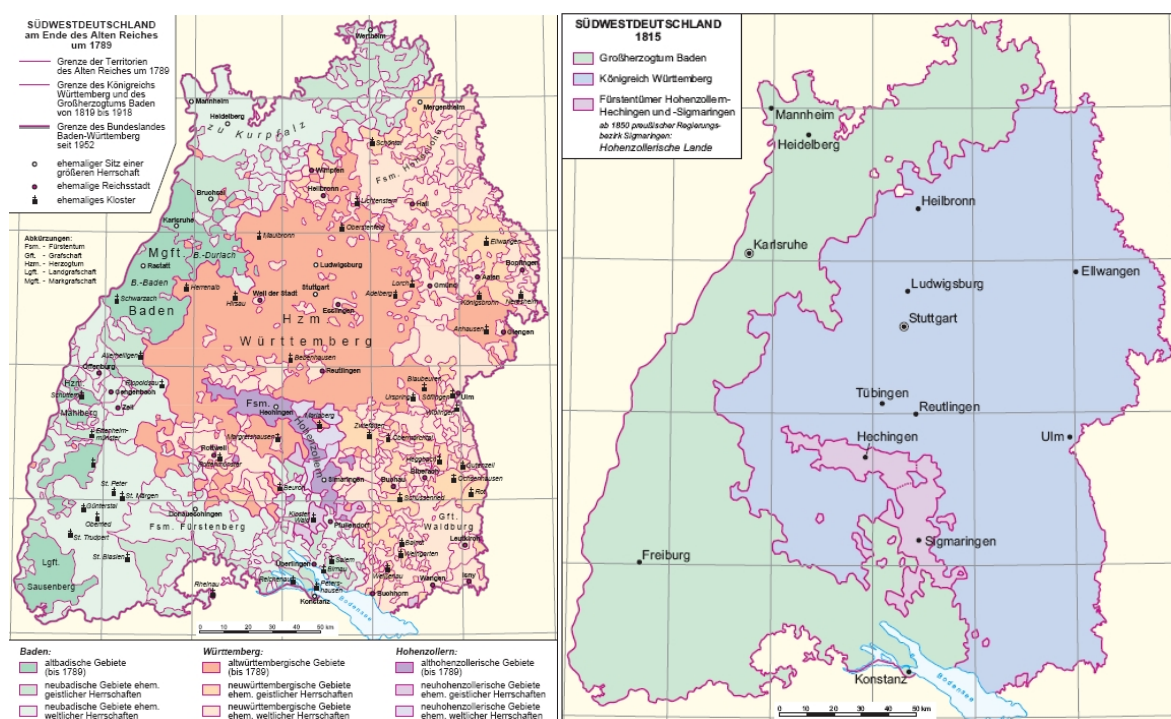
Royal marriages and dynastic interests were defining characteristics of inter-state relations throughout the Empire's history. The intricate maneuverings of the Habsburgs, Wittelsbachs, and Luxembourgs are evidence to this point. Inheritance by means of arranged marriages, wars due to dynastic conflict, and alliances according to bloodlines were crucial aspects European diplomacy. Secular principalities were thus at an advantage in the eighteenth

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<sup>113</sup> Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793*, 23.

century, as they could use royal weddings to further political objectives— a tool which most Imperial Cities and ecclesiastical states lacked.<sup>114</sup> Indicative of the significance of this instrument of state power is the importance which the reformer and diplomat Maximilian von Montgelas placed on proper management of the affairs of the House of Wittelsbach in Bavarian diplomacy in his celebrated and progressive “Ansbacher Mémoire.”<sup>115</sup>

### Baden-Württemberg in 1789<sup>116</sup> (left) and 1815<sup>117</sup> (right)



*The original territories of Baden, Württemberg, and Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen are depicted in dark green, dark orange, and dark purple respectively in the map to the left. The territories which they annexed through secularization and mediatization represent the lighter shades of the respective colors. The map to the right depicts the conclusion of territorial consolidation after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Rastatt can be seen on the map to the left in the dark green space near the border with France.*

<sup>114</sup> Peter H. Wilson, *Heart of Europe* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 567.

<sup>115</sup> Maximilian von Montgelas, “Ansbacher Mémoire,” September 30, 1796. In Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte. Accessed November 13, 2018. <http://www.hdbg.de/montgelas/pages/hmv33.htm>.

<sup>116</sup> “Südwestdeutschland am Ende des Alten Reichs (um 1789),” map, Landeskunde Baden Württemberg, accessed March 28, 2019, [https://www.landeskunde-baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/landeskunde/images/Geographie/Historische\\_Territorien/Suedwestdtlnd.1815.jpg](https://www.landeskunde-baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/landeskunde/images/Geographie/Historische_Territorien/Suedwestdtlnd.1815.jpg).

<sup>117</sup> “Südwestdeutschland 1815,” map, Landeskunde Baden Württemberg, accessed March 28, 2019, [https://www.landeskunde-baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/landeskunde/images/Geographie/Historische\\_Territorien/Suedwestdtlnd.1815.jpg](https://www.landeskunde-baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/landeskunde/images/Geographie/Historische_Territorien/Suedwestdtlnd.1815.jpg).



The Congress of Rastatt is distinctive in that it took place at a time when the acceptance of dynasty was at a low point. The French Revolution renounced monarchy as a legitimate form of government and various intellectuals within France sought to transform Europe into a continent of republics. The idea that only republics could be justified gained ground with the publication of Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* in 1795.<sup>118</sup> In a report from December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1799, General François Joseph Lefebvre criticized French policy in Italy which left small monarchies intact, arguing that it isolated “ ‘each state, weakens them all, and has no benefit to any.’ ”<sup>119</sup> To Lefebvre and others, such as the revolutionary socialist Filippo Buonarroti, republics were the only reliable allies of the French because their populations were free from tyranny.<sup>120</sup>

Charles-François Delacroix, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1795-1797, opposed a foreign policy antithetical to monarchies. He wrote on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1796, that “ ‘a Piedmontese Democratic Republic would be a much more disturbing neighbor for us than a king’ ” because its creation would infuriate France's enemies.<sup>121</sup> Internal division within France on this question continued over into the Congress of Rastatt and inspired fear in many Germans. For one anonymous diplomat, secularization was France's method of spreading violent revolution to Germany and spelled the end of the Empire as he knew it: “To be sure, secularization will bring the fire of insurrection to eruption in the loving fatherland a dozen years sooner than otherwise.”<sup>122</sup> In a letter from October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Roberjot informed Talleyrand that the Prussians

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<sup>118</sup> Rao, “Républiques et Monarchies à l'Époque Révolutionnaire : une Diplomatie Nouvelle ?” in *Annales Historiques De La Révolution Française*, no. 296 (1994), 269.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 276. Quotation from page 276. “...chaque État, les affaiblit tous et ne fit du bien à aucun.”

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 270. Quotation from page 270. “Une république démocratique piémontaise seroit pour nous un voisin beaucoup plus inquiétant qu'un roi.”

<sup>122</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt*, 91. “Gewiß wird das Säcularisationswesen das Feuer der Insurrection im liebenden Vaterlande um ein Dutzend Jährchen früher zum Ausbruche bringen.”

were eager for peace as soon as possible, as they feared the rise of revolutionary states in Germany.<sup>123</sup>

The French government did consider using the Congress to expand the Revolution. In another letter, Roberjot detailed how it could be an advantage to French interests to maintain the independence of Augsburg to Talleyrand, for “this Imperial and freer City will be of great use to us for germinating the principles of liberty in the center of the Empire.”<sup>124</sup> In the same letter, Roberjot continued, “We believe that this determination will bring many friends to France, that these cities...will lean on the protection of France to resist more firmly the despotic claims of the head of the Empire and the clergy.”<sup>125</sup> In the construction of republican states within the Empire, the French hoped to expand the Revolution and, consequently, defend state interests.

But the French ultimately did not decide to destroy the German principalities and monarchies at Rastatt. Pragmatism usually triumphed over ideology in French diplomacy. For instance, the Duchy of Württemberg enjoyed rich compensation by the French at the Congress of Rastatt despite its feudal and monarchical tendencies. The reason, in part, was that the Tsarina until 1801, Maria Feodorovna – née Sophie Dorothea of Württemberg, used Russian influence to advocate on behalf of her relatives in Württemberg.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, the Tsar consistently negotiated with the French to ensure that his relatives in Baden, Württemberg, Hessen-Darmstadt, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin received adequate compensation.<sup>127</sup> For similar reasons,

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<sup>123</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, October 7, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:31.

<sup>124</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, October 6, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:25. “cette ville impériale et plus libre nous sera d’une grande utilité pour faire germer au centre de l’Empire les principes de la liberté.”

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 1:26. “Nous pensons que cette détermination attirera de nombreux amis à la France ; que ces villes...s’étayeront de la protection de la France pour résister avec plus de fermeté aux prétentions despotiques du chef de l’Empire et du clergé.”

<sup>126</sup> Andreas Fahrmeir, “Centralisation versus Particularism in the ‘Third Germany’,” In *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe*, ed. Michael Rowe, (New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 110.

<sup>127</sup> Whaley *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:9.

Hessen-Kassel benefitted from dynastic ties to Sweden and Hanover from ties to the British monarchy.<sup>128</sup>

However, the transformation of the *République* into *l'Empire Français* following the coronation of Napoleon in 1804 did the most to reinstitute the significance of bloodlines to European diplomacy. The Treaty of Lunéville and the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss*, the Final Recess, were deeply informed by dynastic relations. Baden, like Württemberg, benefitted from Russian connections. After the assassination of Tsar Paul in 1801, Alexander assumed the throne and promoted the interests of the country of his wife, Princess Louise von Baden.<sup>129</sup> Relations with foreign monarchs allowed some states to receive compensation far greater than what they had lost on the left bank.<sup>130</sup>

Napoleon himself used royal marriages as a diplomatic tool, with implications for territorial consolidation and compensation in the Reich. It is no wonder that both Bavaria and Baden benefitted greatly from secularizations and mediatizations, considering that Napoleon's stepson and the viceroy of Italy, Eugène de Beauharnais, was married to Princess Augusta of Bavaria, and Napoleon's wife's niece Stéphanie de Beauharnais married the Grand Duke of Baden, Karl Ludwig Friedrich.<sup>131</sup> After the Treaty of Tilsit, Napoleon created the Kingdom of Westphalia under the rule of his brother, Jérôme Bonaparte, although the state was more a satellite of the French Empire than a sovereign entity.<sup>132</sup>

Dynasty remained important in European diplomacy throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From 1792-1800, debates within France weakened the significance of royal lineage by questioning the ability of republics and monarchies to coexist in harmony. Germans

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<sup>128</sup> Gerhard J Seifner, "The Hanoverian Embassy in Vienna 1764-1772," (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 1982). Additionally, the Queen consort of Sweden from 1797-1809 was Frederike von Baden.

<sup>129</sup> Fahrmeir, "Centralisation versus Particularism in the 'Third Germany'," 110.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>131</sup> Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815*, 255-256.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

feared that French motives were more sinister than they appeared, namely that the French wanted to inspire Revolution in the Holy Roman Empire. Ultimately, the French did take dynasty into account at the Congress of Rastatt and the rise of Napoleon and his monarchical tendencies gave new significance to bloodlines. Subsequent secularizations and mediatizations ensured that those states with connections to powerful ruling houses – be it the Romanovs or the Bonapartes – survived and expanded.

At the time of the Congress of Rastatt, structural changes in the realms of economics, politics, and culture had changed the balance of power among the imperial estates. Secular princes with medium-sized or large territories profited, attaining more wealth, influence, and alliances than their smaller neighbors. By contrast, the rulers of tinier secular states, ecclesiastical states, Imperial Cities, etc. gradually lost their prestige and prosperity. They became increasingly isolated at a time when alliances and coalitions were essential for political survival. As will shortly be examined, new ideas about the role of the state would only delegitimize these corporate entities further.

## II. Politics by Other Means

Structural transformations benefitted the middling princes and the two great powers – Austria and Prussia – while simultaneously weakening the already vulnerable small and ecclesiastical states. Yet these latter entities faced another challenge by the mid-eighteenth century: political delegitimization. A pervasive sense that the Reich was in decline spurred a serious public discourse regarding the need for reforms that cohered to some of the ideals of the Enlightenment. As a consequence, the non-princely states suffered from widespread negative reputations for their supposed backwardness. They themselves, meanwhile, contested that the princes were the true despots and the enemies of the German nation. Despite the delegitimization of some states, prior to the French Revolution more than 1,800 polities within the Empire’s borders were sovereign, and illegal annexations remained remarkably rare. Only when French power entered the scene did the mighty flex their strength. By then, the potentates of the Empire engaged in a sort of Clausewitzian politics by other means: illegal annexations and, in some cases, military takeovers of neighboring territories.

### *The Reichsreformdebatte: Between Princely Greed and Reichspatriotismus*

*“Often war destroys more in the blink of an eye,  
What a Century has painstakingly built,  
And blind Madness measures its grandeur  
By the bones of slain brothers.”<sup>133</sup>*

Franz Georg Karl von Metternich-Winneburg-Beilstein, the Imperial Commisar and chief representative of the Habsburgs at Rastatt, printed these words in his reflections on the Congress. They came from Aloys Schreiber’s “Ode to the Congress of Rastatt,” a beautiful plea for armistice and reconciliation.<sup>134</sup> Schreiber viewed the Congress as a “comforting shimmer of

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<sup>133</sup> Franz Georg Karl von Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799* (Karlsruhe and Rastatt: Macklots Hochbuchhandlung, 1799), 308. “Der Krieg zerstöret öfter im Augenblick, / Was ein Jahrhundert mühsam gebaut hat, / Und blinder Wahn mißt seine Größe / Nach den Gebeinen erschlagner Brüder.”

<sup>134</sup> See Appendix III for the complete poems on Rastatt.

peace” after “five dark years” when “the desire to murder...transformed towns and cities into rubble.”<sup>135</sup> How the delegates negotiated could either yield the deaths of “hundreds of thousands” where half of the world again blazes “in flames,” or it could mean that “those who first swore utter destruction, / Shake hands as brothers.”<sup>136</sup> The anonymous author of another poem entitled “On the Congress at Rastatt” was far less hopeful. For him, the Congress was the culmination of years of neglect and mismanagement, a tragedy that was “fate.” At Rastatt, the “family” of Germans faced the undeniable truth that “the funeral pyre is truly here.”<sup>137</sup>

The poetry on the Congress of Rastatt added to the public discourse on what was called the *Reichsreformdebatte*, the imperial reform debates. Ever since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 which granted *ius territorii et superioritatis*<sup>138</sup> to the German princes, intellectuals increasingly believed that the Empire had fallen behind its European neighbors – that its institutions were backwards and its political structure unsustainable. The *Reichsreformdebatte* developed following the European Wars of Religion in a context of absolutism, the Enlightenment, the genesis of nationalism, and the rise of newspaper publications. While multifaceted and intellectually rich, it primarily focused on the question of centralization: on the one side were those who sought to expand princely sovereignty, and on the other side were those who argued for *Reichspatriotismus*, imperial patriotism, and a return to the romanticized German unity of a bygone era.

The sentiment that the Empire was in decline is evident in the anonymously written poem. The author began by stating “The old little Mother with crutch and eyeglass, / Called

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 305-306. “Tröstende Schimmer des Friedens” “Fünf dunkle Jahre” “Mordbegier...Wandelte Dörfer und Städt’ in Trümmer.”

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 306-307. “hundertmal Tausende” “in Flammen” “ Und, die sich erst Vertilgung schwuren, / Reichen die Hände sich ist als Brüder.”

<sup>137</sup> *Briefe Eines Abgeordneten Bey Dem Congressse Zu Rastadt* (1798), 95. “Schicksal” “Familie” “Ach, der Scheiterhaufe ist wirklich da.”

<sup>138</sup> Defined as territorial sovereignty, or “Landeshoheit” in German. Princes could maintain armed forces and make treaties with foreign powers, provided these were not directed against the Empire.

Germania, once had eagle wings,” and used to be “pleasing beyond measure.” But no longer: the once great nation had become handicapped, enfeebled, and weak with age.<sup>139</sup> One contemporary and delegate at Rastatt agreed that the imperial institutions had degraded. He wrote “A single unprejudiced look at our situation up until now shows that we were on the verge of ruin – the main departments, which give a constitution momentum, were already paralyzed.”

Indeed, by the opening of the Congress many of the Reich’s institutions were obsolete. In 1663, the princes conspired to keep the imperial assembly, the deliberative body of the Empire, continuously in session. They did so by refusing to officially close the congress in order to ensure the Emperor would not escape their surveillance and increase his power at their expense.<sup>140</sup> The result was an *immerwährender Reichstag*, an Eternal Diet of Regensburg, that rendered the entire body into a permanent congress of diplomatic delegates in which the chief concern was to see that as little as possible was done and with as little rapidity as possible.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, the judicial institutions of the Empire, the *Reichskammergericht* and the *Reichshofrat*, had major understaffing problems as the estates quibbled over funding, and by the early 1770s there were more than 60,000 unprocessed, backlogged court cases.<sup>142</sup>

How to address decay? In the Reich, the rise of newspapers and literacy – as well as masonic groups, patriotic societies, and the illuminati – allowed the proliferation of many diverse

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 94. “Das alte Mütterchen mit Krück und Augenglas, / Germania genannt, hatt’ einstens Adlerflügel; / Doch willig wars und zahm; gefällig ohne Maas.”

<sup>140</sup> John G. Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation: The Holy Roman Empire as Idea and Reality, 1763-1806* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 22-24. The Kurfürstenrat (Council of Electors) represented the Prince-electors. The Fürstenrat (Council of Princes) had 100 votes divided between the secular Prince’s Bench (Fürstenbank) and the spiritual Prelates’ Bank (Prälatenbank). Members either had one vote (Virilstimme), a shared “curial vote” (Kuriatstimme), and sometimes multiple votes. The Reichsstädtekollegium (Council of Cities) represented Imperial Cities. Simple majorities were needed in each Council, and 2/3 of the Councils needed to agree to make a binding decision on the whole Diet.

<sup>141</sup> Peter H. Wilson, *Heart of Europe* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 567.

<sup>142</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 27.

answers.<sup>143</sup> Contemporaries were influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment,<sup>144</sup> the *Sturm und Drang* countermovement,<sup>145</sup> and romantic nationalism.<sup>146</sup> Many members of the public found obsolescence in the archaic ecclesiastical states, Imperial Cities, and Imperial Knights. Secular princes often sought more sovereignty as the answer, seeing an empowered Kaiser as a threat to *deutsche Freiheit*. Nationalists, by contrast, viewed the greed and absolutism of the secular princes as the reason for decline and saw the remedy in centralization and deeper patriotic sentiments.

