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Much Ado About Nothing? Baron Forstner and Anglo-Lorraine Relations, 1710-1715

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| Abstract: | <p>Baron Wolfgang Jacobus Forstner von Breitenfels was Duke Leopold I of Lorraine's (1697-1729) envoy at the court of Queen Anne of Britain and Ireland (1665-1714) between 1710 and 1713. Using Forstner's unexamined papers the article explores Lorraine perceptions of Britain during the twilight of Anne's reign. As a monarch's political decisions were influenced by the correspondence of their representatives and the quality of the information they received, the article examines how Forstner's correspondence affected Leopold's decision making. It argues that the relationship between Anne and Leopold was shaped by Forstner's impressions of Anne, her court, and ministers. Forstner's reports on the state of Jacobitism in England misled Leopold into believing that Anne's ministry advocated the restoration of her half-brother: James Francis Edward Stuart (1688-1766). As a result, James was welcomed in Lorraine between 1713 and 1716. Three years that were crucial for the preparation of the Jacobite Rising of 1715.</p> |

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Much Ado About Nothing? Baron Forstner and Anglo-Lorraine Relations, 1710-1715

On the week of 8 May 1711, there took place a meeting in London between Henry St. John, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, and eventual Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751) and Wolfgang-Jacques, Baron Forstner von Breitenfels, the envoy of Duke Leopold I of Lorraine and Bar (1679–1729). The War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13) was then in its ninth year and Leopold's duchy lay under French occupation.¹ Forstner had arrived in England in January/February 1711 charged with representing his master's political interests at the British court. Now, however, he had been recalled and he sought reassurances from St. John and the British monarch, Queen Anne (1665–1714), for Leopold's diplomatic pretensions. Assured of Anne's goodwill and her support for Leopold's interests, Forstner wrote that he left this meeting 'the most satisfied man in the world'.² Twelve months later, in May 1712, Forstner would return to London.³ Britain and France had been in negotiation at Utrecht since January and Leopold once again sought assurances of Anne's support. Initially unable to meet with St. John, Forstner now met with the Lord High Treasurer, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford (1661–1724).⁴ Of particular concern to the envoy were **French** rumours that Leopold would soon play host to Anne's half-brother, James Francis Edward Stuart (1688–1766), and his court which had been in exile since 1688 and resided in Saint-Germain-en-Laye under the protection of Louis XIV (1638–1715).⁵ Such rumours, according to Forstner, were being spread by France to lessen Leopold's standing in the eyes of Britain and her

¹ For an overview of Lorraine in the War of the Spanish Succession see: Phil McCluskey, 'Louis XIV, Duke Leopold I and the Neutrality of Lorraine, 1702–1714', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 45 (2015), 34–56.

² Archives-des-Meurthe-et-Moselle (hereafter ADMM), 3F 421 f. 57, Forstner to Leopold, 8 May 1711. All translations are our own unless otherwise specified.

³ ADMM 3F 421 fos. 64–5, Forstner to Leopold, 27 May 1712.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The best examination of the Stuart court's sojourn in France post-1688 remains Edward Corp, *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689–1718* (Cambridge, 2004).

allies. Oxford's response was that the French king had no right to pressure other princes to harbour James, especially when he would presently be obliged to remove the Stuarts from his state too.⁶

From this series of events, one will notice the endeavours of a small state prince and his diplomatic representative in dealing with the ministers and rulers of larger states. More specifically, we see interactions between the courts of Queen Anne and of the duke of Lorraine, while the court of France also looms in the background. The envoy of Lorraine sought assurances from a potential ally for his master while promoting Leopold's political interests and dispelling rumours spread by rivals. Yet despite Forstner's adamant declaration that the arrival of the **Stuarts** in Lorraine would only embarrass Leopold, within months the envoy would be writing in positive terms to the duke regarding the future of the **Stuart** claimant. In early 1713 and lasting until January 1716, the Stuart court would ultimately come to reside in Leopold's lands. That small state rulers were often able to wield far more political influence than their territories suggested is well-known.⁷ The events surrounding James's retirement from France and move to Lorraine during the negotiations which led to the Peace of Utrecht do not need to be retold here.⁸ Moreover, recent scholarship has done much to highlight the role which Leopold played in the broader story of the Stuart court and the Jacobites. It can now be convincingly argued that, in addition to securing his own interests, Leopold played host to James in the belief that the exiled prince might eventually be restored to the throne of Britain and Ireland.⁹

⁶ ADMM 3F 421 fos. 64–5, Forstner to Leopold, 27 May 1712.

⁷ See Daniela Frigo, ed., *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450–1800*, Adrian Belton, trans. (Cambridge, 2000).

⁸ See Corp, *A Court in Exile*, 278–97.

⁹ See, Jérémy Filet, 'Jacobitism on the Grand Tour? The Duchy of Lorraine and the 1715 Rebellion in Writings of Displacement (1697–1736)' (PhD diss., Manchester Metropolitan University and Université de Lorraine, 2021); and Stephen Griffin, 'Duke Leopold of Lorraine, Small State Diplomacy, and the Stuart Court in Exile, 1716–1729,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 65 (2022), 1244–61.