The anonymous poet alluded to Enlightenment critiques when he wrote “her [Germania’s] senses are getting confused.”<sup>147</sup> The Empire could not tell a “flea” from a “monster” and could not distinguish good from evil.<sup>148</sup> The Reich, in other words, was not rational. Enlightenment emphasis on logic and order, in fact, rendered many states of the Empire – especially those with medieval institutions – vulnerable to scathing critiques. Principal among the targets of such critiques were the ecclesiastical states, considered irrational and backwards in their fundamental constitutions. One participant at Rastatt wished “that the ecclesiastical states would come to an end, because they were unsuitable to their basic constitution.”<sup>149</sup> Andreas

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<sup>143</sup> Joachim Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2:438, 464. By the early 1790s, 200 German newspapers were printing some 300,000 copies per week for a readership of around 3 million, and the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* was Europe’s largest paper.

<sup>144</sup> Ewald Frie, “Weltwissen: Religion, Wissenschaft und die schönen Künste” (Class lecture, Deutsche Geschichte 1780-1830, Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, June 11, 2018). Intellectuals considered human coexistence and the state, the place of religion in society, the idea of history progress, the perfectibility of man, and the freeing potential of reason.

<sup>145</sup> Goethe and Schilling were major proponents and interested in the irrational, the romantic, and the sublime.

<sup>146</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:531. Nationalism was in part a reaction to Neoclassicism: the European obsession with antiquity following excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum defined by the works of men like Winckelmann, Baumgarten, and Herder.

<sup>147</sup> *Briefe Eines Abgeordneten Bey Dem Congress Zu Rastadt*, 95. “Sinn ihr zu verwirren.”

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* Full quotation: “die Furcht ihr jeden Floh / Zum Ungeheuer schafft.”

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 91. Full quotation: “So sehr ich auch an und für sich wünschte, die geistlichen Staaten möchten aufhören, weil sie nach ihrer Grundverfassung nichts taugen, so sehr würde ich doch, wenn meine schwache Stimme etwas vermöchte, den Abgeordneten meines Volks zurufen, sie erst noch stehen zu lassen, bis sie durch sich selbst fallen, wie alles, früh oder spät, in sich und durch sich zerfallen muß, was mit den ewigen Abgeordneten der Natur im Widerspruch steht.”



Riemer, likewise had disdain for such polities. He wrote “we do not like to have anything to do with the gentlemen who rule in the darkness of this world,” in reference to abbots, bishops, archbishops, and other ecclesiastical rulers.<sup>150</sup>

Critics held ecclesiastical states to be seriously deficient compared with most secular states with regards to every aspect of public life from education, morals, and general Enlightenment to the economic well-being of the citizenry.<sup>151</sup> As the idea that Church and State should be separated gained currency, especially in Austria under State Chancellor Wenzel-Anton von Kaunitz-Rietberg, condemnation expanded.<sup>152</sup> Catholic rulers themselves were aware of the extent of their poor reputations and began to turn against demonstratively anti-Enlightenment practices such as pilgrimages, holidays, contemplative orders, and the Jesuits.<sup>153</sup> Nevertheless, disapproval for the ecclesiastical states persisted.

It was not only the Church that was vulnerable to Enlightenment era critiques, however. Imperial Counts and Knights also suffered from reputations for unenlightened administrations. Since most of their territories were too small to have *Landtags*, State Diets, the Counts and Knights frequently retained absolutist power over their subjects.<sup>154</sup> Karl Ernst Adolf von Hoff, an official from the Duchy of Gotha, published an article which attacked the Knights’ right to independence. Echoing the sentiment of many German contemporaries, Hoff argued that Knightly polities were prone to tyranny and despotism, and – as they did not have representation

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<sup>150</sup> Andreas Riemer, *An den Congress zu Rastadt* (Leipzig, 1798), 135. Full quotation: “Und da wir nicht gern mit den Herren, die in der Finsterniß dieser Welt herrschen, was zu thun haben, so wollen wir ihnen dasjenige gerne gönnen, was nach Befreidigung der weltlichen Stände noch übrig bleiben möchte.”

<sup>151</sup> Ewald Frie, “Weltwissen: Religion, Wissenschaft und die schönen Künste” (Class lecture, Deutsche Geschichte 1780-1830, Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, June 11, 2018).

<sup>152</sup> Harm Kluetting, “Die josephinischen Klosteraufhebungen und die Säkularisationsdiskussion im Reich vor 1803,” in *Das Reich und seine Territorialstaaten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Wolfgang Schmale and Harm Kluetting (Münster: Lit Katz Verlag Münster, 2004), 219.

<sup>153</sup> Ewald Frie, “Weltwissen: Religion, Wissenschaft und die schönen Künste” (Class lecture, Deutsche Geschichte 1780-1830, Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, June 11, 2018).

<sup>154</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 13.

at the Imperial Diet, the *Reichstag* – were not fundamental to the *Reichsverfassung*, the Imperial Constitution.<sup>155</sup>

Similar criticisms were lobbed at the *Reichsstädte*. Excluding the largest of the Imperial Cities, by the late eighteenth century their reputation was even worse than that of the ecclesiastical states. In addition to their tendency to transform into patrician oligarchies, cities faced admonishment for their unequal tax burdens, mismanagement of municipal property and funds, large and growing public debts, and obscurantism.<sup>156</sup> An anonymous delegate at Rastatt regretted how “a number of our Imperial Cities, it is true, are very degenerate in their constitutions.”<sup>157</sup> A historian of Rothenburg ob der Tauber wrote that before secularization, “it looked rather funebrial in the Imperial Cities, where the bold courage, the sense of freedom and self-confidence had faded away amidst the misery of everyday life, mismanagement, and mindless living for the day! Illiberality, narrow-mindedness and debauchery appeared everywhere in the Imperial Cities.”<sup>158</sup>

For many intellectuals, decay in the ecclesiastical states, Imperial Cities, and other entities of the Reich justified their secularization and mediatization. Riemer, for instance, wrote that “we will gladly grant them [ecclesiastical sovereigns] that which, after the gratification of the secular estates, is left over.”<sup>159</sup> Presumably there would be little left. Baron Friedrich Karl von Moser likewise called for secularization, viewing Bishoprics as unjust in their denial of full

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 222. Economic backwardness was both a reason for much of this as well as another source of criticism, something explored in the first chapter.

<sup>157</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt*, 38. “Mehrere unserer Reichsstädte, es ist wahr, sind in ihren Verfassungen sehr ausgeartet.”

<sup>158</sup> August Schnitzlein, *Aus Rothenburgs Vergangenheit: Kurze Geschichte der Reichsstadt Rothenburg (Rothenburg Ob Der Tauber: C. H. Trenkle, 1913)*, 97. Full quotation: “Ein bißchen Licht in dem vielen Schatten, den jene Zeit uns zeigt, in der es in den Reichsstädten ziemlich trübselig aussah, wo der kühne Mut, der Freiheitssinn und das Selbstvertrauen unter dem Jammer der Alltäglichkeit, der Mißwirtschaft und gedankenlosen Indentaghineinlebens dahin geschwunden waren! Engherzigkeit, Beschränktheit und Verlotterung traten überall in den Reichsstädten zutage.”

<sup>159</sup> Riemer, *An den Congress zu Rastadt*, 135. Full quotation: “Und da wir nicht gern mit den Herren, die in der Finsterniß dieser Welt herrschen, was zu thun haben, so wollen wir ihnen dasjenige gerne gönnen, was nach Befreidigung der weltlichen Stände noch übrig bleiben möchte.”

freedom of thought and conscience to their populations.<sup>160</sup> Secularization became a favored solution to the problem of the ecclesiastical states at Rastatt.

Toward the end of his verse, the anonymous poet wrote, “everyone is laughing in Germany, except for the clergy, and who knows if they will not have the last laugh?”<sup>161</sup> They did not laugh because it had become clear at Rastatt that they would soon lose possession of their properties and sovereignty. But in the afterlife, suggested the poet, perhaps God would interpret secularization as a sin. This subtle criticism of the principle of secularization alludes to another side of the *Reichsreformdebatte*, namely, that the secular princes were the greater criminals. It was *their* short-sighted greed and self-interest which threatened the Empire.

The idea that the secular princes were to blame for imperial decline can be seen in both poems on Rastatt. Schreiber implored the princes to stop considering their own territorial gain, and to see the bigger picture: “A speck of earth more or less, - / What is it in the eyes of humanity? / Should then the inheritance of our mother / Always be weighed with blood?”<sup>162</sup> The anonymous poet, too, attributed the decay of the Empire to the selfishness of individual rulers. He wrote that the “wreath of honor” adorning Germania’s head had begun to disintegrate: “Now, with the whole wreath knotted with loose straw, / Already becoming looser” Germany would die.<sup>163</sup> The origin of decline, argued some, could be pinpointed to 1648. Johann Nikolaus Becker, for instance, asserted “Despotism began to reign in Germany right after the Peace of Westphalia.”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 200-202.

<sup>161</sup> *Briefe Eines Abgeordneten Bey Dem Congressse Zu Rastadt*, 95. “alles lacht in Deutschland, bis auf die Geistlichen nicht, und wer weiß, ob sie nicht noch die letzten lachen werden?”

<sup>162</sup> Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799*, 307. “Ein Fleckchen Erde mehr oder weniger, - / Was ist es in dem Auge der Menschlichkeit? / Soll den das Erbe unsrer Mutter / Immer mit Blute gewogen werden?”

<sup>163</sup> *Briefe Eines Abgeordneten Bey Dem Congressse Zu Rastadt*, 94. “Ehrenkranz” “Jetzt, da der ganze Kranz, geknüpft mit losem Stroh, / Schon immer loser wird.”

<sup>164</sup> Johann Nikolaus Becker, *Zur kritischen Geschichte des Rastadter Friedens, von einem unpartheiischen Beobachter* (Braunshorn (Berlin): Julius Knipperdolling Und Peter Ziffer, 1798), 4. “Der Despotism, der gleich nach dem westfälischen Frieden in Deutschland zu herrschen begann.”

If the Enlightenment was the basis for criticisms of the ecclesiastical states, Imperial Knights, and Imperial Cities, nationalism was the basis for criticisms of the secular princes. Since at least the mid-eighteenth century, following Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des loix* (The Spirit of Laws) from 1748 and Winckelmann's *Gedancken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Wercke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and the Art of Sculpture) from 1755,<sup>165</sup> nationalism and the idea of Germany as a *Kulturnation*, cultural nation, captivated the minds of prominent thinkers. A multitude of publications from the eighteenth century meditated on the theme of Germany and Germanness in conjunction with the rise of Romanticism and medieval revivalism.<sup>166</sup> Nationalists envisioned a powerful, unified Germany as a solution to the fraternal division of the Reich.

The abstract desire to preserve and protect German culture and freedom lay at the heart of the *Reichsreformdebatte*. Those on all sides of the conversation, and delegates at Rastatt, argued that their solution would best guard *deutsche Freiheit*. The anonymous author of a pamphlet from 1787, *Warum soll Deutschland einen Kayser haben?* (Why Should Germany Have an Emperor), for instance, contested that the Emperor's very existence threatened German freedom.<sup>167</sup> A response by Julius von Soden in 1788, appropriately called *Deutschland muss einen Kaiser haben* (Germany must have an Emperor), also appealed to freedom as something only an Emperor could guarantee through countering absolutist princes.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Franz M. Eybl, "Patriotismusdebatte und Gelehrtenrepublik: Kulturwissenschaftliche Forschungsfelder im Problembereich nationaler Identitätsbildung," in *Das Reich und seine Territorialstaaten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Wolfgang Schmale and Harm Klueting (Münster: Lit Katz Verlag Münster, 2004), 151.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 154. Some choice examples are: Johann Georg Zimmermann, *Von dem Nationalstolze* (Zürich 1758); Thomas Abbt, *Vom Tode für das Vaterland* (Berlin 1761); Johann Gottfried Herder, "Haben wir noch jetzt das Publikum und Vaterland der Alten?" (Riga 1765); Friedrich Karl von Moser, *Von dem Deutschen national-Geist* (Frankfurt 1765); Joseph von Sonnenfels, *Über die Liebe des Vaterlandes* (Wien 1771). It was in this time also that the Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm began to collect fairy tales.

<sup>167</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 138.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

Even those who did not see the need for reform maintained their position on the basis of freedom. Karl Friedrich Häberlin, a law professor from the University of Helmstedt, argued that the Reich's nature was ideal as it was founded on a social contract and popular sovereignty.<sup>169</sup> Wilhelm von Humboldt made similar defenses of the Empire.<sup>170</sup> Perhaps the greatest champion of status quo in the Reich was a leading law expert from the University of Göttingen. Johann Stephan Pütter rebuked claims of the Empire to be monstrous or contradictory; rather, he praised its checks and balances over the powers of both the Emperor and the princes.<sup>171</sup>

Yet the concept of *deutsche Freiheit* had a distinct significance in the Empire. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon understanding of freedom, in the German context it denoted corporate and class rights and privileges opposed to a modern, centralized, and impersonal state. Thus, those who supported a stronger Kaiser – generally the Imperial Knights, ecclesiastical states, and Imperial Cities – feared the abuses of secular princes, while princes feared the abuse of the Kaiser. Intrinsic to *deutsche Freiheit* was the concept of the *Universalität*, universality, of the German cultural community. Proponents of this idea viewed the multiplicity of German states as immensely precious for it allowed all forms of human creativity to manifest. Political unification, on the other hand, would homogenize culture after a standard emanated from the capital city, destroying regional diversity.<sup>172</sup>

Perhaps Günther Heinrich von Berg, a Professor at the University of Göttingen, best expressed this viewpoint when he stated: “ ‘The German citizen can...live largely satisfied and happy, and that he can [is due primarily] to a constitution which created numerous states in Germany.’ ”<sup>173</sup> The renowned author Christoph Martin Wieland likewise believed that

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<sup>169</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:603.

<sup>170</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 122-123.

<sup>171</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:443-444.

<sup>172</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 138. Inherent in this belief is a criticism of Nationalstolz (national pride) as a degenerate form of “Nationalgeist” (national spirit).

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 125. Quotation from page 125.

Germany's multitude of polities led to fewer extremes of wealth and poverty, more and better distributed schools and universities, and more opportunities for individual advancement.<sup>174</sup> The fact that by 1800 just under half of the 45 universities in the Empire closed as a result of secularization and mediatization gives tragic evidence to his point.<sup>175</sup> Berg, Wieland, and many others saw a relationship between political fragmentation and freedom: the many territories of the Reich made censorship difficult, encouraged competition for better governance, and allowed subjects to develop personal – rather than abstract and distant – relationships with their rulers.<sup>176</sup>

When French armies marched into the Rhineland and the Austrian Netherlands in 1794, and pushed deep into Bavaria in 1796, the time for an internal answer to the *Reichsreformdebatte* was over. At Rastatt and Campo Formio, the French made it clear that they sought the complete annexation of the left bank of the Rhine. Imperial delegates were horrified but forced to accept the terms and resolve the question of compensation. Eventually, proponents of secularization and mediatization had the last word – certainly benefitting from years of debates which had delegitimized Imperial Cities and ecclesiastical states.

Yet not everyone supported the terms of compensation. When it came to the *Reichsstädte*, most defenders appealed to their historical and legal rights to exist, rather than to their practical utility or enlightened nature. The author and Protestant clergyman Johann Gottfried Pahl, for instance, argued that it would be insulting to dissolve Imperial Cities who had sacrificed so much in the last war and had demonstrated greater loyalty to the Emperor and the Empire than any of the secular princes.<sup>177</sup> With what right did secular princes have to absorb Imperial Cities?

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>175</sup> Ewald Frie, “Weltwissen: Religion, Wissenschaft und die schönen Künste” (Class lecture, Deutsche Geschichte 1780-1830, Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, June 11, 2018).

<sup>176</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 126.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 223.

Additionally, some opponents of the dissolution of the Imperial Cities appealed to Romantic values. One anonymous author published a periodical in 1801 titled *Die freyen Reichs-Städte oder über das Interesse ihrer Verbindung in nächster Beziehung auf Schwaben* (The Free Imperial Cities or on the Interest of their Alliance in the Immediate Vicinity of Swabia) which lauded the cities' sanctuary status in the Medieval Ages and their role in promoting the arts and science.<sup>178</sup> A delegate at Rastatt wrote, "On the whole, our Imperial Cities are still alone helping the German art scene, giving a hand to our trade, and giving the bourgeoisie its real value."<sup>179</sup> The same delegate also referenced *deutsche Freiheit* when he expressed fear at the prospect of citizens being handed over to impersonal new masters who rule by despotism, a process he referred to as "human trafficking."<sup>180</sup> Riemer, likewise, asserted that "the German imperial cities are the only places of refuge for persecuted honest men...are the only places where freedom of the press still exists to some extent."<sup>181</sup>

Men who contested secularization appealed to a similar set of arguments. The majority of those who defended the ecclesiastical states argued – accurately – that such polities were coequal fiefs with secular principalities and it therefore did not make sense for ecclesiastical states alone to suffer the consequences of the peace. Riemer considered the whole idea of secularization and mediatization to be criminal: "It would be a true robbery- and plundering-system of 1,492 large and small German sovereigns."<sup>182</sup> An anonymous delegate at Rastatt, meanwhile, asked "with

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 224. The author is unique in the literature for actually encouraging the cities to form a coalition to protect their interests, though nothing came of it.

<sup>179</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congress zu Rastadt*, 38. "Allein im Ganzen sind es unsere Reichsstädte noch allein, die dem deutschen Kunstleisse empor helfen, unserm Handel unter die Arme greifen, und dem Bürgerstand seinen eigentlichen Werth geben."

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 91-92. Full quotation: "soll ein großer Theil der Bewohner neue Herren erhalten, ohne Rücksicht, ob er sie auch haben will, ob er nicht aus einer konstitutionellen Verfassung in die Hand der Willkühr geworfen wird" "Menschenhändel."

<sup>181</sup> Riemer, *An den Congress zu Rastadt*, 148. Full quotation: "Nehmen wir nun hierzu noch, daß die deutschen Reichs-Städte die einzigen Zufluchts-Orte für verfolgte ehrliche Männer sind, welche von Despoten, ihrer vernünftiger Grundsätze wegen...daß sie die einzigen Orte sind, wo noch Preßfreiheit einigermaßen statt findet."

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 139. Full quotation "Es wäre dieses ein wahres Raub- und Plünderungs-System von vierzehnhundert und zweiundneunzig, großen und kleinen deutschen Souverains, und möchte dem Deutschen Reich gar schlecht bekommen."

what rights are the ecclesiastical states and princes, whose legal and political existence is founded on the same line as that of the temporal princes, sacrificed?”<sup>183</sup>

Proponents of secularization had no good answer to this criticism and continued their attacks on the poor reputations and administrations of bishoprics and abbeys. Only C. D. Voss, a professor at the University of Halle, and the Leipzig professor Christian Ernst Weisse attempted to legally justify secularization. The former asserted that any sovereign spiritual prince could remain in his office only as long as the sovereign Empire found it appropriate for him to do so, and the latter made a similar claim, stating “ ‘the legality of secularization is immediately proved as soon as the supreme power proceeds under the conviction that peace is essential to the preservation of the state.’ ”<sup>184</sup>

Christian revivalism, a newfound fascination for the Middle Ages, and nationalism provided context for other anti-secularization arguments as well. Multiple participants at Rastatt felt that the conditions for peace would be disastrous. One delegate called it “the extermination of the nation,”<sup>185</sup> another argued, “And better we perish laudably than bear with narrow patience the destruction of our name and of our fatherland;”<sup>186</sup> and yet another concluded that, “Yes, peace is a desirable good, but not so desirable that it should be bought at any price. Better to honorably fall than to live in disgrace.”<sup>187</sup> Underlying these statements are deep patriotic sentiments.

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<sup>183</sup> *Einige Bemerkungen über die von der französischen Gesandtschaft in Rastadt verlangte Uebertragung der Kriegsschulden ... auf die zur Entschädigung für die verlierende Fürsten auf den rechten Rhein-Ufer ausgezeichnete Länder* (1798), 19. “mit welchem Rechte eben die geistliche Wahlstaaten, und Fürsten, deren rechtliche und politische Existenz mit jener der weltlichen Fürsten auf gleicher Linie gegründet ist, zum Opfer ausgezeichnet seyen?”

<sup>184</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 212-214. Quotation from page 214.

<sup>185</sup> *Einige Bemerkungen*, 30. “die Vernichtung der Nation.”

<sup>186</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt*, 105. “Und besser, wir gehen rühmlich unter, als wir tragen mit schmäliger Geduld die Zernichtung unsers Namens und unsers Vaterlandes.”

<sup>187</sup> *An den Rastatter Congreß bei seiner Auflösung* (1799), 4. “Ja, der Friede ist ein wünschenwerthes Gut, aber nicht so wünschenwerthes, daß er um jeden Preis erkaufet werden müßte. Besser, rühmlich fallen, als in Schmach leben.”



The poets, too, appealed to nationalist attitudes to encourage German unity against secularization and mediatization. Schreiber wrote “O ye, upon whom the eye of the nations looks, / Who will one day be called forth from the grave, / To be judged by posterity, ye who bear / Their blessing and misery in your very hands!”<sup>188</sup> The future generations of the nation depended on the delegates at Rastatt. Schreiber concluded his poem in a direct petition to them: “You, messengers of peace, hear the call of mankind! / Is this earth not your fatherland? / Are you not spouses, fathers, brothers? / Are you not children of the same root?”<sup>189</sup> For the anonymous poet it was too late. The Germans had been defeated and in their internal divisions at Rastatt, Germania “Like Lady Lucretia” committed suicide.<sup>190</sup> He concluded that “for an honest German the story brings more tears than laughter.”<sup>191</sup>

Those who resisted abolishing the ecclesiastical states also appealed to *deutsche Freiheit*. A deputy at Rastatt feared the extermination of German freedom and compared the border changes and population transfers to “slavery,” ominously warning that “sons and daughters will become foreigners in their own fatherland.”<sup>192</sup> The Salzburgian Catholic Priest and professor at the University of Landshut, Johann Baptist Graser, argued that Catholic populations suddenly under the rule of Protestants could expect at the very best indifference to their religion. The consequence would be an erosion of faith and spiritual discipline as well as a decline in “‘science and culture in the proper sense, ’” i.e. philosophy, pedagogy, and history, in favor of law, medicine, physics, and chemistry. Graser envisioned a tragic transition of a once spiritual

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<sup>188</sup> Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799*, 308. “O ihr, auf die das Auge der Völker blickt, / Die aus dem Grab die richtende Nachwelt einst / Zur Rechenschaft herauf ruft, die ihr / Seegen und Elend in eurer Hand tragt!”

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. “Ihr, Friedensboten, höret der Menschheit Ruf! / Ist diese Erde nicht euer Vaterland? / Seyd Ihr nicht Gatten, Väter, Brüder? / Seyd Ihr nicht Kindern desselben Stammes?”

<sup>190</sup> *Briefe Eines Abgeordneten Bey Dem Congresse Zu Rastadt*, 95. “Wie Frau Lucretia.” Lucretia is an allusion to the noblewoman in the famous Roman legend.

<sup>191</sup> Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799*, 308. “Freylich ist für einen biedern Deutschen die Geschichte mehr zum Weinen als zum Lachen.”

<sup>192</sup> *An den Rastatter Congreß bei seiner Auflösung*, 4. “Sklaverei” “Söhne und Töchter werden Fremdlinge in ihrem eignen Vaterlande.”

population into one of materialist consumers. He, and others, went further in their description of this dystopia: they foresaw large, impersonal bureaucracies, a growing wealth disparity, and the extinction of the freedom of the press.<sup>193</sup>

The Catholic-Protestant divide at the Congress added another element to negotiations. While secular princes generally opposed the Habsburg emperors and favored secularization, it was Protestant princes in particular who seemed to care little about maintaining the Reich as it was. Catholics, on the other hand, generally supported the Emperor and the Empire, and opposed secularization. One delegate at Rastatt noted the consequence of this division: “The Catholics and Protestants do not live in fraternal harmony. They accuse each other of bigotry and intolerance.”<sup>194</sup> When he was negotiating a separate peace with Paris, Wilhelm Rabe von Pappenheim encouraged his Landgrave to stop thinking about the Empire, and to start thinking about the interests of the Protestant princes, writing: “His Grace the Landgrave is Protestant. It is necessary, therefore, that he embraces the common interest of all of the Protestant princes & not that of the priesthood; if Austria approves of it or not, it does not matter.”<sup>195</sup>

The French profited from a disunified imperial delegation divided on religious and political lines at Rastatt. Changing political realities and new Enlightenment, nationalist, and Romantic ideas shook the people’s confidence in the structure of the Reich. Various proposals for reparations were made, ranging from Baron O’Cahill’s suggestion to compensate princes

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<sup>193</sup> As quoted in Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 219. These views are articulated in Anon., *Auf wessen Seite liegt der Vortheil wenn Teutschlands Bissthümer sacularisiret werden?* (n.p., 1802); Fandrich *Frey müthige Gedanken*; Fabritius, *Ueber den Werth*; and Anon. *Patriotische Bemerkungen in Hinsicht der Sekularisation und dessen unvermeidlich betrühten Folgen* (Germanien, 1802).

<sup>194</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt*, 11. “Die Katholiken und Protestanten leben eben nicht in brüderlicher Eintracht. Diese werfen jenen Bigottismus und Intoleranz vor.”

<sup>195</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Franz Wilhelm von Barkhaus, May 18, 1798, in Uta Ziegler and Eckhart G. Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs: Die Berichte Des hessen-darmstädtischen Gesandten August Wilhelm von Pappenheim aus Paris und Rastatt, 1798-1803, 1806*, (Darmstadt: Hessischen Historischen Kommission, 2007), 26. “Monseigneur le Landgrave est protestant. Il faut, que par conséquence il embrasse l’intérêt commun à tous les princes protestants & non celui de la prêtraille ; que l’Autriche l’approuve ou pas, c’est égal.”

from the left bank with cash from the *Reichskasse*, the imperial treasury, to Graser's complicated scheme to reimburse princes with a combination of cash and territory, to the contention of Karl Theodor von Dalberg, the Elector of Mainz, that the princes did not deserve compensation at all.<sup>196</sup> But by April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1798, the French and the imperial delegation agreed on secularization and mediatization as means for compensation.<sup>197</sup> The confluence of a delegitimized imperial structure with the rise of the threat of French revolutionary armies would transform intra-Empire relations. Increasingly, the strong could and would assert themselves over the weak.

***The Weak Suffer What They Must: Realpolitik***

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1798, the French ambassador, General Jean Bernadotte, was forced to flee his post in Vienna for Rastatt. Earlier that day, the Viennese had protested and rioted outside of the French Embassy in response to a major diplomatic insult. Knowing that the Viennese were celebrating their armament against the French when the city of Vienna was threatened in 1796, Bernadotte decided – against warnings from Paris – to hang a huge French tricolor with the words *liberté égalité fraternité* outside the Embassy's window.<sup>198</sup>

For the ostensible purpose of resolving tensions between Paris and Vienna following Bernadotte's actions, a secret conference began at Selz on May 30<sup>th</sup>. In this hamlet on the French side of the Rhine, fewer than 10 kilometers from Rastatt, the French plenipotentiary François de Neufchâteau and the Austrian statesman Philipp von Cobenzl entered six months of negotiations. Cobenzl's position was clear: he sought "that all points to be discussed at the Congress [of Rastatt] should already be accorded between Austria and France," and he argued for Austrian

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<sup>196</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 207-208. Graser's plan revolved around recompensing 60% of lost wealth with ecclesiastical territory, 20% with cash, and 20% in other territories.

<sup>197</sup> "Introduction," in Paul Montarlot and Leonce Pingaud, eds., *Le Congrès de Rastatt (11 Juin 1798-28 Avril 1799): Correspondance Et Documents*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Paris: Alphonse Picard Et Fils, 1912), 1:5.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:5-6. The event is reminiscent of Debry's arrogance at Rastatt, discussed in the last chapter.

compensation in Italy in return for the French annexation of the left bank of the Rhine.<sup>199</sup> For Austria, Rastatt was next to meaningless – only the decisions of the great powers carried any weight.

While the conference at Selz ultimately did not come to a successful conclusion, its very existence reminds one of Thucydides' notorious statement: *the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must*.<sup>200</sup> The implications of Selz rightly terrified the tiny entities of the Reich: Jean Debry noted in a letter to Treilhard from June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1798, that upon hearing of Selz, "The small states are in mortal panic, I reassure them as best I can."<sup>201</sup> Debry also noted that after word spread that the French had annexed Malta, the imperial delegates became much more willing to concede to French demands.<sup>202</sup> As the *Reichsreformdebatte* delegitimized some states and to a certain extent the Reich itself, great power politics and political annexations demonstrated the truth of Thucydides' claim. Increasingly, large and medium-sized states took advantage of the turmoil and insecurity to expand their own interests – whether that benefitted the Reich as a whole or weakened it profoundly. Austro-Prussian dualism, the French reorganization of Europe, and the greedy actions of the secular princes reveal the harsh nature of *Realpolitik*.

In 1784, the political satirist Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrlin noted that " 'People say the King of Prussia is the only prince who can defend the lesser territories...That deserves our respect. But the house of Austria is the only power that can oppose the aggrandizement of the crown of Brandenburg, if it wishes to endanger the German Reich. Is that a less significant observation?'

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 1:6-8. Montarlot and Pingaud cite the French Archives des Affaires Étrangères, *Autriche*, vol. 369, and the Archives Nationales, AF III, 59. "que tous les points à discuter au Congrès devraient être auparavant accordés entre l'Autriche et la France."

<sup>200</sup> Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Modern Library, 1951), 331.

<sup>201</sup> Jean Debry to Jean-Baptiste Treilhard, June 21, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:189. "Les petits États sont dans des trances mortelles, je les rassure de mon mieux."

<sup>202</sup> Address of Jean Debry to the Consulate, August 8, 1800, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:139.

<sup>203</sup> Wekhrlin's statement alluded to mounting fear across the "third Germany" that the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns would partition the Reich between themselves. Ever since at least 1740, when King Frederick the Great of Prussia reneged on his promise to acknowledge the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 and invaded Austrian Silesia, Austro-Prussian rivalry had become a defining theme in European international relations. Even the French royalist émigré Dominique-George-Frédéric de Pradt remarked, "There is nothing more rare in Germany than a German. There are only Austrians and Prussians."<sup>204</sup> Peace negotiations at Rastatt were likewise heavily informed by *deutschem Dualismus*, Austro-Prussian dualism.

In 1800, Berlin and Vienna were by far the largest cities in the Reich with 170,000 and 230,000 citizens respectively.<sup>205</sup> With size came power and with power came ambition. Both states acted independently, often in ways contrary to the interests of the Empire, only participating in its institutions sporadically and when it was to their benefit to do so. The history of the *Fürstenbund*, the League of Princes, offers support to this point. The League was created in 1785 at the behest of Frederick the Great with support from most of the Protestant states. Officially called the "Association for the Preservation of the Imperial System," the *Fürstenbund* had the professed purpose of safeguarding the *Reichsverfassung*. In truth, its creation was part of Prussia's strategy to counter Austrian ambitions, particularly Kaiser Joseph II's goal of annexing Bavaria.<sup>206</sup> When Joseph II died in 1790 – and with him pretensions on Bavaria – the League quickly disintegrated.

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<sup>203</sup> As quoted in Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648-1806*, 2:425.

<sup>204</sup> Dominique-George-Frédéric de Pradt, *Antidote Au Congrès De Rastadt : Ou Plan D'un Nouvel Equilibre Politique En Europe* (London, 1798), 54-55. "Il n'y a rien de plus rare en Allemagne qu'un Allemand. Il n'y a que des Autrichiens et des Prussiens."

<sup>205</sup> Ewald Frie, "Städte und Dörfer" (Class lecture, Deutsche Geschichte 1780-1830, Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, June 6, 2018). Hamburg was the next largest city with around 100,000 people. At this time, 90% of the Empire's population lived in places with fewer than 5,000 people. In total, the Empire had approximately 27 million inhabitants.

<sup>206</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 80. Vienna had been in negotiations with the Duke of Bavaria, Karl Theodor, about swapping territory: Theodor would receive the Austrian Netherlands, and Joseph II Bavaria.

The Swiss historian Johannes von Müller dreaded the prospect of an enlarged Austria and was a strong supporter of the *Fürstenbund*.<sup>207</sup> He agreed with men like Berg and Wieland in his conviction that small states were more likely to uphold German freedom, and worried that Vienna and Berlin would partition the whole Reich. Contemporaries had reason to fear partitions: in 1772, 1793, and 1795, Austria, Prussia, and Russia had divided and eliminated the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>208</sup> Small states were terrified of the same fate, and in 1793 Freidrich Karl von Moser warned, “ ‘Once Poland has been fully partitioned, we’ll be next on the menu.’ ”<sup>209</sup> A delegate at Rastatt regretted, “I do not know whether Poland’s fate will ultimately become ours under such circumstances, and in the next century we will not perhaps tell the children at school: there was once a country called Germany!”<sup>210</sup> Andreas Riemer, too, feared “a sort of polonization” of the “third Germany.”<sup>211</sup> The dread which so many inhabitants of the Empire felt about the possibility of the Polish fate becoming their own was well-expressed by Karl Ludwig von Haller. He wrote that:

At first most believed that Austria and Prussia were in agreement with each other in order so that each would attain a considerable, well-situated part of Germany, and afterwards the rest of Germany [would be divided] by secularizing the spiritual founders, subjugating the Imperial Cities, and devouring the smaller imperial territories. Each of the major powers would give their clients excellent consideration; and France would help and support this plan, as one would expect, in that it would be rewarded the whole of the left bank of the Rhine for its endeavors and efforts to, in artistic language, liberate Germany.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 85. Müller was convinced that freedom in Europe and the well-being of the whole human race depended on the question of for whom and for what the Germans might fight, and whom they might follow. If this power was directed by any one state, it would invariably lead to universal (European) despotism.

<sup>208</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:402. Fears of Austria and Prussia partitioning the rest of the Empire were, however, overblown because if one state suggested it, it would have been a propaganda coup to the other. Furthermore, the main issue involved inheritances that would become relevant only when one of the imperial princes actually died.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 2:603. Quotation from page 603.

<sup>210</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congress zu Rastadt*, 93. “Ich weiß nicht, ob unter solchen Umständen nicht Polens Loos zuletzt noch das unsrige werden, und man im nächsten Jahrhundert nicht vielleicht den Kindern in der Schule erzählen wird: Es war einmahl ein Land, das hieß Deutschland!”

<sup>211</sup> Riemer, *An den Congress zu Rastadt*, 134. Full quotation: “Es ist möglich, daß man die Absicht habe, dasjenige mit Gewalt nehmen zu wollen, warauf man keine gerechte Ansprüche zu machen hat. Es scheint auf eine Art von Polonisation abgesehen zu seyn, welches jedoch erst die Zukunft entwickeln kann.”

<sup>212</sup> Karl Ludwig von Haller, *Geheime Geschichte der Rastadter Friedensverhandlungen in Verbindung mit den Staatshändeln dieser Zeit: Nebst den wichtigsten Urkunden*. Vol. 1. 6 vols. (Germanien, 1799), 285. “Anfangs

The rivalry of the great powers also had important implications during the wars with France. Many of the small states did not want to enter into the combat, believing that they would become the first victims of any conflict. Häberlin accordingly recast the war as a traditional Habsburg-French clash that did not concern the Empire.<sup>213</sup> After Austria and Prussia mobilized their armies, Archbishop Max Franz of Cologne wrote on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1792, “ ‘All of Germany is in an uproar, one fears the French less than these two powers, and one generally finds the cure worse than the malady.’ ”<sup>214</sup>

The rivalry also hindered the war effort since Prussia and Austria did their best to prevent the other from gaining an upper hand. Correspondingly, mutual distrust at the onset of hostilities caused both states to keep the bulk of their forces at home rather than committing them to invading France.<sup>215</sup> Especially in the early years of conflict, Berlin and Vienna hardly coordinated the war effort, a miscalculation which contributed considerably to French military successes. An indicative event was the Peace of Basel in 1795 which took Prussia out of the war as Austria continued to fight. Many Germans were disgusted with Prussia’s separate peace: Müller contended that Berlin was deserting her obligations to the Empire and the Duke of Lippe-Weissenfeld, Karl Christian, likewise considered Prussia’s actions a betrayal to all Germans and avowed “ ‘We want no division! We are members of one state, estates of one Empire, citizens of

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glaubten die meisten, Oesterreich und Preußen wären mit einander einverstanden, um jedes einen beträchtlichen, wohlgelegenen Theil von Deutschland an sich zu bringen, und dem übrigen Deutschland nachher durch Secularisirung der geistlichen Stifter, Unterwerfung der Reichstädte, und Verschlingen der kleinern Reichständischen Gebiete eine ganz andre Form zu geben, wobey jede der beyden Hauptmächte ihre Clienten vorzüglich bedenken würde; und diesen Plan würde Frankreich, wie man vermuthete unterstützen und ausführen helfen, indem es selbst das ganze linke Rheinufer zum Lohn für seine Bemühungen und Anstrengunge, um Deutschland, der Kunstsprache nach, zu befreyn, erhielt.”