However, the role of Forstner in convincing the duke that this idea was a possibility has never been examined. Forstner has received only the briefest of mentions in examinations of Leopold's court.¹⁰ An Austrian who had entered the ducal service during the House of Lorraine's own exile in Innsbruck in the late-seventeenth century, he spent much of the War of the Spanish Succession representing Leopold's interests at various German courts.¹¹ Studies of Anne's court are similarly vague or obsolete when discussing Forstner. He receives only passing mention in Edward Gregg's study of Anne's reign and is not mentioned at all in Daniel Szechi's examination of Jacobitism and the Tories between 1710–14.¹² Readers would also be hard pressed to find Forstner in studies of Anne's prominent ministers: Oxford and Bolingbroke.¹³ Nevertheless, Forstner was in Britain throughout the final years of Anne's reign and maintained regular correspondence with Leopold **regarding** court gossip, political developments, events in the Houses of Lords and Commons, and **public** opinion amongst the British people.

The role of individuals in diplomatic endeavours has long been a subject of attention and numerous studies have examined the role of diplomatic agents and their efforts in the early modern world.¹⁴ With the advent of the 'new diplomatic history' in the last two

¹⁰ A very brief account of his career between 1702–1713 can be found in Alain Petiot, 'D'Innsbruck à Lunéville: l'expérience de l'exil du Duc Léopold', in Anne Motta, ed., *Échanges, Passages et Transferts à la Cour du Duc Léopold, 1698–1729* (Rennes, 2017), 33–46.

¹¹ Petiot, 'D'Innsbruck à Lunéville', 43.

¹² Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne* (2nd ed., New Haven, 2001); Daniel Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory politics, 1710–14* (Edinburgh, 1984).

¹³ For example: H.T. Dickinson, *Bolingbroke* (London, 1970); Brian W. Hill, *Robert Harley: Speaker, Secretary of State and Premier Minister* (New Haven, 1988). Also see the most recent issue of *Revue de la Société d'études Anglo-Américaines des XVII^e et XVIII^e Siècles* which contained several discussions of Stuart and Hanoverian Britain: Lucien Bély, Nathalie Rivère de Carles and Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, eds, *Territoires de Diplomatie: Le Monde Anglo-Américain et ses Relations Extérieures* in *Revue de la Société d'études Anglo-Américaines des XVII^e et XVIII^e Siècles*, Vol. 79 (2022).

¹⁴ See, for example, Catherine Fletcher, *Our Man in Rome: Henry VIII and his Italian Ambassador* (London, 2012); Toby Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy: Political Culture and the Thirty Years' War* (Cambridge, 2007); Janet M. Hartley, *Charles Whitworth: Diplomat in the Age of Peter the Great* (Abingdon, 2002); Miles Pattendon, 'From Ambassador to Cardinal? Francisco de Vargas at the Papal Court (1559–63)', in Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, ed., *Embajadores Culturales: Transferencias y Lealtades de la Diplomacia Española de la Edad Moderna* (Madrid, 2016), 126–143; Brigitte Tremml-Werner and Dorothee

decades, historians of diplomacy have done much to increase understandings of early modern diplomatic practice.¹⁵ The ‘actor-centric’ approach favoured by Hillard von Thiesen and Christian Windler has highlighted the varying factors which influenced diplomats when carrying out their duties. Diplomats possessed their own private networks of clients which, in turn, influenced their activities when serving the monarch.¹⁶ **A vast literature exists regarding both social network analysis and its benefits when applied to historical research.¹⁷ Tracing an individual’s networks can help us to identify their interdependencies and interactions to discern from whence they may have obtained information. However, it is important to remember that the actual effectiveness of such networks can be difficult to prove. In turn, the relevance of the individuals selected for examination may be overemphasised.¹⁸**

If a diplomat’s primary role was to represent his prince at a foreign court, he was also tasked with obtaining news. The importance of letters as a means of collecting and transmitting information and subsequently shaping opinion has long been acknowledged. In

Goetze, ‘A Multitude of Actors in Early Modern Diplomacy’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 23 (2019), 407–22.

¹⁵ For brief overviews of the discipline see John Watkins, ‘Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2008), 1–14; Tracey A. Sowerby, ‘Early Modern Diplomatic History’, *History Compass*, Vol. 14, No. 9 (2016), 441–56; Toby Osborne, ‘Whither Diplomatic History? An Early-Modern Historian’s Perspective’, *Diplomatica*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2019), 40–5.

¹⁶ Hillard von Thiesen, ‘Diplomatie vom type ancien. Überlegungen zu einem Idealtypus des frühneuzeitlichen Gesandtschaftswesens’, in Hillard von Thiesen and Christian Windler, eds, *Akteure der Aussenbeziehungen: Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel* (Vienna, 2010), 471–503; Also see, Christian Windler, ‘From Social Status to Sovereignty – Practices of Foreign Relations from the Renaissance to the Sattelzeit’, in Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings, eds, *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c. 1410-1800* (Abingdon, 2017), 284–86.