<sup>213</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 166

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 144. Quotation from page 144. A patriot of the Reich, Franz rejected a plan in 1798 which would have made him the ruler of a secular electorate, asserting, “ ‘I became a spiritual prince and Elector by election; my right to land and people is based purely and solely on this election.’ ” and “ ‘In case of general secularization, my role is played out.’ ” Quotation from page 225.

<sup>215</sup> Steven Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815: France Against Europe* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books Doubleday & Company, 1969), 51. Of 170,000 Prussian soldiers and 200,000 Austrian soldiers, only 42,000 and 70,000 respectively were sent to France out the outbreak of hostilities.

one fatherland!’ ” Dalberg meanwhile advocated for a virtual dictatorship under the House of Habsburg now that Prussia had effectively abandoned the Reich.<sup>216</sup>

Yet when Austria sued for peace with France at the Treaty of Campo Formio in October, 1797, it too exhibited self-interest over loyalty to the Reich. While one of the articles did call for a Congress to take place at Rastatt, the Habsburgs also made the secret agreement to enlarge their territory. As Görres noted, Austria had agreed to surrender Mainz to France on without the Archbishop of Mainz even being aware of the agreement. Austria also took Venice, part of Baviaria, and the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg.<sup>217</sup>

Upon learning of Austria’s negotiations with France at Rastatt, many of the delegates felt betrayed and vulnerable. An author of the history of the *Reichsstadt* Nuremberg thus chronicled, “Meanwhile, through the secret articles of peace at Campo Formio (17 Oct. 1797), the emperor had just as well renounced the empire, as had already been done by individual princes.”<sup>218</sup> Mistakenly, but fittingly, the delegate at Rastatt Johann Ludwig Klüber referred to Campo Formio as “Campo Formido (truly a terribly-ominous name!).”<sup>219</sup> Roberjot even remarked to Talleyrand how little Austria appeared to care for the Reich in a letter from August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1798.<sup>220</sup>

The Prussians made a similar impression on the French plenipotentiaries. On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1798, Jean Debry wrote to the influential political theorist Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès that “the Empire is null; it is very surprising that those who could give it life to their advantage [Prussia]

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<sup>216</sup> As quoted in Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 169.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>218</sup> Marx, *Geschichte Der Reichsstadt Nürnberg*, 399. Full quotation: “Unterdessen hatte sich durch die geheimen Artikel des Friedens zu Campo Formio (17. Oktbr. 1797) der Kaiser eben so vom Reiche losgesagt, wie dies bereits schon von einzelnen Fürsten geschehen war, größtentheils dem zu Folge verlies der Congreß zu Rastatt ohne Resultat, und der Krieg begann von Neuem.”

<sup>219</sup> Johann Ludwig Klüber, *Das neue Licht, oder Rastatter Friedens-Congreß-Aussichten* (Rastatt, 1798), 5. “Campo Formido (wahrlich ein fürchterlich-vorbedeutungsvoller Name!).” Ironically, the Italian village in which the treaty was signed is today called Campoformido.

<sup>220</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, August 23, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:305.



do not pronounce themselves.”<sup>221</sup> The Hohenzollerns were keen on defeating the French, but keener on weakening Austria. Prussian attendance at the Congress was indeed primarily to prevent those under the sway of Vienna from profiting in the peace; in a letter to Talleyrand from September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Roberjot observed that the Prussians, “at present seem to desire that the prizes to be granted to Protestant princes be, to the detriment of the clergy, strong enough to give these princes a more imposing political existence.”<sup>222</sup>

For their part, the French understood that the real power lay with the Austrian and Prussian diplomats and not with the imperial delegation as a whole. In his address from August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1800, Debry expressed frustration at the Congress of Rastatt for its multitude of powerless and irritating delegates, asserting that it would be preferable to negotiate only with Berlin and Vienna.<sup>223</sup> Debry also made it clear that the most fundamental terms of peace had already been decided by the larger powers; speaking on secularization for instance, he attested, “in spite of the pious demonstrations of the great Catholic states, it was basically decided *in petto* that the clergy should bear all the burden [of compensation].”<sup>224</sup> Attentive Germans likewise believed that France only cared about Austrian and Prussian opinions. Pappenheim thus wrote, “There is no doubt that the French Government does not speak of the mode of secularization at the Congress of Rastatt before knowing where it stands with Austria and Prussia.”<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Jean Debry to Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, July 23, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:230. “L’Empire est nul ; il est bien étonnant que ceux qui pourraient lui donner la vie à leur avantage ne se prononcent pas.”

<sup>222</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, September 30, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 2:8. “paraissent actuellement désirer que les lots à accorder aux princes protestants soient, au détriment du clergé, assez forts pour donner à ces princes une existence politique plus imposante.”

<sup>223</sup> Address of Jean Debry to the Consulate, August 8, 1800, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:116.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:124. “malgré les pieuses démonstrations des grands États catholiques, il était à peu près décidé *in petto* que le clergé porterait tout ce fardeau.”

<sup>225</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Franz Wilhelm von Barkhaus, June 1, 1798, in Ziegler and Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs*, 32. “Il ne faut pas douter, que le Gouvernement français ne parle pas du mode de sécularisation au congrès de Rastadt avant de savoir, où il en est avec l’Autriche et la Prusse.”

The Austrians and Prussians were not the only powers conducting *Realpolitik* at Rastatt. The most significant force in Europe was of course the French, and for Paris, just as for Berlin and Vienna, justice often meant whatever policy served the national interest. The very idea of secularization as compensation – although it had currency in the Reich – was originally a French proposal. Talleyrand hoped to weaken France’s staunchest enemy, Austria, by eliminating the pro-Habsburg ecclesiastical states and by constructing medium-sized secular states making up the “third Germany” dependent on France.<sup>226</sup> Thus one explanation as to why France did not make sister republics in Germany as it had done in Italy was practical: smaller German kingdoms, more legitimate than republics in the eyes of the natives, could better oppose Prussia and Austria. The future of Germany, as de Pradt, averred, “resides entirely in Paris.”<sup>227</sup>

In a letter to Talleyrand on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Debry attached a political essay he had written outlining French strategy in Germany. He proposed that the French Directory mimic the actions of the House of Brandenburg by elevating the secondary powers of Germany – Hesse-Kassel, Württemberg, Baden, and Hessen-Darmstadt – to kingdoms and by “liberat[ing] the free and Hanseatic cities from the yoke of the House of Austria.”<sup>228</sup> Additionally, he suggested that France modify the imperial electors to cause the Habsburgs to lose the next election and, consequently, their status as Kaiser. The French plans for the Reich were always to weaken their enemies and defend their interests, even if supporting German monarchies was theoretically against Revolutionary ideology.

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<sup>226</sup> Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815*, 181. Talleyrand eventually abandoned this plan, but its influence was widespread in France and had real consequences after Napoleon proclaimed himself emperor.

<sup>227</sup> Pradt, *Antidote Au Congrès De Rastadt*, xx. Full quotation: “mais nous savons aussi que cette mesure d’évaluation n’est pas plus applicable à l’Allemagne qu’aux autres états de l’Europe ; que la décision de leur sort est hors de leurs mains et qu’elle réside toute entière à Paris.”

<sup>228</sup> Jean Debry to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, June 30, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:190. Full quotation: “Faites pour une des puissances secondaires ce que la maison de Brandebourg avait fait pour elle-même. Élevez à son niveau le landgrave de Hesse-Cassel, ralliez autour de lui le Wurtemberg, Bade, Hesse-Darmstadt, et délivrez les villes libres et hanséatiques du joug de la maison d’Autriche.”

Negotiations between Paris and the medium-sized secular princes generally went according to French plots. Such rulers conspired with the French in order to expand their personal power – power dependent on France and to the detriment of Austria, Prussia, and the Empire. Pappenheim explained that “It is natural that the Austrian and Prussian ministers do not like that we speak to the French,” but concluded that “From France alone one can hope for active and strong support.”<sup>229</sup>

Indeed, until the turning points in the Peninsular War and the invasion of Russia, Central Europe was strategically reorganized to empower Paris. At Rastatt, secularization and mediatization were agreed upon which would weaken Habsburg power. At the Treaty of Lunéville on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1801, Austria was finally forced to accept and implement the principles decided at Rastatt. As France ensured that it would participate at the imperial congress tasked with compensating dispossessed princes, it also assured influence over those secular princes winning new territory at the expense of Austria’s traditional allies.<sup>230</sup>

At the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss* of 1803, 112 states of the Holy Roman Empire were dismantled and incorporated into the territories of Napoleon’s German allies.<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, Baden, Württemberg, Hesse-Kassel, and Salzburg were all given electorate status, while the Archbishoprics of Cologne and Trier lost their status and Mainz’s status was transferred to Regensburg.<sup>232</sup> Since all of the new electors except Salzburg were Protestant, the French hoped that the Habsburgs would have a more difficult time being elected emperor in the future. At the Treaty of Pressburg on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1805, Vienna was forced to cede territory

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<sup>229</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Franz Wilhelm von Barkhaus, June 11, 1798, in Ziegler and Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs*, 32. “Il est naturel, que les ministres autrichiens et prussiens n’aient qu’on s’adresse à la France... Von Frankreich allein kann man thätige und kräftige Unterstützung hoffen.”

<sup>230</sup> Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815*, 230.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>232</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:621-622

to Napoleon's allies: the newfound kingdoms of Bavaria, Württemberg, and Italy.<sup>233</sup> Napoleon in fact created various kingdoms among his client German states to counter the balance of power against Prussia and Austria, as satirically shown in the English etching from 1806 below.

Tiddy-Doll, The Great French Gingerbread-Baker<sup>234</sup>



Depicted is Napoleon standing before a large “New French Oven for Imperial Gingerbread” in the process of creating/baking new kings called “Bavaria, Wirtembg, [and] Baden.” To the left, Talleyrand is in the process of making another batch of dough.

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1806, representatives from 16 German states signed the *Rheinbundakte* in Paris, officially establishing the Confederation of the Rhine under the protection of Napoleon. Member states absorbed 70 smaller entities and the estates of the *Reichsritterschaft*.<sup>235</sup> The Confederation was effectively a satellite of Paris: it was bound to furnish Napoleon 60,000

<sup>233</sup> Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815*, 253-254.

<sup>234</sup> James Gillray, “Tiddy-Doll, the great French gingerbread-baker; drawing out a new batch of kings - his man, Hopping Talley, mixing up the dough / Js. Gillray invd. & fec. France,” 1806. Etching. Source: Library of Congress, accessed 31 March, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002723250/>.

<sup>235</sup> Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815*, 256. “Rheinbundakte” means the Treaty of the Confederation of the Rhine.

troops in wartime and could not have an independent foreign policy.<sup>236</sup> Soon thereafter, on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1806, Franz II abdicated the throne and dissolved the Holy Roman Empire.

While power politics was a game best played by the courts of Vienna, Berlin, Paris, London, and Saint Petersburg, it was not reserved for them exclusively. When the opportunity arose, medium-sized powers of the Empire proved adept at exerting their limited power over their even smaller neighbors. Until the outbreak of the French Revolution, the Empire – or coalitions within the Reich<sup>237</sup> – actually proved effective in preventing princes and dukes from illegally expanding their territories. Yet various states had succeeded in asserting greater autonomy and in subverting burdensome imperial institutions. In 1681, the imperial army had been organized on a system of fixed quotas from each state organized by the *Reichskreise*; unfortunately for the Empire, secular princes – such as Karl Eugen from Württemberg in 1763 – failed to provide contingents, preferring to keep their soldiers at home.<sup>238</sup>

When the Empire found itself at war with France, the self-interested nature of many medium-sized and small states hindered defense coordination. Rhenish entities feared the costs of war and battles on their territories and Palatinate-Bavaria and Württemberg went so far as to proclaim the neutrality of their territories.<sup>239</sup> Eventually, the conflict with France affected all parts of the Reich. The secular princes saw the fog of war as an opportunity, and many of them sought to exploit the great turmoil around them.

The French certainly enjoyed cultivating division in the Empire by negotiating with secular princes, but negotiations involve at least two parties. For their part, the middling German

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<sup>236</sup> John Breuilly, “Napoleonic Germany and State-formation,” in *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe*, ed. Michael Rowe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 133.

<sup>237</sup> Sigrid Hirbodian, “Württemberg im 15. Jahrhundert” (Class lecture, Württemberg im Mittelalter, Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, June 27, 2018). See for instance the histories of the Schwäbischer Städtebund (Swabian League of Cities) and the Imperial Knights association, St. Jörgenschild (St George’s Shield).

<sup>238</sup> Peter H. Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 21.

<sup>239</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 143

rulers hoped to use French power to their advantage. In his directions for Pappenheim's mission in Paris, Landgrave Ludwig X expressed no loyalty to the Reich, only his desire to maximize his territorial acquisitions. He hoped to annex many neighbors including Mainz, Worms, and Pfalz, and even Frankfurt. Other secular rulers of the Empire negotiated in Paris for similar reasons.

Naturally, the most vulnerable territories were the tiniest. The French royalist émigré Charles-François Dumouriez expressed a common sentiment in Germany in his *Tableau spéculatif de l'Europe* (Speculative Tableau of Europe), published in February 1798. In it, Dumouriez accused Rastatt of being a farce, painting a horrible picture of the Congress: "The empire is there as a dish to satisfy the greed of many hungry guests. We cut it and give a piece to each according to his size and appetite."<sup>240</sup> The miniscule estates seemed to be the victims of not only the great powers, but the middle powers as well. One delegate mourned how national spirit was missing, "Everyone just thinks about bringing the skin of his lord to safety, so that the rest can go to the executioner!"<sup>241</sup> Riemer likewise noted that many of the secular princes "would like to have something more than they have lost [on the left bank] without having any just claims."<sup>242</sup>

It must therefore be concluded that one of the reasons secularization and mediatization were agreed upon, despite the dubious legality of that course of action, is tied to the wishes of those who had power. Once it was assured at Rastatt and after that the secular princes would be compensated, some rulers overstepped their entitlements. A historian of the *Reichsstadt* Rothenburg ob der Tauber remarked that Bavaria did not wait for the Final Recess to incorporate

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<sup>240</sup> Charles-François Dumouriez, *Tableau spéculatif de l'Europe*, February, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 2:141. "L'empire est là comme un mets propre à assouvir l'avidité de plusieurs convives affamés. On va le découper et en donner un morceau à chacun selon sa taille et son appétit."

<sup>241</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt*, 106. "Jeder denkt blos daran, die Haut seines Comittenten [translated as lord, the person to whom one is committed] in Sicherheit zu bringen, mag alsdenn der ganze Rest zum Henker gehen!"

<sup>242</sup> Riemer, *An den Congress zu Rastadt*, 131. Full quotation: "Unter den verlierenden Fürsten sind welche, die auf Indemnisation gerechte Ansprüche haben; andere gerne etwas haben wollen, und zwar mehr, als sie verlohren haben, ohne irgend gerechte Ansprüche zu haben."

new territories: “as early as September 2, 1802, a Bavarian light infantry battalion under Major von Vincenti appeared and occupied the city.”<sup>243</sup> Under the policies of Montgelas, Bavaria quickly took over church lands, free towns, and small lordships in its territory.<sup>244</sup> The story was similar across Germany. Friedrich I of Württemberg, for instance, integrated new territories in a notoriously brutal fashion akin to military takeovers. Opponents soon referred to him as the *Swabian Sultan* or the *Swabian Czar*.<sup>245</sup>

The most telling case of secular princes flexing their power can be seen in their treatment of the Imperial Knights. The Final Recess had specifically called for the preservation of this corporate body, but in 1803 secular rulers immediately began to assault the Knights’ independence. Castles were taken by force and there were even occasional battles and deaths. Austria’s efforts stopped the takeover in a decree from January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1804, but one letter from Napoleon in July 1805 nullified Vienna’s order and the assaults continued.<sup>246</sup> The course of events reveals the state with the most power usually had the last say. While compensation was indeed fairer at the lower end of the scale, Baden gained more than seven times the territory it had lost, Prussia five times, Württemberg four times, etc.<sup>247</sup>

Although the exertion of power played a significant role in determining the course of the Congress of Rastatt and the eventual reorganization of Central Europe, *Reichspatriotismus* was still an influential idea, even among the leaders of large secular states. The intensity of the

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<sup>243</sup> Schnitzlein, *Aus Rothenburgs Vergangenheit*, 98. Full quotation: “Dieses Versprechen wurde auch „Reichsdeputationshauptschluß“ vom 25. Februar 1802 eingelöst; doch wartete Bayern diesen „Hauptschluß“ gar nicht ab; schon am 2. September 1802 erschien unter dem Major von Vincenti ein bayerisches Jägerbataillon und besetzte Stadt und Gebiet.”

<sup>244</sup> Maximilian von Montgelas, “Ansbacher Mémoire,” September 30, 1796. In Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte. Accessed November 13, 2018. <http://www.hdbg.de/montgelas/pages/hmv33.htm>.

<sup>245</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:625.

<sup>246</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 230-231.

<sup>247</sup> Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:621. The Counts of Quadt, for instance, lost Wickrath and Schwanenberg (85km<sup>2</sup> with 3,000 people) but gained the Swabian Imperial Abbey and Imperial City of Isny (4km<sup>2</sup> with 2,000 inhabitants plus 11,000 gulden per annum from the Imperial Abbey of Ochsenhausen).

*Reichsreformdebatte* is evidence to this point. Moreover, while both Austrian state chancellor Johann Amadeus von Thugut and Kaiser Franz II have been criticized by contemporaries and historians for only seeking territorial enlargement, the truth is more nuanced. Thugut's letters show that he believed Austria's fate to be inextricably linked to that of the Reich, and Franz II wrote in August, 1796 that "a good and honorable outcome of this war depends on the restoration of things in the Reich."<sup>248</sup> Furthermore Austrian and Prussian troops acted as *Reichstruppen* and coordinated strategy with other units through a significant part of the wars with France.<sup>249</sup> Finally, the relatively frequent transfer of officers and other personnel between armies across the Empire ensured notions of loyalty to a wider, if vaguely defined fatherland that transcended that to a particular prince.<sup>250</sup>

In the sphere of international relations at the time of the Congress of Rastatt, *Realpolitik* was an unforgiving political reality. Enlightenment ideas, nationalism, and institutional decay had weakened imperial actors' confidence in the Reich's structure. Delegitimized states only maintained their sovereignty as long as the Empire remained unthreatened. But as French power loomed, each state increasingly – regardless of ideology or nationalist sentiment – used diplomacy and war to achieve its interests. Austro-Prussian dualism divided and weakened the Empire fundamentally. French grand strategy envisioned and attained the neutering of Germany through exploitation of its internal disunion. The middle powers did what they could to maximize their gains by manipulating what clout they possessed. As Andreas Riemer wrote, "What is not justified can sometimes be politically convenient."<sup>251</sup> The smallest, poorest, and least reputable states could only endure what their neighbors designed for them.

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 564. As quoted on page 564.

<sup>249</sup> Peter Wilson, "Military culture in the Reich, c. 1680-1806," in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Scott Hamish and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 47.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>251</sup> Riemer, *An den Congress zu Rastadt*, 135. "Was nicht gerechdet ist, kann manchmal sehr politisch convenient seyn."



### III Culture Clashes and Bribery: Rastatt as a Farce?

The tension between *Reichspatriotismus* and self-interest found expression at the Congress of Rastatt. Although ostensibly the imperial delegation represented the interests of the Holy Roman Empire as one entity, the French diplomats quickly found that individual German delegates were hardly unified. It was exceedingly frustrating for the French to negotiate with so many delegates – many of whom adhered to customs perceived as ridiculous and many of whom did not know French. The Germans, meanwhile, took offense at the indelicate and unceremonious behavior of the novice French plenipotentiaries. Amid the friction, adept, professional, and trained diplomats – usually from secular principalities – left the Congress for Paris. Realizing that it would be best to negotiate away from the chaos of Rastatt, such diplomats turned to bribery to advocate their goals.

#### *French – the Lingua Franca*

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1800 Jean Antoine Debry gave a spirited address to the Consulate in Paris concerning the nature of the course of events at Rastatt. Having survived the attack on the French diplomats from March 28<sup>th</sup> of the previous year, which resulted in the assassinations of fellow plenipotentiaries Claude Roberjot and Antoine Bonnier d'Alco,<sup>252</sup> Debry was eager to express his frustration with the Congress. According to him, the entire negotiation was a chaotic mess, a “tortuous march,” with far too many people and far too little progress.<sup>253</sup> A particularly irritating aspect of negotiations was the behavior of the German diplomats and their “punctilio,” their incessant obsession with petty formalities of diplomatic conduct.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> “Introduction,” in Paul Montarlot and Leonce Pingaud, eds., *Le Congrès de Rastatt (11 Juin 1798-28 Avril 1799): Correspondance Et Documents*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Paris: Alphonse Picard Et Fils, 1912), 1:12. Debry arrived as a replacement of Jean-Baptiste Treilhard on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1798 after Treilhard was elected director of the Conseil des Cinq-Cents.

<sup>253</sup> Address of Jean Debry to the Consulate, August 8, 1800, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:122. “une marche tortueuse.”

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:121. “Punctilio.”

Debry considered the gratuitous etiquette and protocol of the delegates of the Reich to be ridiculous, even insulting. He went so far as to suggest that the employment of excessively formal diplomatic procedures served “to hide the smallness of some men who are not tall but for their stilts.”<sup>255</sup> The fact that Debry interpreted punctilio as a crutch obscuring the other party’s motives and authentic negotiating position reveals something about the French diplomats as well. One of the consequences of the Revolution of 1789 was that by 1797 nearly all of France’s elite ambassadors – associated with the *Ancien Régime* – were dead or in refuge. Emissaries of the French Republic, including those at Rastatt except Roberjot, neither respected nor studied traditional eighteenth-century diplomatic customs and thus clashed with foreign envoys.

The friction underlying the communication between the French and German representatives, the Germans themselves divided, helps to explain the outcome of the Congress. There were three different groups of diplomats at the Congress. One group came from the larger secular principalities, which benefitted from centuries of experience with foreign relations and a pool of functionaries professionally trained in the well-established system of diplomatic education. The second group was composed of delegates from most of the small and more insignificant entities of the Reich – especially the Imperial Cities and Imperial Knights – that had never dealt with powers outside of their immediate vicinities before. Finally, the Republican French diplomats, inexperienced with the nuances of traditional diplomacy, made up the third group. At Rastatt, the assembly of so many envoys with such different expectations and backgrounds hindered the chances of successfully negotiating peace in 1799. The great powers chose instead to resort to another, more familiar instrument of state power to attain their objectives: the military.

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid. “pour cacher la petitesse de certains hommes qui n’ont de grand que leurs échasses.” A bit difficult to directly translate as “petitesse” has the double meaning of smallness and small-mindedness; “grand” also could mean either tall or great.

By the middle of 1798 the original 519 diplomats at Rastatt expanded to 640 as more and more entities sought representation. Of these hundreds of men, 118 of the most prominent lived in Schloss Rastatt, the palace in which negotiations actually took place.<sup>256</sup> The stark division between housing in and outside of the palace mirrors the split between representatives of the most powerful secular principalities and those from smaller and poorer territories. The former had extensive training in diplomatic practice at Knight or Noble Academies, *Ritterakademien*, in cities like Berlin, Vienna, Liegnitz, and Wolfenbüttel, or in France.<sup>257</sup> The latter had little to no experience in negotiating with foreign (extra-Empire) powers.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the power and prestige emanating out of Versailles seduced the sensibilities of foreign travelers and envoys. Soon, fluency in French and the adoption of Parisian culture and customs distinguished members of the erudite European public as cultivated and sophisticated.<sup>258</sup> For diplomats throughout Europe, knowledge of French courtly practices and *français* was an absolute necessity. In the Reich, *Ritterakademien* and universities trained future servants of the state in foreign languages, law, territorial administration, politics, and the etiquette of courtly protocol.<sup>259</sup>

An increasingly important class of bureaucrats in the Holy Roman Empire, the *noblesse de robe*, studied at such academies. They came to hold most of the lower ranks of diplomatic positions offered by secular principalities, which included the posts of secretary, embassy

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<sup>256</sup> Marco Müller, “Unterschiedlichste Nutzungen: Das Rastatter Schloss von 1771-1918,” in *Schloss Rastatt - Schloss Favorite: Menschen Geschichte, Architektur*, eds. Wolfgang Froese and Martin Walder (Gernsbach: Casimir Katz Verlag, 2011), 162. While there were 519 and 640 diplomats in Rastatt respectively in 1797 and 1798, the true number of foreigners was 807 and 940 counting servants or assistants of certain emissaries.

<sup>257</sup> Heidrun Kugeler, “‘Le Parfait Ambassadeur’. The Theory and Practice of Diplomacy in the Century following the Peace of Westphalia,” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2006), 221, [https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:be69b6b3-d886-4cc0-8ae3-884da096e267/download\\_file?file\\_format=pdf&safe\\_filename=D.Phil.Kugeler.finalised.pdf&type\\_of\\_work=Thesis](https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:be69b6b3-d886-4cc0-8ae3-884da096e267/download_file?file_format=pdf&safe_filename=D.Phil.Kugeler.finalised.pdf&type_of_work=Thesis).

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>259</sup> Scott Hamish, “Diplomatic culture in old regime Europe,” in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Scott Hamish and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 79.

secretary, and councilor of legation; a notion of hierarchy and career soon developed.<sup>260</sup>

Nevertheless, even as diplomatic assignments became more sought after over the course of the eighteenth century, it remained a relatively unattractive career prospect due to financial problems, isolation abroad, and the difficulty of political advancement at home.<sup>261</sup>

For the territorial nobility that tended to dominate the upper ranks of diplomatic posts, however, the situation looked different. Members of noble families vied for enviable ambassadorships, such as those at prestige embassies in cities like Madrid, Paris, and Vienna.<sup>262</sup> This elite class of diplomats always sought education in France rather than in the Holy Roman Empire. In fact, no fewer than 20% of noble families from the Electorate of Mainz sent their sons to study in Strasbourg or in other diplomatic academies at Pont-à-Mousson, Reims, and Besançon in the late eighteenth century.<sup>263</sup>

Strasbourg was home to Europe's most celebrated noble academy, the *École Diplomatique*, which welcomed and instructed young princes and future ministers and emissaries from across the Holy Roman Empire, France, Russia, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Britain, and the United Kingdom since its establishment in 1752.<sup>264</sup> Dignified participants at the Congress of Rastatt, such as Maximilian von Montgelas of Bavaria and Klemens Wenzel von Metternich<sup>265</sup> of Austria, had studied diplomatic practice in the French city.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Kugeler, “‘Le Parfait Ambassadeur’,” 216.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>262</sup> Hamish, “Diplomatic culture in old regime Europe,” 76.

<sup>263</sup> William D. Godsey, *Nobles and Nation in Central Europe: Free Imperial Knights in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 91. As an example, the representative of Mainz at Rastatt, Franz von Albin, studied at Pont-à-Mousson.

<sup>264</sup> Kugeler, “‘Le Parfait Ambassadeur’,” 228. The institution, officially called the *Institutum historico-politicum*, closed in 1790 due to the French Revolution. Some of its notable members include Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Johann Gottfried Herder.

<sup>265</sup> Son of Franz Georg Karl von Metternich and future Chancellor of the Austrian Empire.

<sup>266</sup> Joachim Whaley, *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648-1806*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2:523.

At Strasbourg and throughout France, European aristocrats who prepared to enter their state's foreign service developed a transnational collective identity centered around shared lifestyles, mores, and socio-cultural values.<sup>267</sup> They learned to speak in the refined language of the court and worked toward becoming the ideal French courtier-diplomat: an *homme du monde* and *honnête homme* who had perfected the *art de plaire* and the *art de la conversation* with an impeccably stylish appearance and insinuating manners.<sup>268</sup>

The core element of training involved analysis of archival materials and diplomatic documents.<sup>269</sup> In particular, foreign envoys were expected to have studied the most influential sources on diplomatic protocol, including Abraham van Wicquefort's *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions* (The Ambassador and his Functions) from 1681, François de Callières's *De la manière de négocier avec les souverains* (On the Manner of Negotiating with Sovereigns) from 1716, and Antoine Pecquet's treatise *Discours sur l'art de négocier* (Discourse on the Art of Negotiating) from 1737.<sup>270</sup> Finally, students learned about 'national styles' of negotiation as posited by diplomatic theorists. Accordingly, the Spanish were characterized by formality and 'gravité,' the Italians by cunning and refinement, the French by politeness and tact, and the Germans by stolidity and drunkenness.<sup>271</sup>

Maximilian von Montgelas' "Ansbacher Mémoire," presented to the Duke of Bavaria Maximilian Joseph on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1796, offers insight into the diplomatic practices of a medium-sized power in the Reich.<sup>272</sup> The letter – originally in French – proposed that Munich institute more bureaucratized measures and meritocratic elements into its Ministry of Foreign

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<sup>267</sup> Hamish, "Diplomatic culture in old regime Europe," 60

<sup>268</sup> Kugeler, "'Le Parfait Ambassadeur,'" 256-257. "homme du monde" literally means "man of the world" and implies a member of the elite; "honnête homme" means honest (respectable) man; "art de la conversation" means the art of conversation; "art de plaire" means the art of pleasing or tempting.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 223

<sup>270</sup> Hamish, "Diplomatic culture in old regime Europe," 62-63

<sup>271</sup> Kugeler, "'Le Parfait Ambassadeur,'" 257. Climate was pointed to as one of the explanations for such cultural differences.

<sup>272</sup> Montgelas, "Ansbacher Mémoire."

Affairs. For instance, Montgelas suggested that envoys stationed abroad be required to report back to the government regularly about topics such as the political and financial situation, the most important individuals, and the condition of the military of the state in which they were posted. He suggested that Bavaria have missions “in the courts of London, Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, Saint Petersburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Turin, Rome, and Constantinople” as well as in “almost every imperial circle.”<sup>273</sup> Montgelas seemed equally interested in affairs inside and outside of the Reich, writing that Munich needs alliances “inside and outside Germany,” and he was particularly adamant about the necessity of dutifully managing marriages and inheritances concerning the House of Wittelsbach.<sup>274</sup>

Secular principalities such as Bavaria could afford to have a network of agents across Europe trained in French diplomatic practices. August Wilhelm Rabe von Pappenheim was one such agent from Hessen-Darmstadt. Born into a wealthy knightly family in northern Hesse, Pappenheim studied law at the University of Göttingen before fighting in the American War of Independence with Hessian mercenaries from 1779-1784. After briefly serving the Dutch state, Pappenheim married Charlotte von Lersner, a member of the noble family Barkhaus in Hessen-Darmstadt, and thereafter worked in the service of Landgrave Ludwig X.<sup>275</sup>

Experience abroad and diplomatic training prepared Pappenheim for posts in Paris and Rastatt at the time of the Congress. Adroit at apprehending the motivations and true position of the French, he consequently succeeded in secret negotiations in Paris to expand Ludwig X’s territories. His reports arrived semi-weekly, and occasionally daily from Paris.<sup>276</sup> Oftentimes he

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid. “Man würde Gesandte an den Höfen von London, Wien, Berlin, Dresden, Sankt Petersburg, Stockholm, Kopenhagen, Turin, Rom und Konstantinopel unterhalten. ” “fast jedem Reichskreis.” He also mentioned Paris later on.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid. “innerhalb und außerhalb Deutschlands“

<sup>275</sup> Uta Ziegler and Eckhart G. Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs: Die Berichte Des hessen-darmstädtischen Gesandten August Wilhelm von Pappenheim aus Paris und Rastatt, 1798-1803, 1806*, (Darmstadt: Hessischen Historischen Kommission, 2007), viii.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., xii.

would alternate between writing in German and in French – sometimes mid-sentence. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1798, for instance, Pappenheim wrote “*Der Mann hat sehr viel zu thun, und dazu kommt, daß in jezigen Zeiten die Leute n’aiment pas à voir des étrangers chez eux, à cause du soupçon.*”<sup>277</sup>

The immense adaptability of envoys from secular principalities like Pappenheim and Montgelas, as well as their educational backgrounds, served them well in negotiations with the French.

By contrast, envoys from smaller and poorer entities of the Holy Roman Empire – such as those from the smaller Imperial Cities and the Imperial Knights – were generally only familiar with intra-Empire diplomacy at the *Reichstag* in Regensburg with its emphasis on hierarchy, aristocracy, and tradition. Such men generally only trained in German and Latin – not French – which inhibited their ability to successfully negotiate at Rastatt.<sup>278</sup> Baron Friedrich Karl von Moser decried how many Germans lacked “ ‘sufficient knowledge of the actual customs and laws of European diplomacy.’ ”<sup>279</sup> Legally, all entities of the Reich could have alliances with foreign powers on the condition that they not be directed against the interests of the Emperor or Empire, but in practice only the wealthy principalities could attract the interest of extra-Empire allies.<sup>280</sup>

The French plenipotentiaries described their impressions of both the representatives of the secular princes and of other polities. In a letter from July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Roberjot wrote Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, “The princes who have negotiated with us are quite well prepared; their agents leave us no doubt in this respect; but the

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<sup>277</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Franz Wilhelm von Barkhaus, June 1, 1798, in Ziegler and Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs*, 22-23. “The man [speaking in third person about himself] has a great deal to do and, in addition, in today’s times people do not like to see strangers at their house due to suspicion.” Pappenheim is referencing the difficulty of attaining information due to an atmosphere of fear in Paris.

<sup>278</sup> Hamish, “Diplomatic culture in old regime Europe,” 67

<sup>279</sup> As quoted in Kugeler, “‘Le Parfait Ambassadeur’,” 221. Moser actually planned to create of a separate school as part of the University of Göttingen to teach students about European diplomacy. His proposal failed and his second attempt, a ‘Staats- und Cantzley-Academie’ in the small principality of Hesse-Hanau only lasted from 1749-1751 due to financial problems.

<sup>280</sup> John G. Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation: The Holy Roman Empire as Idea and Reality, 1763-1806* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), viii

representatives of the ecclesiastical electors and the fickleness of the deputies of the free and Imperial Cities always leave us in perplexity and uncertainty as to the results of the sessions of the Deputation of the Empire.”<sup>281</sup> In other words, the French preferred negotiations with the professionally trained diplomats of the wealthier middling and large powers of the Empire than with envoys of states considered to be outdated and backwards – the Imperial Cities and ecclesiastical states. While the poor diplomatic skills of the weaker states were not the chief factor behind their eventual dissolution, they certainly did not help their cause.

The fact that so few of the representatives on the German side of negotiations knew French contributed to the disagreeable atmosphere at the Congress. Where the language should have been clear and precise, it was often murky and ambiguous. Proceedings were exceptionally slow, and although the Congress began on December 9<sup>th</sup>, the first 15 meetings only concerned formalities so that it was not until January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1798, when real negotiations began.<sup>282</sup> In his book reflecting on Rastatt, Haller devoted a chapter to the challenges of negotiations entitled “Slowness and Circuitousness of the Nature of the Sessions.”<sup>283</sup> In it, he described a congregation from December 27<sup>th</sup> when the parties finally established a consensus about language and calendar procedures:

They [Germans] adopt the notes of the plenipotence in German and theirs be in French, without requiring that either the one or the other side be given in translation...the plenipotentiaries insisted on their appropriate titles, as far as the French wished to maintain the title ‘Citoyen,’ and (since the French Ministers, according to the conventional manner, refrained from putting aside the German calendar), also the date

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<sup>281</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, July 29, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:251. “Les princes qui ont traité avec nous sont tout à fait bien disposés ; leurs agents ne nous laissent aucun doute à cet égard ; mais les représentants des électeurs ecclésiastiques et la versatilité des députés des villes libres et impériales nous laissent toujours dans la perplexité et l’incertitude sur les résultats des séances de la Députation de l’Empire.”

<sup>282</sup> Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès De Rastatt*, 1:4.

<sup>283</sup> Karl Ludwig von Haller, *Geheime Geschichte der Rastatter Friedensverhandlungen in Verbindung mit den Staatshändeln dieser Zeit: Nebst den wichtigsten Urkunden*. Vol. 1. 6 vols. (Germanien, 1799), 280. “Langsamkeit und Weitläufigkeit der Behandlungsart.”



was no longer denoted according to the French calendar on the German side, but just according to the German [calendar]<sup>284</sup>

Communication problems at the Congress did not end there, however. While the secular princes did fare better in negotiations with Paris, negotiations were still difficult as a result of Republican France's dearth of diplomatic experience. In a clear break with pre-Revolution diplomacy, the French were prone to seeing foreign diplomats as adversaries to be overcome rather than actors with whom one could compromise as a result of ideology and the siege mentality that had developed in the Directory. Where in the past envoys emphasized give-and-take in negotiations, the French stated and held to unwavering demands.<sup>285</sup> As the German delegate Johann Ludwig Klüber put it, Bonaparte did not come to Rastatt to negotiate, but rather "to dictate."<sup>286</sup>

German delegates did not take the new approach well and derided the brusqueness and cavalier nature of the French ambassadors, something they termed "*fierté républicaine*."<sup>287</sup> Over the course of the Congress, instances of such *fierté républicaine* soured French-German relations. On one occasion, the Queen of Prussia, Louise von Mecklenburg-Strelitz, travelled to Rastatt to bless a good outcome to the peace accords. When she entered the theater in the palace, all of the diplomats stood up out of respect for her grace except for Jean Debry. He stubbornly

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid. Full quotation: "In diesen Noten ward nach der Anzeige der Plenipotenz vom 27. Dec. das bey Friedensverhandlungen mit dem deutschen Reich hergebrachte Idioma abermals gerettet, indem, nach der mit den französischen Gesandten getroffenen Abrede, sie die No ten der Plenipotenz in deutsche Sprache annahmen und die ihrigen in französischer Sprache abgaben, ohne daß weder von dem einen noch dem andern Theile eine Uebersetzung verlangt oder gegeben ward; die Curialien aber wurden von beyden Seiten nach dem Gesetz der Reciprocität gegeben, so daß die Plenipotenz auf den ihr gebührenden Titel bestand, so fern die französischen Minister den Titel Citoyens zu erhalten wünschten, und, (da die französischen Minister, nach der zuerst hergebrachten Weise, die deutsche Zeitrechnung beyzusetzen unterließen), auch deutscher Seits das Datum nicht mehr nach der französischen Zeitrechnung, sondern blos nach der deutschen bezeichnete." Here, "beyzusetzen" is translated as to put aside for clarity in the text's purpose, but the word really means "to bury." The French calendar was developed in the Revolution while the German is simply the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>285</sup> Hamish, "Diplomatic culture in old regime Europe," 83

<sup>286</sup> Johann Ludwig Klüber, *Das neue Licht, oder Rastatter Friedens-Congreß-Aussichten* (Rastatt, 1798), 6. Full quotation: "Buonaparte kommt, der nicht gewohnt ist, zu negociiren, sondern zu befehlen."