¹⁷ For a broad overview see, Peter Carrington and John Scott, eds, *The SAGE Handbook of Social Network Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, 2011); For the uses of social network analysis in historical research, see, Martin Düring and Ulrich Eumann, ‘Historische Netzwerkforschung: Ein neuer Ansatz in den Geschichtswissenschaften’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, Vol. 39 (2013), 369–90. Also useful is Hillard von Thiesen and Christian Windler, *Nähe in der Fern: Personale Verflechtung in den Außenbeziehungen der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2003).

¹⁸ Düring and Eumann, ‘Historische Netzwerkforschung’, 378; Mark Hengerer, ‘Access at the Court of the Austrian Habsburg Dynasty (Mid-Sixteenth to Mid-Eighteenth Century): a Highway from Presence to Politics?’, in Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks, eds, *The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Princely Courts* (Leiden, 2016), 148.

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examining political information in the early modern world, Brendan Dooley has noted that societal ‘responses’ are modified due to the imparting of new information. Gathering and distributing information (and that information’s overall quality) has always been key to the decision-making process in politics.¹⁹ Therefore, the question remains: to what extent was Leopold influenced in his diplomatic choices regarding Britain by the information provided by Forstner? The intention of this article is to trace Forstner’s stay in London to demonstrate how his dispatches were instrumental in convincing Duke Leopold to harbour the Stuart court in exile. To do so, this article will outline Lorraine’s political position during the War of the Spanish Succession and highlights Leopold’s motivations in seeking support from Queen Anne. It will then examine the individuals with whom Forstner interacted in London and offer an analysis of the information which they provided regarding Anne’s succession. **We will then** set Forstner’s activities against the backdrop of peace negotiations between France and Britain and suggest that the agreement which saw Leopold allow James to enter Lorraine was made based upon biased and potentially dubious information. Finally, the last section will measure the extent to which Leopold believed his envoy’s reports by appraising the support which the gave to the Jacobites in the years preceding the 1715 Jacobite Rising.

Playing all the fields: Lorraine in the War of the Spanish Succession

After the Treaty of Ryswick of 1697, the question of the Spanish Succession would dominate the minds of all of Europe’s statesmen. The empire of **Carlos II (1661–1700)** was composed of Spain, Milan and Naples, the Spanish Netherlands, and colonies in the New World. As the sickly king had failed to produce an heir, the dynastic links of the Bourbons and Austrian

¹⁹ Brendan Dooley, ‘Introduction’, in Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron, eds, *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2001), 6; Charles Howard Carter, *The Secret Diplomacy of the Habsburgs, 1598–1625* (New York, 1965), 269; Also, see, Francisco Bethencourt and Floriske Egmond, ‘Introduction’, in Francisco Bethencourt and Floriske Egmond, eds, *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe, 1400–1700* (Cambridge, 2007), 1–32.

Habsburgs to the Spanish royal family had seen both Louis XIV and Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705) jostle for their children's rights to be heirs to that vast empire.²⁰ Upon his deathbed, Carlos bequeathed his territory to Louis's grandson, Philip, Duke of Anjou (1683–1746). Louis proclaimed him as Philip V, King of Spain on 24 November 1701, and provoked William III (1650–1702) by acknowledging **the son of the exiled James II (1633–1701)** as James III of England and Ireland, and VIII of Scotland on 16 September 1701.²¹ The Grand Alliance was formed in September of the same year, bringing together the Austrian Habsburgs, the Dutch Republic, and Great Britain against France.²² The details of the War of Spanish Succession (1701–14) **are well-known**.²³ However, Leopold's diplomatic choices in the context of the peace of Utrecht have been misinterpreted.²⁴

Leopold's duchy **was at the** geographic centre of the conflict. Lorraine was a 'buffer state' between France and the Allies **and had been used as a satellite state by both** France and the emperor.²⁵ **Serving as a gateway into France, Lorraine had previously been occupied by the French in a bid to secure their borders between 1631–1661 and 1670–1697.**²⁶ Indeed, France enjoyed a comfortable geopolitical advantage in Lorraine due to the

²⁰ Wout Troost, 'Leopold I, Louis XIV, William III and the Origins of the War of the Spanish Succession', *History*, Vol. 103 (2018), 545–70.

²¹ See Henry Kamen, *Philip V of Spain: The King Who Reigned Twice* (New Haven, 2001).

²² See John P. Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria* (London, 1977). Wout Troost, *William III, The Stadholder-King: A Political Biography* (London, 2005). John A. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV, 1667–1714* (Routledge, 2013).

²³ For the most relevant references about Britain in this context, see John Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1701–1712* (New York, 1987). Trevor J. Dadson, *Britain, Spain, and the Treaty of Utrecht 1713–2013* (London, 2019). Jamel Ostwald, 'Creating the British Way of War: English Strategy in the War of the Spanish Succession' in Murray Williamson & Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds, *Successful Strategies: Triumphant in War and Peace from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, 2014), 100–129.

²⁴ In 1894, Henri Baumont suggested that, in order to conclude the peace, Louis XIV pressured Leopold to accept James into his duchy: Henri Baumont, *Études sur le Règne de Léopold, Duc de Lorraine et de Bar: 1697–1729* (Paris, 1894), 97. This argument was reused in McCluskey, 'Louis XIV, Duke Leopold I', 37. For a different perspective on the Peace of Utrecht, see Renger de Bruin, et al., eds, *Performances of Peace: Utrecht 2013* (Leiden, 2015).