<sup>287</sup> Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès De Rastatt*, 1:16-17. "Republican pride."

remained seated to demonstrate his hatred of monarchy.<sup>288</sup> Debry earned the most contempt for such diplomatic insults: Klemens Wenzel von Metternich called him the “Quintessence of boorishness” and van Dijk called him “first-class rude.”<sup>289</sup> German impressions of other French diplomats were only slightly better. One anonymous German delegate best summarized his experience when he wrote, “The French seem to be seeking every opportunity to demean the [imperial] deputation.”<sup>290</sup>

Representatives of the Holy Roman Empire even found the French clothing too casual for such a ceremonial event: the French wore *culottes courtes* whereas the Germans sported long, formal *pantalons*.<sup>291</sup> The French criticized the Germans for how they looked as well. They mocked the Austrian diplomat von und zu Lehrbach, for instance, for his angular forms, for his gait that was “like a perpetual jig,” and for his wig that “aspired to the sky like a lightning rod.”<sup>292</sup> That which the Germans considered respectful and proper – the punctilio so criticized by Debry – the French scorned. Roberjot wrote that “the enemies of the French Republic sought to retard the operations of the Congress of Rastatt...the means that they employed were to prolong the deliberations by giving rise to minute difficulties at every moment.”<sup>293</sup> Although certainly it may have been part of the Imperial Delegation’s strategy, specifically Austrian strategy, to extend the Congress until the armies on the right bank of the Rhine could recuperate, many of the

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid. The editors cite *Mémoires du prince de Metternich* (1880) for both quotations. “Quintessence de rustre” “Bourru de première classe.” Van Dijk was the representative of the Batavian Republic at Rastatt.

<sup>290</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congress zu Rastatt* (1798). “Die Franzosen scheinen jede Gelegenheit hervorzusuchen, um die Deputation herabzuwürdigen.”

<sup>291</sup> Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès De Rastatt*, 1:16-17. Short pants vs long trousers.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 1:46. It is unclear which diplomat wrote this; the editors cite *Liebensbilder aus dem Befreiungskriege* (1841). “semblable à une gigue perpétuelle” “aspirant vers le ciel comme un paratonnerre.”

<sup>293</sup> Claude Roberjot to Jean-Baptiste Treilhard, April 13, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:20. “les ennemis de la République française cherchaient à retarder les opérations du congrès de Rastatt...les moyens qu’ils employaient étaient de faire prolonger les délibérations en faisant naître à chaque instant des difficultés minutieuses.”

“minute difficulties” the French plenipotentiaries complained of were likely diplomatic formalities.

A further challenge stemming from the French side of negotiations was the weak relationship between the ambassadors and Paris. According to Debry’s address, the French Directory “governed poorly,” gave contradictory directions, seemed to be jealous of the diplomats in Rastatt, and preferred renewing military hostilities over concluding a secure peace.<sup>294</sup> Certainly there were ulterior motives behind Debry’s criticism of the Directory, as he now served Napoleon who had just eight months prior overthrown the previous government in the Coup of 18 Brumaire. Nevertheless, Debry’s account was corroborated by others. Haller, for instance, contended that Napoleon “declared at the outset that the plenipotent ministers of the French Republic could not negotiate with the deputies of the Reich based on the inadequate authority imparted to them.”<sup>295</sup>

Talleyrand went even further in his criticism of the Directory. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he would have been privy to the intricacies of the French government. In an article published in the paper, *Moniteur*, on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1799, Talleyrand wrote:

In the position of the Republic, one is naturally inclined to accuse the Minister of Foreign Relations [Talleyrand]; so we hear a lot of insinuations against him. If one wanted to reflect for a moment on what political relations might be, what causes them to vary, and what influence a minister can exert in this respect, it would not be long before he convinced himself, especially with some notions of the manner in which the Directory behaved before the time of the 29<sup>th</sup> of Prairial [June 17<sup>th</sup>], that, whatever talent is rightly supposed to the minister who has this department, it has been an absolute impossibility for him to give a direction to affairs...The affairs of Italy were so exclusively in the Directory that the agents did not even correspond with him [Talleyrand]<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Address of Jean Debry to the Consulate, August 8, 1800, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès De Rastatt*, 1:115. “il avait mal gouverné”

<sup>295</sup> Haller, *Geheime Geschichte*, 276. Full quotation: “Uebrigens verrieth er die Absicht, die Friedensunterhandlungen selbst betreiben zu wollen, durch weiter nichts, als daß er gleich anfangs erklärte, daß die bevollmächtigten Minister der französischen Republik mit den Deputirten des Reichs, auf die ihm mitgetheilten unzureichenden Vollmachten, nicht unterhandeln könnten.”

<sup>296</sup> Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord’s article in *Moniteur*, June 30, 1799, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès De Rastatt*, 1:14. “Dans la position où se trouve la République, on est naturellement porté à accuser le ministre des relations extérieures ; aussi entend-on diriger beaucoup d’insinuations contre lui. Si l’on voulait réfléchir un moment sur ce que peuvent être les relations politiques, sur les causes qui les font varier, et sur

The disorder of the Directory compromised the effectiveness of the French foreign ministry and, consequently, the effectiveness of the French ambassadors at the Congress of Rastatt.

At the end of the eighteenth century in the palace of a quiet hamlet, a diverse group of diplomats met to organize peace. A squadron of police surveilled the town, preventing the infiltration by foreigners uninvited to the Congress, regulating the consumption of alcohol, and generally enforcing order.<sup>297</sup> Yet they could not remove the underlying friction which would lead to the failure of negotiations. Classically trained princely delegates best managed discussions with the French, though they were taken aback by the haughtiness and blunt demands of the French plenipotentiaries. Representatives of poor and small states had difficulties communicating to an enemy that neither spoke nor appreciated their diplomatic language. For their part, the French envoys were novices to the art of negotiation and suffered from the uncertain and contradictory demands of Paris. Miscommunication and tension complicated the mission of the Congress. The Austrians refused to offer a military escort to the French ambassadors leaving Rastatt in 1799<sup>298</sup> and the French envoys were murdered, a fitting end to a Congress so rife with discord. In large part due to difficulties at negotiating in Rastatt, many actors instead went to Paris to bribe the French.

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l'influence qu'un ministre peut exercer à cet égard, on ne tarderait pas à se convaincre, surtout avec quelques notions de la manière dont le Directoire se conduisait avant l'époque du 29 prairial, que, quelque talent qu'on suppose avec raison au ministre qui a ce département, il lui a été d'une impossibilité absolue de donner une direction aux affaires. ...Les affaires d'Italie étaient si exclusivement au Directoire que les agents n'y correspondaient même pas avec lui." The 29 Prairial refers to the day before the bloodless coup in the Directory the following day.

<sup>297</sup> Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799*, 279-280.

<sup>298</sup> Lamerville, *Discours Prononcé Au Conseil Des Cinq-cents*.

### *Negotiations Dessous-de-Table*

In 1751 the absolutist Duke of Württemberg, Karl Eugen, struck a deal with the French. In exchange for 160,000 florins, the Duke agreed to loan 3,000 troops to Louis XV under certain conditions: Eugen would quarter and supply the troops over winter, but they were forbidden from attacking the Reich or the Emperor. In addition, Eugen agreed to represent French interests at the *Reichstag* – namely, Württemberg would oppose the election of Joseph II as Emperor.<sup>299</sup> The blatant bribery was hardly scandalous.

Bribery had long been a characteristic of diplomacy within the Holy Roman Empire, with its plethora of fiefs, titles, statuses, and territories. Unlike the contemporary connotation, however, bribery was an accepted and expected social custom in the Reich. To become Kaiser, candidates required enormous sums of money both to attain electors' votes and to rule effectively. The election of Joseph I (1678-1711), for instance, cost an incredible 3,000,000 gulden.<sup>300</sup> Dukes, princes, and counts would also pay the Emperor to annex fiefs and Imperial Cities.<sup>301</sup> Becoming the ruler of an ecclesiastical state, meanwhile, almost always involved bribery as those positions were elected and not hereditary.<sup>302</sup>

During the French Revolutionary Wars, bribery remained a common feature of diplomacy and played an important role in determining the survival of any political entity. The secularization and mediatization of territories on the right bank of the Rhine had been agreed upon at Rastatt and came to fruition in subsequent concessions. The specifics of compensation, however, can be partly explained by negotiations *dessous-de-table*. An analysis of the details of

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<sup>299</sup> Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793*, 205.

<sup>300</sup> Gerhard J Seifner, "The Hanoverian Embassy in Vienna 1764-1772," (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 1982), 49.

<sup>301</sup> Sigrid Hirbodan, "Ein Territorium entsteht: Von der Mitte des 13. bis zum Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts" (Class lecture, Württemberg im Mittelalter, Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany, May 5, 2018). One of many examples is when Count Ulrich III bought Tübingen in 1342.

<sup>302</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 5. Members of a permanently constituted council, called a *Kapitel*, elected rulers with broad governing powers.

bribery explain why certain *Reichsstädte* survived, why the *Reichsritterschaft* all but disappeared, and why certain secular princes were overcompensated for their losses. Moreover, the actions of the ecclesiastical states demonstrate the limits of this risky political tool, which could bring both dishonor and disrepute.

Of the 51 Imperial Cities before the French Revolution, 47 met their demise over the course of the French Revolutionary Wars.<sup>303</sup> In nearly every case, it was not the French but rather a neighboring secular ruler who incorporated the city into his territory. Financial negotiations elucidate the reason that certain cities maintained their independence, while others could not. After the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss*, only Lübeck, Hamburg, Bremen, Frankfurt am Main, Nuremberg, and Augsburg survived as sovereign cities; following the Congress of Vienna, only the former four cities were independent.<sup>304</sup>

The poor financial state and political delegitimization of the *Reichsstädte* has already explained much of the reason for their mediatization. Those cities which did endure all had one thing in common: they were wealthy and, consequently, bribed the French.<sup>305</sup> In addition to money, the cities guaranteed that they would remain neutral. Nuremberg, for example, sent the diplomats Jobst Wilhelm Karl von Tucher and Justus Christian Kießling to Paris and, through economic negotiations, the diplomats “brought with them the assurance that Nuremberg’s independence should be maintained.”<sup>306</sup> As another example, the representative of Bremen at Rastatt, Georg Gröning, realized that the Congress would not help his city, so he left for Paris. There, he secretly negotiated a monetary bribe as well as the promise of neutrality so that the city

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<sup>303</sup> Marc Girardin, *L’Allemagne Politique Et Littéraire* (Bruxelles: Société Belge De Librairie Hauman Et C., 1845), 13.

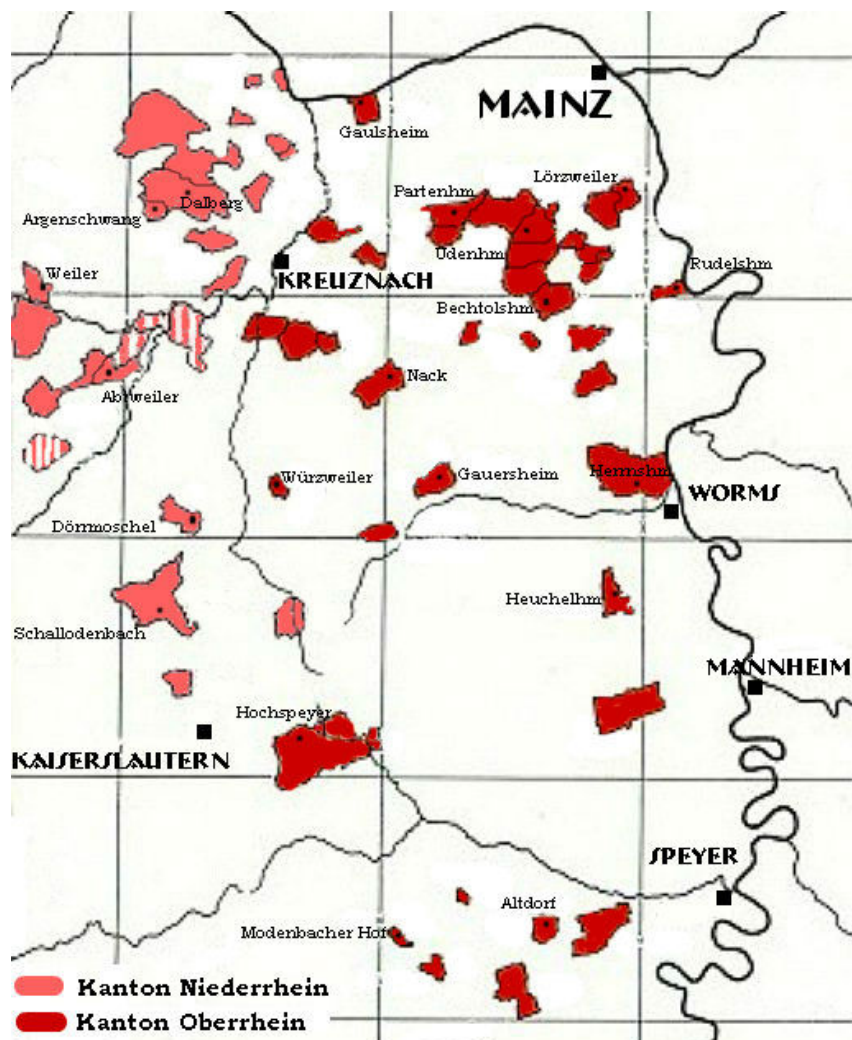
<sup>304</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 194.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>306</sup> Leonhard M. Marx, *Geschichte der Reichsstadt Nürnberg* (Nuremberg, 1861), 402. “brachten die Versicherung mit, daß Nürnbergs Selbständigkeit aufrecht erhalten werden solle.” As an aside, the sister of Jobst von Tucher, Maria Helena Susanna Tucher von Simmelsdorf, married Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel!

would remain autonomous.<sup>307</sup> Roberjot sent a letter to Talleyrand on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1798, in which he confirmed that negotiation as well as the economic importance of Bremen for France as reasons for its independence.<sup>308</sup>

Detail of the Imperial Knights Territories South of Mainz 1789<sup>309</sup>



*The territories belonging to the Reichsritterschaft were widely dispersed and often miniscule in size. Above, one can see the territories of the Imperial Knights between the cities of Mainz and Speyer on the Rhine. Lands were often subdivided between family members or jointly ruled with other knightly families.*

<sup>307</sup> Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:78.

<sup>308</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, October 4, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 2:15.

<sup>309</sup> Lubiesque, "Reichsritterschaft Territories Rhineland, 1789," map, Wikipedia, January 25, 2013, accessed March 28, 2019, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d6/Reichsritterschaft\\_territories\\_Rhineland\\_1789.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d6/Reichsritterschaft_territories_Rhineland_1789.jpg).

The Imperial Knights at times also tried bribery to maintain their status. By the late eighteenth century, the knights controlled more than 1,600 fiefs in the Empire with about 450,000 inhabitants.<sup>310</sup> The *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss* specifically called for the preservation of Knightly prerogatives largely because Knights had paid large sums of money to the French.<sup>311</sup> Yet the Knights did lose their sovereignty which begs the question: why was bribery less successful for this corporate group?

The answer relates to the nature of the Knights and their properties. While often individually wealthy, most Knights could not match the economic power of their larger neighbors, who could outcompete them in the bribery game (see map on the previous page). But perhaps more significant is that the loss of political power did not mean the loss of economic power for Knights and nobles, unlike for princes and Imperial Cities. Indeed, families who lost sovereignty may have been hostile to the process of change, but their power was not sufficient to translate into active or even armed resistance because they generally maintained their economic and social statuses.<sup>312</sup>

Around half of the nobles from the left bank of the Rhine returned and arranged themselves in a demonstrative way, such as by accepting administrative positions or French citizenship.<sup>313</sup> One decision from December 6<sup>th</sup> at the Congress of Rastatt confirmed that “the immediates who do not have voice at the diet [i.e. the Knights] retain their estates in territories that have become French.”<sup>314</sup> Various Free Imperial Knights, such as the Coudenhove family, also emigrated to the Austrian Empire.<sup>315</sup> There, they maintained their traditional noble identity

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<sup>310</sup> Peter H. Wilson, *Heart of Europe* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 576.

<sup>311</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 229.

<sup>312</sup> Andreas Fahrmeir, “Centralisation versus Particularism in the ‘Third Germany’,” In *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe*, ed. Michael Rowe, (New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 116.

<sup>313</sup> Godsey, *Nobles and Nation in Central Europe*, 97. One example is Emmerich von Dalberg.

<sup>314</sup> Ultimatum of December 6, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 2:218. Full quotation: “on a accordé que les immédiats qui n’ont pas voix à la diète conservassent leurs domaines dans les territoires devenus français.”

<sup>315</sup> Godsey, *Nobles and Nation in Central Europe*, 187.



and also received material advantages through positions at the Court, army, and collegiate foundations.<sup>316</sup> One lucrative Viennese institution that came to be dominated by nobles was the Schwarzenberg Bank.<sup>317</sup> In other territories – with the notable exception of Prussia<sup>318</sup> – secular rulers appeased the Knights whom they incorporated by granting them ownership of their lands as private property.<sup>319</sup> Whether the Knights were promised administrative positions, the maintenance of their noble identity, or economic rights, bribery played an important role in ensuring the ultimate demise of Knightly sovereignty in the Empire.