²⁵ Jonathan Spangler, 'Not Invited to the Party: The Duke of Lorraine and the Treaty of Utrecht', talk given on 25 April 2013 at *Performances of Peace: The Treaty of Utrecht 1713–2013*, Utrecht, 24–26 April 2013.

²⁶ See, David J. Sturdy, *Richelieu and Mazarin: A Study in Statesmanship* (Basingstoke, 2004), 51–53; Laurent Jalabert, *Charles V de Lorraine (1643–1690) Ou La Quête de l'Etat* (Nancy, 2017).

enclave of the *Trois évêchés*: the bishoprics of Toul, Verdun and Metz which were situated within the duchy but recognised the authority of the *Parlement de Paris*.²⁷

Leopold also paid homage to Louis XIV for the Duchy of Bar.²⁸ From the very beginning of hostilities, Leopold wanted his territory to remain neutral and his envoys would try to negotiate with the greater powers involved in the war.²⁹ Nonetheless, both the Allies and Louis XIV would find Lorraine's neutrality suspicious on various grounds and Leopold was ultimately brought into the conflict despite his best efforts.³⁰

On the French side, Louis invoked a clause of the Treaty of Ryswick to impose free passage of his troops through Lorraine.³¹ Over time, this would give the impression to the Allies, and especially to Emperor Joseph I (1678–1711), that Leopold was helping France. These tensions reached their height in 1705 when French troops were spotted in Lorraine while the Allies planned a major offensive along the river Moselle.³² While Louis XIV abused his power over Leopold, the Allies kept accusing the duke of helping the French. Yet Leopold did his best to keep his neutrality until at least 1708. As the son of Eleonore Maria Josefa of Austria (1653–1697), he was the presumptive heir of both the Prince of Arches-Charleville and of Ferdinando-Carlo Gonzaga (1652–1708).³³ Leopold could therefore inherit

²⁷ See, Robert Parisot, *Histoire de la Lorraine (duché de Lorraine, duché de Bar, Trois-Evêchés)* (Brussels, 1978); and François Roth, *Histoire de la Lorraine et des Lorrains* (Metz, 2006). On the importance of the three bishoprics for France, see Marie-Laure Legay, *Les États Provinciaux dans la Construction de l'Etat Moderne aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles* (Geneva, 2001).

²⁸ On this, see Phil McCluskey, 'From Regime Change to Réunion: Louis XIV's Quest for Legitimacy in Lorraine, 1670–97', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 126 (2011), 1386–407.

²⁹ On the concept of neutrality in the early modern period, see Jean-François Chanut and Christian Windler, eds, *Les Ressources des Faibles : Neutralités, Sauvegardes, Accommodements en Temps de Guerre* (Rennes, 2010); and Eric Schnakenbourg, *Entre la Guerre et la Paix : Neutralité et Relations Internationales, XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles* (Rennes, 2013).

³⁰ McCluskey, 'The Neutrality of Lorraine', 45.

³¹ Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance Politique, Lorraine (hereafter AAE CP Lorr.) 46, fos. 27–33.

³² David Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander* (London, 2003), 146.

³³ Leopold's grandmother, Eleonora Gonzaga (1630–86), was the aunt of Ferdinando Carlo Gonzaga, 3rd Prince of Arches-Charleville (1652–1708). Gonzaga had also married Suzanne Henriette de Lorraine (1686–1710), the daughter of Charles de Lorraine, Duke of Elbeuf (1620–92).

the territories around Charleville-Mézières (on the French border) as well as the duchies of Mantua and Montferrato, both in northern Italy. Despite these pretentions, Charleville-Mézières was given to Henri Jules de Bourbon, Prince of Condé (1643–1709), Montferrato was given to Victor Amadeus II of Sardinia, Duke of Savoy (1666–1732)³⁴, and Mantua to the emperor.³⁵

From then on, Leopold chose to explore other diplomatic routes. Although still officially neutral, he decided to push his interests by making overtures to the Dutch and the British in 1709.³⁶ However, when he was ignored by the Allies, who were starting preliminary peace negotiations at The Hague,³⁷ he then tried to influence the outcome of the war by soliciting the favour of the Allies directly at their own courts. As early as February 1710, the duke sent clear instructions to Forstner asking him to obtain as many favours as possible from Queen Anne.³⁸ In October of the same year, Leopold believed he could gain Montferrato and the Duchy of Luxembourg and he informed Forstner that the Emperor, King Charles III (the Allied candidate for the Spanish throne), and Anne had all ‘formerly engaged themselves’ to support his claims.³⁹ By December, the duke believed Forstner had the ear of the Queen of Britain and Ireland and he instructed his envoy to stay at the court and to deliver letters to both Anne and John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722).⁴⁰

By March 1711, Forstner’s negotiations seemed to have moved even further. Leopold now felt bold enough to instruct Forstner to request that Anne’s envoys in Vienna and in

³⁴ Paola Bianchi, ‘Savoyard Representatives in Utrecht: Political-aristocratic Networks and the Diplomatic Modernization of the State’, in Inken Schmidt-Voges and Ana Crespo Solana, eds, *New Worlds? Transformations in the Culture of international relations Around the Peace of Utrecht* (London, 2017), 96–112.

³⁵ Baumont, *Règne de Léopold*, 188.

³⁶ ADMM 3F 8 f. 50, Forstner to Leopold, 22 April 1709.

³⁷ Charles W. Ingrao, *In Quest and Crisis: Emperor Joseph I and the Habsburg Monarchy* (West Lafayette, 2014), 170–181.

³⁸ ADMM 3F 422 f. 52, ‘Instruction pour le Baron de Forstner’, 27 February 1710.

³⁹ ADMM 3F 422 f. 53, ‘Memoire servant d’Instruction pour le Baron de Forstner’, 23 October 1710.

⁴⁰ ADMM 3F 422 f. 55, ‘Instruction pour l’Angleterre’, 22 December 1710.

Spain, Charles Mordaunt, 3rd Earl of Peterborough (1658–1735), and John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll (1680–1743) respectively, press the allies to support Leopold's pretensions over Luxembourg.⁴¹ Although the Emperor was not pleased by Lorraine's unilateral negotiations with Britain, Forstner was instructed to continue his good work.⁴² Furthermore, in a letter to Marlborough in March 1711, Leopold repeated that he had obtained Anne's *marques d'amitiés*⁴³ and claimed to have her protection in October of the same year.⁴⁴ Although Leopold exercised his best efforts in all these negotiations, he would abandon any hope of territorial compensation by 1712.⁴⁵ At the beginning of 1713, negotiations had begun at Utrecht and Anne agreed to support Leopold's pretensions if the duke agreed to host her exiled half-brother James.⁴⁶ Removing James from France, his place of exile since 1688, had not always been a condition for peace.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Anne's ministry wanted to introduce this clause in January 1712. Bolingbroke, now Secretary of State, suggested a separate peace with France. In May 1712, he ordered British forces to cease hostilities, and in August, Bolingbroke went to France to sign the ceasefire agreement. **The following June**, the French reported that James was ready to leave Paris for Châlons on 7 September. The final arrangement was reached on 14 June 1712.⁴⁸

Leopold thus welcomed James in the hopes of favours from Britain at Utrecht. He would spend the next three years claiming that he welcomed James because he was a prince in exile, as he had once been himself.⁴⁹ One might wonder why Leopold suddenly decided to

⁴¹ ADMM 3F 422 f. 1, Leopold to Forstner, 10 March 1711.

⁴² ADMM 3F 422 f. 1, Leopold to Forstner, 14 April 1711.

⁴³ ADMM 3F 116 f. 113, Leopold to Marlborough, 11 March 1711.

⁴⁴ ADMM 3F 116 f. 127, Leopold to Strafford, 23 October 1711.

⁴⁵ McCluskey, 'The Neutrality of Lorraine', 49.

⁴⁶ ADMM 3F 421 f. 143, Forstner to Leopold, 23 October 1712.

⁴⁷ H. N. Fieldhouse, 'Oxford, Bolingbroke, and the Pretender's Place of Residence, 1711-14', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 52 (1937), 290.

⁴⁸ AAE CP Angleterre 240, f. 205: Torcy to Bolingbroke, 10 June 1712.

⁴⁹ Jérémy Filet, 'Jacobitism in an Early-Modern State: The Duchy of Lorraine and the 1715 Rebellion' (Unpublished MA diss, Université de Lorraine, 2016), 82–112.

offer asylum to the shadow monarch and his court. Likewise, what could have happened during Forstner's embassy in London that would make Leopold believe that Britain would support his small state?

Partisan politics: Forstner's stay in London

In many ways Forstner is representative of a typical diplomatic envoy from an early modern small state. Princes from such states were reliant upon their courtiers and as diplomats were not trained, they were, in turn, largely reliant upon their own skills when it came to political manoeuvring.⁵⁰ Leopold's use of diplomatic representatives follows this pattern. Many of the men who were dispatched across Europe on his behalf held positions at his court and often possessed a long history in Leopold's service dating back to his days in exile in Innsbruck.⁵¹ Forstner fits this model, and he was an experienced envoy who continued to serve Leopold long after having left London.

A close examination of Forstner's extensive correspondence with Leopold reveals that there was much more taking place than continued expressions of support. Upon closer inspection it becomes clear that Leopold's decision regarding James was based upon the intelligence he received from Forstner in Britain.⁵² To better understand what transpired it is necessary to provide an overview of those whom the envoy formally and informally interacted with. As we shall see, Forstner discussed his interactions with several individuals at Anne's court. He also obtained anecdotal information and snippets of intrigue from different contacts all of which were of varying reliability. **This section highlights several**

⁵⁰ Jeremy Black, *British Diplomats and Diplomacy, 1688–1800* (Exeter, 2001), 2.

⁵¹ For Leopold see, Petiot, 'D'Innsbruck à Lunéville', 41–45; For a comparison with another small state, see, Alessandro Bianchi, *Al Servizio del Principe: Diplomazia e Corte nel Ducato di Mantova, 1665–1708* (Milan, 2012).

⁵² ADMM, 3F 421 f. 174, Forstner to Leopold, 13 January 1713.

individuals whom Forstner reported interacting with and whom, we suggest, influenced the intelligence which he provided Leopold.