For secular princes, the Revolutionary Wars were both a threat and an opportunity. While the Congress at Rastatt sought to negotiate peace between France and the entire Empire, individual rulers sought separate treaties with the French in order to procure greater compensation than could be negotiated at Rastatt. Already in 1796 secret conventions with France had taken place to divvy out ecclesiastical territories: on August 5<sup>th</sup> Prussia ensured it would be granted Münster; on August 7<sup>th</sup>, Württemberg negotiated its acquisition of Oberkirch, Zwiefalten, and Ellwangen; on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Sigismund von Reitzenstein ensured Baden would expand into Reichenau, Konstanz, Öhningen, Ettenheim, and part of Speyer; similar treaties took place with Hesse and Nassau.<sup>320</sup>

Rulers sometimes tried to present their case to the French in Rastatt: the diplomat Antoine Marie Chamans de Lavallette wrote, for instance, “I often met the secretaries of the legation of the little princes of Germany, who slipped by MM. Treilhard and Bonnier...these

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>317</sup> Dana Štefanová, “Adelige Wirtschaftsaktivitäten und Aufklärung: Eine Fallstudie zur „Schwarzenberg Bank“ (1787-1813),” in *Das Reich und seine Territorialstaaten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Wolfgang Schmale and Harm Klueting (Münster: Lit Verlag Münster, 2004), 146.

<sup>318</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 228-229. See the Prussian treatment of Knights from Ansbach-Bayreuth between 1792-1797 in spite of protests from the Knights and from Vienna.

<sup>319</sup> Fahrmeir, “Centralisation versus Particularism in the ‘Third Germany,’” 115.

<sup>320</sup> Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:31.

secret maneuvers became more frequent.”<sup>321</sup> However, the most successful princes did not negotiate in Rastatt, but secretly in Paris. An anonymous participant at Rastatt noted sardonically how “Most of the interested powers have their agents in Paris, where everyone’s private interest takes precedence at the expense of the public cause.”<sup>322</sup> He reported how someone told him in even clearer terms how “one can do a lot in Paris, but it costs money!”<sup>323</sup> Another attendant at Rastatt, Johann Ludwig Klüber, confirmed that it is best to negotiate “not in Rastatt, but in Paris – most securely with a loan of ducats and old German carolins [d’or].”<sup>324</sup>

One of the most striking cases of bribery through secret negotiations involved August Wilhelm von Pappenheim, the representative of Hessen-Darmstadt in Paris. Throughout his correspondences, Pappenheim did not directly refer to bribery, but wrote using the codeword “Cassa” or “arguments irresistibles.”<sup>325</sup> His instructions by his Landgrave Ludwig X were to go to Paris and determine whether the French would be open to such a negotiation. With the express goal of expanding Hessen-Darmstadt’s territory and population, Pappenheim wrote to Ludwig X on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1798: “This official compensation-promise will then be followed by a lump sum payment, but the remainder of the payment will remain pending the actual acquisition of the new territory.”<sup>326</sup> In that letter, Pappenheim continued to outline the price: Hessen-Darmstadt would pay no less than 12 or 13,000 Louis d’or and no more than 50,000 Louis d’or.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Souvenirs et Mémoires of Antoine Marie Chamans de Lavallette, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:32. “je rencontrais souvent les secrétaires de légation des petits princes d’Allemagne se glissant chez MM. Treilhard et Bonnier... Ces manœuvres secrètes devinrent plus fréquentes.”

<sup>322</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congress zu Rastadt* (1798), 27. “Die meisten der dabei interessirten Mächte haben ihre Agenten in Paris, wo jeder sein Privatinteresse auf Kosten der öffentlichen Sache berreibt.”

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. “man kann in Paris viel thun, aber es kostet Geld!”

<sup>324</sup> Klüber, *Das neue Licht, oder Rastatter Friedens-Congreß-Aussichten*, 9-10. Full quotation: “Wer von den Reichsständen den Handel verstehen will, negociirt unterdessen nicht in Rastatt, sondern in Paris – am sichersten mit einer Anleihe von Ducaten und alten teutschen Carolins.” Ducats and carolins d’or were types of currency.

<sup>325</sup> Ziegler and Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs*, xv.

<sup>326</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Landgraf Ludwig X von Hessen-Darmstadt, March 23, 1798, in Ziegler and Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs*, 6. “Diesem officiellen Entschädigungs-Versprechen wird alsdann eine Stückzahlung folgen müssen, der Rest der Zahlung aber bis zur wirklichen Besitznehmung der neuen Acquisition ausgesetzt bleiben.”

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

In another letter from Pappenheim to Franz Wilhelm von Barkhaus on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Pappenheim was confident that the negotiation would work out and remarked that negotiations at Rastatt were only a farce. He wrote that the “Elector of Mainz, the Elector of Cologne, [and] the Elector of Trier will be duped” for not negotiating in Paris.<sup>328</sup> In addition to payment, Pappenheim asserted in a letter to Barkhaus from April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1798, that he also “proposed a treaty of alliance between the French Republic and Monseigneur the Landgrave, following which we promise perfect neutrality in case of war.”<sup>329</sup>

The French were open to secret negotiations and in a letter between Roberjot and Talleyrand on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1799, Roberjot wrote how Pappenheim’s demarche was courageous and he hoped “that the government hears him with goodwill.”<sup>330</sup> Already by October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Roberjot informed Talleyrand that “The princes who already negotiated with the Republic” were prepared to join their military forces with those of the French in case war broke out.<sup>331</sup> By 1803, Pappenheim’s efforts paid off and Ludwig X was assigned an extra 200,000 inhabitants into his expanded domain.<sup>332</sup>

Bribery, of course, was not without limits. Secular princes could generally enter separate secret negotiations with the French, the Austrians, or the Prussians – depending upon which seemed most powerful at the time. Yet the ecclesiastical states were without this option, as Revolutionary France’s attacks on clerical privileges precluded good relations between the

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<sup>328</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Franz Wilhelm von Barkhaus, May 10, 1798, in Ziegler and Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs*, 22-23. Full quotation: “Qu’on ne craigne la guerre. Tout ce qui se fait au congrès de Rastadt & à ailleurs, ne sont que des grimaux, en sentent comme R.R. ou en foire. - L’Electeur de Mayence, l’Electeur de Cologne, l’Electeur de Trèves seront duppe.” All of these electors were ecclesiastical states.

<sup>329</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Franz Wilhelm von Barkhaus, April 18, 1798, in Ziegler and Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs*, 15. “proposai un Traité d’alliance entre la République Française et Monseigneur le Landgrave, à la suite duquel nous promettons une neutralité parfaite en cas de guerre.”

<sup>330</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, February 4, 1799, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 2:349-350. “que le gouvernement l’entende avec bienveillance.”

<sup>331</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, October 20, 1798, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 2:63-64. Full quotation: “Les princes qui ont déjà traité avec la République sont disposés à réunir leurs forces aux siennes dans le cas d’une rupture.”

<sup>332</sup> Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677-1793*, 90.

Church and Paris. Moreover, while secular rulers such as Karl Theodor of Bavaria and Margrave Karl Friedrich of Baden restrained French royalist émigrés in their territories, ecclesiastical states often did the opposite. The Archbishop Elector of Trier, for instance, offered the brothers of the slain French King, the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois, Schloss Schönbornlust in Koblenz; the palace was soon called *klein Versailles*, little Versailles, and acted as a headquarters for counterrevolutionary activities in the early 1790s.<sup>333</sup> Protestant Prussia, too, was unlikely to accept bribes from the Catholic ecclesiastical states as it stood to gain from their secularization.

Archbishoprics, bishoprics, abbeys, and other ecclesiastical entities thus turned to the Catholic House of Habsburg. While certainly looking out for its own interests – see, for instance, the annexation of Salzburg – Austria was the most likely among the *grandes puissances* to support states facing secularization, especially if money was involved. In a letter from November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Roberjot wrote to Talleyrand about the ecclesiastic states: “You must know that the Emperor has promised them protection. For four months, in return for so great a favor, they have offered considerable sums, which they pass to the bank or to the treasury. It returned to us that they had offered fifty million, that part of this sum had already been paid.”<sup>334</sup>

In another letter to Talleyrand on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1798, Roberjot reported that in order to attain funds to fill the Emperor’s coffers, “the clergy have joined hands throughout the Empire to cut down the forests and have ordered extraordinary deforestation.”<sup>335</sup> It is likely that the economic benefit procured through the ecclesiastical states contributed to Austria’s infamous

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<sup>333</sup> Whaley *From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648 -1806*, 2:567. The French eventually destroyed the palace and it was never rebuilt.

<sup>334</sup> Claude Roberjot to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, November 13, 1799, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 2:130. “Il faut que vous sachiez que l’Empereur leur a promis une protection signalée. Depuis quatre mois, en retour d’une si grande faveur, ils ont offert des sommes considérables, qu’ils font passer à la banque ou au trésor. Il nous est revenu qu’ils avaient offert cinquante millions, qu’une partie de cette somme avait été déjà versée.”

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 178. Full quotation: “Pour faire argent de tout et remplir les coffres de l’Empereur, le clergé s’est donné la main dans toute l’étendue de l’Empire pour faire abattre les forêts et ordonner des coupes de bois extraordinaires que plusieurs titulaires possèdent en assez grande quantité à la rive droite.”

delaying tactics at the Congress of Rastatt, as well as its antagonist stance toward secularization as a means of compensation.<sup>336</sup>

Although bribery was pervasive, it was never an explicit, official justification for a state's actions; offering a bribe was dangerous, as it could be interpreted as insulting and dishonorable if made public. This explains Pappenheim's vast use of codewords<sup>337</sup> as well as his promemoria which stated, "The diplomatic agent who goes to Paris must first appear as a private individual and seek to enter into conversation with the French Government indirectly, for any other attempt could jeopardize the dignity of his High Prince's Serenity and the personal safety of His highest agents."<sup>338</sup> Only after said agent could be certain that the French were open to entering into secret negotiations would he present an official request through a memorandum from the government of Hessen-Darmstadt.

At least one anonymous representative at the Congress of Rastatt presented himself as one who would never accept such dishonor. In a scathing criticism of his fellow German diplomats, he described how the French sell cities in the most degrading of ways. "See there a city that would be for sale, if only there were a buyer" the French teased, to which the German princes eagerly presented great sums of money.<sup>339</sup> The author claimed that if he were offered the wealthiest Abbey in Swabia, he would decline for, "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*"<sup>340</sup> In his address from August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1800, Jean Debry confirmed that there were many such honorable men at the Congress of Rastatt – particularly those who came from small Germany states. He was

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<sup>336</sup> Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 90.

<sup>337</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>338</sup> August Wilhelm von Pappenheim to Landgraf Ludwig X von Hessen-Darmstadt, March 23, 1798, in Ziegler and Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs*, 5-6. "Der diplomatische Agent, der nach Paris geht, muss anfänglich als Privatperson erscheinen und mit dem französischen Gouvernement indirecte in Unterhaltung zu treten suchen, denn ein jeder anderer Versuch könnte die Würde seiner Hochfürstlichen Durchlaucht und die persönliche Sicherheit Höchstdero Agenten aufs Spiel setzen."

<sup>339</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt*, 5. "Siehe da eine Stadt, die zu verkaufen wäre, wenn sich nur ein Käufer fände."

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 92. The Latin phrase is from Virgil's *Aeneid* and means "I fear Greeks bearing gifts."

impressed how much they “speak of liberty, of instruction, of enlightenment, of the rights of nations, as the true philosophers, the sincere friends of humanity, have always spoken of it,” and Debry respected their authentic sense of justice.<sup>341</sup>

The French Republic and its awe-inspiring army had the most influence on the future reorganization of Central Europe. Its diplomats forged internal division among the representatives of the Empire by tempting secular rulers with compensation via their wealthy neighbors. To survive and expand, German states often turned to bribery. That risky political tool elucidates some of the specific incongruencies in compensation and the survival of certain Imperial Cities. The inability of actors like the Knights and the ecclesiastical states to effectively bribe the French explains in part their ultimate demise. Yet the illegitimacy of bribery as a justification for annexation means that its significance must not be overstated: it serves, rather, to nuance the specific details of a compensation plan which largely developed to serve the interests of the most powerful of states.

In April 1799, the Congress of Rastatt came to an inauspicious end. Conflicts, miscommunication, and perceived chaos confused and complicated the process of peace. Three types of diplomats clashed, and those willing and able to enter into separate negotiations profited the most. Even when many Germans authentically believed in the Empire or at least in nationalism, such participants at the Congress usually had the smallest sway. By contrast, those who believed that Rastatt would lead to nothing fulfilled that very belief by turning to bribery and secret negotiations. It became progressively clear that the fate of Central Europe would not be determined by ideals or by a just process, but by venality and the demands of power.

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<sup>341</sup> Address of Jean Debry to the Consulate, August 8, 1800, in Montarlot and Pingaud, *Le Congrès de Rastatt*, 1:141. Full quotation: “parmi les ministres étrangers ou les membres des petits États d’Allemagne, j’ai connu des hommes faits pour marquer avec distinction sous tel gouvernement qu’ils eussent vécu, appréciant dans la Révolution les individus et les choses avec justesse et une impartialité que j’ai rarement remarquées en France, et parlant de liberté, d’instruction, de lumières, de droits des nations, comme en ont parlé de tout temps les vrais philosophes, les sincères amis de l’humanité.”

## Conclusion

“It is a new production of the genius of evil, it is the parricide of nations, it is all possible crimes united in a single crime!”<sup>342</sup> It was in this language that the former President of the Council of Five Hundred – the lower house of the French legislature – Jean-Marie Heurtault de Lamerville spoke to the French government following the assassinations. Addressing Austria, Lamerville claimed, “Let us not dwell on the innumerable wars which your particular ambition has aroused against the honest and brave Germany, oppressed by you, and who hates your principles.”<sup>343</sup> The crime would have consequences. Lamerville ominously concluded that Bonnier and Roberjot “will be avenged! They will be avenged!”<sup>344</sup>

The Austrians would be avenged in the subsequent decade. Yet the more enduring significance of the Congress of Rastatt was its consequences for the reorganization of Central Europe. Not Austria, but its closest imperial allies – the ecclesiastical states, the Imperial Knights, and the Imperial Cities – would suffer the most from the French Revolutionary and later the Napoleonic Wars. A few secular princes, in conjunction with the tacit approval – or at least indifference – of Austria and Prussia in addition to the full support of France extinguished the power of the other estates and, consequently, destroyed the old system. The new order irrevocably shattered *deutsche Freiheit*. What Imperial City, Imperial Knight, or ecclesiastical state could honestly believe that its corporate privileges would be secure in Europe post-1799?

In many ways, the Congress represented the end of the Holy Roman Empire, even if it hobbled on until 1806. The negotiations legitimized the secularization of the ecclesiastical states

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<sup>342</sup> Jean-Marie Heurtault De Lamerville, *Discours Prononcé Au Conseil Des Cinq-cents, Par Heurtault-Lamerville, Ex-president, Sur l'assassinat Des Ministres De La République Française à Rastadt* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1799). “C’est une production nouvelle du génie du mal, c’est le parricide des nations, ce sont tous les crimes possibles réunis dans un seul crime !”

<sup>343</sup> Ibid. “Ne nous appesantissons pas sur les guerres innombrables que ton ambition particulière a suscitées à la probe et brave Allemagne, opprimée par toi, et qui déteste tes principes.”

<sup>344</sup> Ibid. “Ils seront vengés ! ils seront vengés !”

and the mediatization of other sovereign entities. Of course, the decisions reached at Rastatt were not truly radical, even if they were viewed as a tragedy by many Germans. Trends dating back to at least 1648 challenged the Empire to adapt to transforming economic, cultural, and political landscapes. Enlightenment ideas, the genesis of nationalism, and a pervasive sense of decline throughout the Reich contributed to the rich *Reichsreformdebatte* of the eighteenth century. Intellectuals, seeking to improve society, had long considered the need for reform; for many, that entailed the very secularization and mediatization that transpired.

Assassination of the French Plenipotentiaries<sup>345</sup>



Depicted is an engraving from 1799 showing the assassination of the French plenipotentiaries on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1799. Soldiers dressed in Austrian uniform are depicted as the murderers, with the dead diplomats and one of the diplomat's grief-stricken wife in the center.

<sup>345</sup> Isidore-Stanislas Helman, "Le IX Floréal an VII. Assassinat Des Plénipotentiaires Français Au Congrès De Rastadt," 1799. Engraving. Source: Armoire de Fer, Archives National Paris, accessed 31 March, 2019, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84128637>



Whether the Empire would have disintegrated without the catalyst of the French Revolution is impossible to say. Certainly, broader transformations and birth of new ideas about the role of the state in society would have increasingly challenged the internal status quo. Yet the thousand-year Empire had survived threats in the past and may very well have adapted to the new demands of the international environment and of its population. Whatever the case, the demolition of the first Reich at Rastatt would not have happened without the coercive influence of French supremacy.

When revolutionary armies finally penetrated, and subsequently contracted, the Reich's borders, raw power rapidly liberated itself from the confines of imperial laws and traditions. The ensuing territorial and political restructuring of Central Europe reflected the interests of the strong with little care for the opinions of the weak. The consensus at Rastatt was not one reached among the estates, but rather one born of the will of the mighty. Studying the Congress of Rastatt offers warning against any argument that there is inevitability in history. The Empire's ultimate disintegration on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1806 was a direct result of French incursions and Napoleonic will, but it *did not* perish “ ‘unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.’ ”<sup>346</sup>

In the eyes of many of its inhabitants, the Empire had occupied a place of respect and authority precisely because it valued authentic consensus – because its emphasis on hierarchy and law theoretically protected the weak from the arbitrary abuses of the strong. Intra-Reich diplomacy had developed under a superstructure that guaranteed German freedom. The structure was composed of declining, but still relevant, institutions: The *Reichskreise*, the *Reichskammergericht*, the *Reichshofrat*, and the *Reichstag*. Advocates of reform did not seek to abolish such bodies, but rather wished to improve their capabilities. And even at the height of

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<sup>346</sup> As quoted in John G. Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation: The Holy Roman Empire as Idea and Reality, 1763-1806* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), xi.

deterioration in the late eighteenth-century, the Empire remained remarkably effective at preventing illegal territorial expansion.

It is perhaps symbolic that the Congress of Rastatt ended in assassination at a time when international, and intra-Empire, relations were increasingly characterized by *Realpolitik*. Prior to the French Revolution, a rules-based order grounded in law and tradition managed the affairs within the Reich. Its many elements could and often did cooperate. Yet the delegitimization of that system and the challenge of a new, revolutionary ideology resulted in the abandonment of the intra-Empire structure. Princes resorted to a more realist understanding of diplomacy in which hard power – the military and money – became more significant than law.