Forstner appears to have veered more towards Tories than Whigs while in England, and this is most evident in his dispatches. During the first visit to London in 1711, he described the queen's uncle, Laurence Hyde, 1st earl of Rochester (1641–1711), as expressing her 'best intentions' towards Leopold. Forstner also interacted regularly with the pro-Jacobite James Hamilton, 4th Duke of Hamilton (1658–1712), until the latter's death in a duel in November 1712. It was Hamilton who spoke enthusiastically of the exiled James being hosted by Leopold purportedly stating that the duke had also experienced a period in exile between 1679–97 and would be an ideal host for the Stuart court.⁵³ On another occasion, Forstner mentioned being at the house of Catherine Sheffield, Duchess of Buckingham (1681–1743) - the illegitimate daughter of James II. While there, he was greeted by another of James II's illegitimate children, Henrietta Waldegrave, Lady Waldegrave (1667–1730).⁵⁴ Forstner was also acquainted with Hanoverian Tories. He reported Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury (1660–1718), the openly pro-Hanoverian minister, as saying: **'I shall soon be in a position to obtain regular information regarding my master's views on the advantages he may gain from the peace to come.'**⁵⁵ There are also references to Charles Montagu, Baron Halifax (1661–1715), from whom he always received courteous treatment.⁵⁶

Forstner's correspondence primarily mentions two individuals. The first was Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, often referred to by his title of First Lord of the Treasury. Born in 1661 and from a parliamentary background, Harley had initially been a supporter of

⁵³ ADMM 3F 421 f. 78, Forstner to Leopold, 14 June 1712.

⁵⁴ ADMM 3F 421 f. 224, Forstner to Leopold, 19 May 1713.

⁵⁵ ADMM 3F 421 fos. 13–17, Forstner to Leopold, 30 January/10 February 1711.

⁵⁶ ADMM 3F 421 fos. 248–9, Forstner to Leopold, 1 August 1713. Interactions with Whigs are occasionally mentioned in Forstner's correspondence, but these seem to have been restricted mainly to mundane exchanges.

William III. He first entered parliament on the side of the Whigs in 1689 and became known for his political shrewdness. Having aligned with the Tories in the 1690s, he was elected Speaker of the Commons in 1701 and again in 1702. Made secretary of state in 1704, he was, together with Godolphin and Marlborough, one of the queen's main advisors. Despite losing office in 1708, Harley returned in 1710 and was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was followed by his appointment as Lord Treasurer and Earl of Oxford and Mortimer the following year in May 1711. By this time, Henry St. John, his ally of many years, had begun to emerge as his chief rival. In parliament since 1701, St. John came from a family that had been divided during the civil war and, although he came from a Whig background, he himself became a Tory. St. John served as secretary of war for four years beginning in 1704 and ending in 1708 when he left office with Harley. When the former returned to office in 1710, St. John was made secretary of state for the northern department. The following year would see the beginning of the rift between the two men. St. John had begrudged Harley's being made Lord Treasurer and created earl of Oxford (he would not receive his own title of Viscount Bolingbroke until 1712). In addition, he resented Oxford's close confidence with the queen and the secret peace negotiations, which Oxford was conducting with France. These had begun in 1710 and only became known to St. John in 1711.⁵⁷

Believing Oxford to be the man who held the most favour with the queen, Forstner had written in 1711 that:

⁵⁷ For Oxford see: J.A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press* (Cambridge Mss, 1979); Brian W. Hill, *Robert Harley: Speaker, Secretary of State and Premier Minister* (New Haven, 1988); W.A. Speck, 'Harley, Robert, first earl of Oxford and Mortimer' in *DNB*; For Bolingbroke: H.T. Dickinson, *Bolingbroke* (London, 1970); H.T. Dickinson, 'St John, Henry, styled first Viscount Bolingbroke' in *DNB*; Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle: the Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Cambridge Mss, 1968); Simon Varey, *Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke* (Boston, 1984). Also see Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne* (New Haven, 2001); and Alice Montner, "'Plain Mat/Has been doing at Paris, The Lord knows what': Matthew Prior and Harleyite Diplomacy in the Year 1711', *Revue de la Société d'études Anglo-Américain et ses Relations Extérieures*, Vol. 79 (2022).

In effect, it is he who pretends not to conduct the ministerial intrigues, and the changes we have seen happening in the past few months, so much so that he is barely available to discuss the affairs of the moment.⁵⁸

If Oxford had proved elusive, St. John had been the opposite. On one occasion he invited Forstner to dinner and this meal lasted from the afternoon until the early hours of the morning. They also encountered each other at the opera where St. John invited the envoy to join him.⁵⁹

Did Forstner interact closely with other envoys in London who were in a similar position to his own? While his own correspondence is sparse on such details he would have done so and due to the nature of his mission he would also have interacted with other representatives of small state princes. One name that does occasionally reoccur is Baron Daniel von Steingens (????–????) the envoy of Johann Wilhelm II, Elector Palatine (1658–1716). Described by Forstner as Oxford’s ‘friend’, Steingens was well known for being a close acquaintance of Oxford and he has been dubbed as the latter’s ‘notorious but competent tool’ by Edward Gregg.⁶⁰ The close connection with Steingens allowed Oxford to attempt to influence the appointments of Hanoverian envoys and secretaries in 1713.⁶¹ It was only through Steingen’s intervention that Forstner was able to obtain an audience with Oxford in 1711 and he would call upon Steingens shortly after his return in London in May 1712.⁶² Elsewhere and due to Leopold’s interest in

⁵⁸ ADMM 3F 421 f. 23, Forstner to Leopold, 6/17 February 1711.

⁵⁹ ADMM 3F 421 fos. 36–37, 38–39: Forstner to Leopold, 27 February/10 March 1711; Forstner to Leopold, 6/17 March 1711; For Harley’s negotiations with France in this period, see, Montner, ‘Matthew Prior and Harleyite diplomacy’.

⁶⁰ ADMM 3F 421 f. 23, Forstner to Leopold, 6/17 February 1711; Gregg, *Queen Anne*, 383.

⁶¹ Gregg, *Queen Anne*, 383.

⁶² ADMM 3F 421 f. 23, Forstner to Leopold, 6/17 February 1711; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv/Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv (hereafter ÖSt/HHStA), Großbritannien, 50, f. 98, Hoffman to Charles VI, 24 May 1712.

the Duchy of Montferrato, Forstner would have cooperated with the Savoyard emissaries Count Annibale Maffei (1710–1713) and Francis Eleazar Wicardel de Fleury, Marquis de Trivié (1713–1716). He dined with Maffei and they shared carriages during which they discussed their dealings with Bolingbroke. He also interacted with Count Pietro Mellarède (1659–1730) another Savoyard envoy who arrived in 1712 and who ensured him of Savoyard support for Leopold's interests at Utrecht.⁶³

For the most part, it was from unnamed sources connected to Oxford that Forstner would inform Leopold of gossip at court. The first signs of the envoy believing that Anne and her ministry would support James's restoration appear in August 1712. While considering whether Britain would ally with the Emperor, Forstner informed Leopold that the ministry and much of the population were averse to Hanover. Therefore, the Lorraine envoy deemed James likely to return, and believed that the queen and her ministry would require an alliance with a Catholic monarch.⁶⁴ A 'friend of Oxford' had already informed Forstner that James had relinquished his rights to the crown while Anne was alive. Forstner also commented that members of Queen Anne's court believed that James would arrive in England when the Peace of Utrecht was declared, and that he would claim the title of Prince of Wales.⁶⁵ The Lorraine envoy therefore alleged that these people had been able to convince the Queen that she was a usurper and could save her soul only by returning the crown to its rightful heir: James III. In October 1712, Forstner reported to Leopold that Anne's ministry was attempting 'little by little' to garner support for James amongst the wider populace in Britain while 'fomenting' an aversion to the Hanoverians. Although the ministry treated the question of James very

⁶³ Christopher Storrs, 'Savoyard Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century (1684-1798)' in Daniela Frigo, ed., *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450–1800*, Adrian Belton, trans. (Cambridge, 2000), 216; ADMM 3F 421 fo. 100; 144–146, Forstner to Leopold, 1 July 1712; Forstner to Leopold, 11 November 1712.

⁶⁴ ADMM 3F 421 f. 111, Forstner to Leopold, 3 August 1712. In 1713, Leopold would unsuccessfully attempt to initiate an alliance between James and emperor by himself. See, Griffin, 'Duke Leopold of Lorraine', 1251.

⁶⁵ ADMM 3F 421 f. 111, Forstner to Leopold, 3 August 1712.

delicately and gave Forstner the impression that they would never restore James, the envoy believed this was a feint and he presumed that Oxford and Bolingbroke were seeking to mentally prepare the state for James's restoration.⁶⁶

Assessing the political situation

Forstner's observations of England, Scotland and Ireland, and their respective political situations, are closely tied to the question of Anne and her succession. According to Forstner, the Whigs, were the suspected authors of pamphlets revealing the true story of James's birth in 1688, although there were also suspected anti-Jacobite Tories who had aligned themselves with the Whigs. At the same time, he noted that there was a strong body of support for James and predicted that there would be violence following Anne's death.⁶⁷ In May 1713, Forstner wrote an extensive letter in which he outlined the political situation in each kingdom. He believed that both Oxford and Bolingbroke would support James's restoration if it meant that they could maintain their positions.⁶⁸ His broader conclusion was that England, with the exception of its Catholic population, was against the return of James due to his long stay in France. Regarding Scotland, he wrote that many in that country were declaring themselves for the Stuarts and he believed that their chief was John Murray, Duke of Atholl (1660–1724). In opposition stood John Campbell, Duke of Argyll (1680–1740) who would, Forstner

⁶⁶ ADMM 3F 421 fos. 137, 170–74: Forstner to Leopold, 4 October 1712; Forstner to Leopold, 13 January 1713. Forstner would not have been alone in suspecting the queen's sympathies as many in England believed that she and her ministers were supporting James in early 1713. Similar rumours were also reported by an agent of Augustus I of Saxony **and by the Savoyard envoy Pietro Mellarède**: Sächsische Staatsarchive (hereafter SStA), Geheimes Kabinett 10026, 688/05, f.18: La Grange to Fleming, 18 April 1712; **Domenico Carutti**, 'Relazione sulla corte d'Inghilterra del consigliere di Stato Pietro Mellarède', *Miscellanea di Storia Italia*, Vol. 24 (1885), 230; Edward Gregg, *Anne*, 363.