The relevance of Rastatt for today ties to this lesson: when the international order breaks down as a result of its perceived illegitimacy, then realism and power politics burgeon. Ironically, it would be the dissatisfied nationalists who would agitate against the post-Napoleonic Wars order. Their disappointment would eventually lead to the First World War. Other instances in history when the international system's perceived illegitimacy led to realism abound. Thus, the challenge of the October Revolution and its consequences brought instability and uncertainty to Eastern Europe in the interwar period. Likewise, when the Nazis and the Japanese defied the validity of the League of Nations and the international order following the Treaty of Versailles, the world entered a period dominated by zero-sum thinking. In today's era defined by globalization, liberalism in foreign affairs, and faith in economic interdependence, contemporaries must be cautious not to forget the inherent anarchy to the international system. It is an anarchy that awakens when the system fails to deliver on its promises, when powerful actors view it as illegitimate and corrupt.

This study has added to the historiography on the viability of the Holy Roman Empire in its waning years by assessing multilateral diplomacy at the Congress of Rastatt from 1797-1799.

Many delegates, such as Pappenheim, acted as though they represented fully sovereign states, going as far as to negotiate separately in Paris. For them, the Empire was of little significance, if anything a minor obstacle to the realization of their ambitions. For others, the Empire was a source of stability and order, the home of the German peoples threatened by the greed of internal and external enemies.

Regardless as to the true motivations and interactions of the delegates at Rastatt, every side of the public debate surrounding the peace accords appealed to German freedom and to what authors viewed as best for the Empire as a whole. Those who favored mediatization and secularization argued on the grounds that the ecclesiastical states and other entities had become corrupt and backwards – only the dissolution of such polities and their integration into secular principalities would allow their populations to flourish. Those who opposed mediatization and secularization argued that the growth of certain states at the expense of others would lead to despotism and an erosion of German freedom. The very fact that such appeals were made itself reveals the continued significance of the Empire to its inhabitants as well as the authentic sympathy that many in power felt for the Reich.

A world of bishops, knights, princes, dukes, counts, and citizens living in cathedrals, in castles, and in fortified cities was transformed in less than one generation. Hundreds of polities were absorbed into their neighbors and over the centuries have become forgotten. The late Holy Roman Empire has been neglected in historical studies and has only recently been rediscovered. Many of the stories that it has to tell are as of yet still hidden in European archives, waiting to be told.

Today, the Empire remains obscure and its name continues to be ridiculed just as it was by the turn of the nineteenth century. As one anonymous author wrote in 1802, “ ‘Mocking politicians may thus always laugh about the Holy Roman Empire that is neither holy nor Roman

nor an Empire; they may call it a many-headed Hydra. So much the better it is. So much the more difficult it becomes for the French Hercules to conquer it.’<sup>347</sup> How *did* the French and their German satellites integrate so many territories? How did the Empire fit into the broader European structure of international relations? How did neighboring polities actually interact with one another over time? Did religion have different influences in the minds of the public in ecclesiastical states compared with Imperial Cities or secular principalities? What role did the public play in different government forms with regard to policy formation? It is exciting how many areas for future research there are. It is now a task for historians – maybe with herculean effort – to understand the ‘many-headed Hydra.’

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<sup>347</sup> As quoted in Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation*, 221. From the anonymous author of the 1802 pamphlet *Aufwessen Seite liegt der Vortheil wenn Teutschlands Bissthümer sacularisiret werden?*

## Appendix I

### Official Representatives of the Reich<sup>348</sup>

Franz Georg Karl von Metternich-Winneburg-Beilstein	Imperial Commissar for the Habsburgs
Ludwig von Cobenzl	Delegate from Austria (until mid-1798)
Johann Amadeus Franz von Thugut	Delegate from Austria (replaced Cobenzl July 9 <sup>th</sup> , 1798)
[Graf] von und zu Lehrbach	Delegate from Austria
Otto Ferdinand von Loeben	Delegate from Saxony
Theodor Heinrich Topor von Morawitzky <sup>349</sup>	Delegate from Bavaria
Emmanuel Meier	Delegate from Baden
Georg Ludwig von Edelsheim	Delegate from Baden
Ulrich Lebrecht von Mandelsloh	Delegate from Württemberg
[Herr] Wekhrlin	Delegate from Württemberg
Christian Hartmann Samuel von Gatzert	Delegate from Hessen-Darmstadt
Friedrich Lothar von Stadion	Delegate from the Bishopric of Würzburg
Friedrich Wilhelm von Reden	Delegate from the Imperial City of Bremen
Franz von Albin	Delegate from the Imperial City of Mainz
Franz Xaver von Pflummern	Delegate from the Imperial City of Augsburg
Jean Conrad Schmidt <sup>350</sup>	Delegate from the Imperial City of Augsburg
Friederich Maximilian von Günderröde	Delegate from the Imperial City of Frankfurt
Friederich Carl Schweitzer	Delegate from the Imperial City of Frankfurt

### Official Representatives of the French Republic

Napoléon Bonaparte	Representative of France until December 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1797
Jean-Baptiste Treillard	Representative of France (until mid-1798)
Antoine Bonnier d'Alco	Representative of France (assassinated)
Claude Roberjot	Representative of France (assassinated)
Jean Antoine Debry	Representative of France (replaced Treillard May 21 <sup>st</sup> , 1798)

<sup>348</sup> Paul Montarlot and Leonce Pingaud, eds., *Le Congrès de Rastatt (11 Juin 1798-28 Avril 1799): Correspondance Et Documents*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Paris: Alphonse Picard Et Fils, 1912), 1:43-53. German representatives have their name given in German and French representatives in French. In addition to the men listed here, there were hundreds of other lesser delegates and assistants to delegates. The delegate of Würzburg represented the ecclesiastical principalities and the delegates from Frankfurt represented the Imperial Cities.

<sup>349</sup> According to Montarlot, "Maximilien de Preysing" represented Bavaria at the beginning but was soon replaced by Morawitzky; no mention of "Preysing," however, is to be found in either Metternich's or Jacob Decker's accounts of the Congress personnel.

<sup>350</sup> Name provided by Montarlot and Pingaud, likely would be different in German.

Additional Figures
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Maximilian von Montgelas	Participant at Rastatt and, from 1799-1817, Minister of Foreign Affairs for Bavaria
August Wilhelm Rabe von Pappenheim	Representative of Hessen-Darmstadt at both Rastatt and Paris, major advocate of secularization and mediatization
Franz Joseph Karl (Franz II/Franz I)	The last Holy Roman Emperor (1792-1806) and the first Austrian Emperor (1804-1835).
Joseph II (Habsburg)	Holy Roman Emperor (1765-1790)
Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord	French Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1797-1815
Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès	Significant political theorist of the French Revolution, President of the Council of Five Hundred in late 1797 and member of the Senate and Directory
Johann Joseph von Görres	German theologian, philosopher, and political satirist originally sympathetic to the Revolution but increasingly critical of it
Friedrich Karl von Moser	German jurist and politician, influential advocate of curbing the power of the secular princes
Karl Ludwig von Haller	Swiss delegate at Rastatt, original supporter of the Revolution but became a fierce opponent by 1800
Andreas Riemer	Protestant Enlightenment theologian and attendant at Rastatt who worked in the service of Revolutionary France until 1800
Johann Nikolaus Becker	Attendant at Rastatt from the Rhineland. A self-confessed Jacobin and ardent supporter of the French Revolution
Johann Ludwig Klüber	Professor at the University of Erlangen in the Principality of Bayreuth, opponent of secularization and mediatization
Karl Eugen	The absolutist Duke of Württemberg from 1737-1793

## Appendix II

Select Code Words in Wilhelm Rabe von Pappenheim's Letters <sup>351</sup>
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Code Word	Meaning
"Herr Unsumm" (Mr. enormous sum)	Franz Wilhelm von Barkhaus
"Belmont," "Belmontius," or "Baudoin"	Landgrave Ludwig X
"Stamm" (Tribe), "Caleb," "Guillaume/Wilhelm," "Henri/Heinrich," and many others	Pappenheim (referring to himself in the third person)
"Antoine," or "Ulva"	Talleyrand
"Maillot," "Erneste," "Eumenes," and others	Napoleon
"Cassa," (Cash) or "Arguments irresistibles" (Irresistible arguments)	Bribe money
"Les Bernardins"	Hessen-Darmstadt
"Anselme"	The King of Prussia
"Isidore"	The Elector of Bavaria
"Orgon"	The Margrave of Baden
"Bathilde"	Austria, the Court at Vienna
"Grandes Dames" (Great Ladies)	The Great Powers
"Bathilde"	Austria, the Court at Vienna
"Claire"	Russia, the Court at St. Petersburg
"Martine"	Great Britain, the Court at London
"Clothilde"	Spain, the Court at Madrid
"Gertrude"	Prussia, the Court at Berlin
"Alexandrine," or "Irénée"	France
"Potpourri"	The Imperial Knights
"Conigonde," or "Kunigunde"	The Imperial Deputation
"Prunelle" (Sloe brandy or gaze (prized possession))	Frankfurt am Main
"Malines" (Clever)	Nuremberg

<sup>351</sup> Uta Ziegler and Eckhart G. Franz, eds., *Diplomatie im Zeichen des revolutionären Umbruchs: Die Berichte Des hessen-darmstädtischen Gesandten August Wilhelm von Pappenheim aus Paris und Rastatt, 1798-1803, 1806*, (Darmstadt: Hessischen Historischen Kommission, 2007), xx.

### Appendix III

*The following two poems are, as far as the author can determine, the only works of poetry on the subject of the Congress of Rastatt. They are presented here for the first time translated into English by the author with the assistance of Professor Astrid Weigert.*

#### Ode an den Congreß in Rastatt

Aloys Schreiber

Seit dreyzehn Monden harren die Völker nun  
Voll hanger Ahndung, ob es nicht Täuschung war,  
Daß aus Gewitternacht der erste  
Tröstende Schimmer des Friedens lachte.

Fünf dunkle Jahre wüthete Nordbegier,  
Zertrat der Huf die ländlichen Hoffnungen,  
Und der Grimms blut'ge Fackel  
Wandelte Dörfer und Städt' in Trümmer.

Fünf dunkle Jahre würgte das Kriegeschwert,  
Und trank der Boden seiner Bedauer Blut,  
Vom Tajo bis zum Rheingestade  
Oeffnete grausend ein weites Grab sich.

Es schien, als habe, die in den Wolken thront,  
Und in der Hand die Wage des Schicksals hält,  
Ein ganz' Geschlecht dem Tod geweiht  
Ob den Vergebungen seiner Väter.

Da scholl es, Friede, über den Alpen her;  
Die Schwerdter sanken aus der erhobnen Hand;  
Der Donner schwieg; in Menschenherzen  
Kehreten Hoffnung und Lust des Lebens.

Doch ach! die Hoffnung ward zur Gewißheit nicht.  
Noch birgt in Dunkel unser Gesichtskreis sich,  
Noch drohen schwere Wetterwolken  
Neue Verderben den Menschenkindern.

O ihr, auf die das Auge der Völker blickt,  
Die aus dem Grab die richtende Nachwelt einst  
Zur Rechenschaft herauf ruft, die ihr  
Segen und Elend in eurer Hand tragt!



Ein Wort, es fallen hundertmal Tausende, –  
 Ein Wort, es leben hundertmal Tausende, –  
 Ihr spricht das eine Wort: es lodert  
 Wieder in flammen der halbe Erdball;

Ihr spricht das andre, und das Gewitter flieht:  
 Im Gelbaumschatten sammeln die Völker sich,  
 Und, die sich erst Vertilgung schwuren,  
 Reichen die Hände sich ist als Brüder

Ein fleckchen Erde mehr oder weniger, /  
 Was ist es in dem Auge der Menschlichkeit?  
 Soll den das Erbe unsrer Mutter  
 Immer mit Blute gewogen werden?

Nicht Ruhe sucht die Menschheit, den Frieden nur.  
 Viel ist der Arbeit, viel ist der Mühe noch,  
 Um diesen Wohnplatz zu verschönern,  
 Welchen die Gottheit uns angewiesen.

Der Krieg zerstöret öfter im Augenblick,  
 Was ein Jahrhundert mühsam gebaut hat,  
 Und blinder Wahn mißt seine Größe  
 Nach den Gebeinen erschlagner Brüder.

Ihr, Friedensboten, höret der Menschheit Ruf!  
 Ist diese Erde nicht euer Vaterland?  
 Seyd Ihr nicht Gatten, Väter, Brüder?  
 Seyd Ihr nicht Kindern desselben Stammes?

## Ode to the Congress of Rastatt

Alois Schreiber<sup>352</sup>

*For thirteen moons the people have been awaiting  
Full of anxious anticipation, if it was not an illusion,  
That out of a night of thunders the first  
Comforting shimmer of peace would smile.*

*Five dark years the desire to murder waged,  
The hoof trampled on the rural hopes,  
And the wrathful torch of blood  
Transformed towns and cities into rubble*

*Five dark years the sword of war has strangled,  
And the land drank the blood of regret,  
From the Tagus to the banks of the Rhine  
A wide grave opened in horror.*

*It seemed as if she, enthroned in the clouds  
And holding in her hand the balance of destiny,  
Condemned a whole generation to death  
Despite the forgiveness of its fathers*

*Then it was heard, peace, over the Alps;  
The swords dropped from the raised hands;  
The thunder silenced, in Men's hearts  
Returned hope and a desire for life.*

*But Alas! Hope did not become certainty.  
Our horizon still hangs in darkness,  
Heavy storm clouds still threaten  
New perdition for mankind's children*

*O ye, upon whom the eye of the nations looks,  
Who will one day be called forth from the grave  
To be judged by posterity, ye who bear  
your blessing and misery in your very hands!*

*One word, hundreds of thousands die, -  
One word, hundreds of thousands live, -  
You speak the one word: half the world blazes  
Again in flames;*

*You speak the other, and the thunderstorm flees;  
In the shade of the olive tree the nations gather,  
And, those who first swore utter destruction,*

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<sup>352</sup> Franz Georg Karl von Metternich, *Rastatter Congreß-Taschenbuch Für 1799* (Karlsruhe and Rastatt: Macklots Hochbuchhandlung, 1799), 305-308.

*Shake hands as brothers*

*A speck of earth more or less, -  
What is it in the eyes of humanity?  
Should then the inheritance of our mother  
Always be weighed with blood?*

*It is not quiet that humanity seeks, only peace.  
Much work is needed, more still effort,  
To beautify this dwelling place,  
Which God has allotted to us.*

*Often, war destroys more in the blink of an eye,  
What a Century has painstakingly built,  
And blind Madness measures its grandeur  
By the bones of slain brothers.*

*You, messengers of peace, hear the call of mankind!  
Is this earth not your fatherland?  
Are you not spouses, fathers, brothers?  
Are you not children of the same root?*

### Auf den Congreß zu Rastadt

Das alte Mütterchen mit Krück und Augenglas,  
 Germania genannt, hatt' einstens Adlerflügel;  
 Doch willig wars und zahm; gefällig ohne Maas  
 Hielt es dem Vater Pabst vor Zeiten schon den Bügel.

Die Nachbarn führten auch es öfters auf zum Tanz,  
 Wie Ludwig, groß genannt vom Chor der schönen Geister,  
 Und von dem schönsten Blatt aus ihrem Ehrenkranz,  
 Dem Blatt Alsatia, ward dieser Nachbar Meister.

Jetzt, da der ganze Kranz, geknüpft mit losem Stroh,  
 Schon immer loser wird, ein jedes Degenklirren  
 Sie an die Grube mahnt, die Furcht ihr jeden Floh  
 Zum Ungeheuer schafft, die Sinn ihr zu verwirren;

Jetzt endlich noch ergriff an ihres Grabes Rand  
 Die alte Tanzwuth sie mit allen ihren Sofen;  
 Sie tanzte mit dem Freund, der ihr das Blatt entwandt,  
 Wie Babels Knaben einst – in einem Feuerofen;

Allein nicht unversehrt; die Luft war gar zu heiß;  
 Sie keucht'; er riß sie fort; sie konnte nicht mehr schreiten;  
 Doch nur die letzte Gunst sey, schwöret er, der Preis,  
 Für diesen woll' er sie zur – ew'gen Ruhe leiten.

Doch giebt er Freyheit ihr, sich vor dem Gnadenstoß  
 Mit der Familie in Rastadt zu besprechen,  
 Und dort ihr Schicksal rührt den härsten Erdenkloß,  
 Wie Frau Lucretia – sich selber zu erstechen.

Nicht wahr, das Ding ist drollig genug? Freylich ist für einen biedern Deutschen die  
 Geschichte mehr zum Weinen als zum Lachen, aber alles lacht in Deutschland, bis auf die  
 Geistlichen nicht, und wer weiß, ob sie nicht noch die letzten lachen werden?

Die Mythologie hat ein großes Bild – wenn es doch das unsres Vaterlandes wäre! Herkules,  
 wie er auf dem Oeta Holz zu seinem Scheiterhaufen zusammen trägt, im hohen  
 Bewustseyn, daß die Glut nur seine Hülle verzehren, er aber in schöner, ewiger Jugend zur  
 Zahl der Olympier aufschweben werde; –

Ach, der Scheiterhaufe ist wirklich da.

**On the Congress at Rastatt<sup>353</sup>**

*The old little Mother with crutch and eyeglass,  
Called Germania, once had eagle wings;  
But she was willing and tame; pleasing beyond measure  
She used to hold the stirrups for Father Pope*

*The neighbors also often took her to dance,  
Like Louis, called great by the choir of beautiful spirits,  
And of the most beautiful leaf out of her wreath of honor,  
Of the leaf of Alsatia, this neighbor became master.*

*Now, with the whole wreath knotted with loose straw,  
Already becoming looser, every sword clang  
Reminding her of the open grave, her dread turning every flea  
Into a monster, her senses are getting confused;*

*Now finally at her grave's edge she is seized by  
The old obsession of dancing with all her maids;  
She danced with the friend, who took the leaf from her,  
Like Babel's boys once did – in a fire oven;*

*Yet not harmed; the air was far too hot  
She gasped; he tore her away; she could no longer walk;  
Yet only the final favor, he swore, was to be the prize,  
For that prize he wanted to lead her to eternal rest.*

*Nevertheless he gives her permission, before the coup de grace  
To consult with the family in Rastatt,  
And there her fate touches the hardest clod of dirt,  
Like lady Lucretia – whether to stab herself.*

*Is it not true, that thing is funny enough? Indeed, for an honest German the story brings more tears than laughter, but everyone is laughing in Germany, except for the clergy, and who knows if they will not have the last laugh?*

*Mythology has a great image – if only it were that of our fatherland! Hercules, as he collects wood for his funeral pyre on Mount Etna, fully conscious that the embers will only consume his shell, but that he himself will rise up in beautiful, eternal youth to become one of the Olympians;*

*Alas, the funeral pyre is truly here.*

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<sup>353</sup> *Briefe eines Abgeordneten bey dem Congresse zu Rastadt* (1798), 94-95. The author is unknown.

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