⁶⁷ ADMM 3F 421 fos. 36–7, 40, 217–18: Forstner to Leopold, 27 February/10 March 1711; Forstner to Leopold, 6/17 March 1711; Forstner to Leopold, 21 April 1713; Other envoys also reported rumours of Whig circulated publications which were intended to convince the public of the ministry's pro-Jacobite intentions. See SStA Geheimes Kabinett 10026, 688/05, f. 107, La Grange to Flemming, 12 July 1712; However, not everyone believed that Harley's ministry intended to restore James: See British Library, Additional Manuscripts (hereafter BL Add MS) 70030, fos. 31–3, Letter to Harley, 25 October 1712.

⁶⁸ ADMM 3F 421 fos. 223–9: Forstner to Leopold, 19 May 1713.

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2
3 claimed, risk everything against a Jacobite restoration. In Ireland, Forstner explained to
4
5 Leopold that close to two thirds of the population were Catholic and would support James.
6
7 Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, who was to be made Viceroy of Ireland, was under the
8
9 influence of his scheming Italian wife, who, despite having converted to Protestantism, was
10
11 still a Catholic at heart. Forstner's insinuation was that rebellion would be 'fomented' in
12
13 Ireland.⁶⁹
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18 The above assumptions were heavily biased, yet how did Forstner's analysis compare
19
20 with reality? His comments on English Catholics are interesting and not wholly inaccurate.
21
22 During the 1715 rising, Catholics in the north of England were the only ones in the country
23
24 who proved willing to turn out in any force.⁷⁰ In Scotland, Atholl had been expected to lead
25
26 the Jacobites due to his reputed involvement in plans for a Jacobite rising in 1708. Yet, Atholl
27
28 professed his loyalty to Hanover in 1714 and again in 1715.⁷¹ Argyll would, however, be the
29
30 one to lead government forces against the Jacobites once the rising began. An estimated
31
32 20,000 Scots took the Jacobite side while 11,000 sided with Hanover.⁷² Only in Ireland were
33
34 Forstner's predictions completely wrong, but it is easy to see why he believed a rebellion
35
36 could take place there. Indeed, there were heightened tensions throughout this period, and
37
38 Éamonn Ó Ciardha has suggested that the situation was comparable to 1688. There were
39
40 numerous governmental reports of Jacobite agents recruiting men for the Irish regiments in
41
42 France (recruitment was also reported in Lorraine).⁷³ In the Irish Parliament, the Whigs were
43
44 accusing Tories of conspiring to restore James. Nonetheless, the country remained relatively
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52 ⁶⁹ Ibid.

53 ⁷⁰ Daniel Szechi, *1715: the Great Jacobite Rebellion* (New Haven, 2006), 252. Also see Gabriel Glickman, *The*
54 *English Catholic Community, 1688–1745: Politics, Community, and Ideology* (Woodbridge, 2009), 56.

55 ⁷¹ Szechi, *1715*, 99; For 1708, see Daniel Szechi, *Britain's Lost Revolution? Jacobite Scotland and French Grand*
56 *Strategy, 1701–8* (Manchester, 2015). For Atholl: John R. Young, 'Murray, John, first duke of Atholl' in *DNB*.
57 Also see Bruce Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain, 1689–1746* (London, 1980).

58 ⁷² Szechi, *1715*, 252.

59 ⁷³ Filet, 'Jacobitism on the Grand Tour?' 121, 160.
60

quiet following Anne's death in 1714 since Irish Catholics were disarmed, and noblemen arrested.⁷⁴ Based on reports from Ireland it is understandable why Forstner believed a rebellion would be imminent.

It is thus **evident** that the Lorraine envoy could gather intelligence that allowed him to make plausible and somewhat accurate conclusions. He was right in asserting that English Catholics would support James, and in assuming that Argyll would oppose the Jacobites in Scotland. Yet it is obvious that Forstner could be equally misled regarding the chances of James being restored since he was taking the Oxford ministry at face value. As negotiations between Britain and France continued, this became increasingly clear.

The Lorraine envoy, Utrecht, and the question of James' residency

While these events took place in London, the British and French had continued negotiating. At an early point in these proceedings, the French agent in London, Abbé Francois Gaultier (1685–1723), was told that the ministry would potentially restore James following Anne's death, providing he converted. Such proposals were the ministry's attempts to deal with the more critical members of the Tory party. Gaultier reported back to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torcy (1665–1746), the French minister for foreign affairs and James Fitzjames, Duke of Berwick (1670–1734), James's half-brother and secretary. Berwick also served as Torcy's spokesman at St. Germain. This allowed Torcy to act as intermediary between Oxford's ministry and St. Germain and presented him with the opportunity to potentially take credit for enabling James's restoration.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause, 1685–1766: a Fatal Attachment* (Dublin, 2002), 130–6; S.J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom: Ireland, 1630–1800* (Oxford, 2008), 216. For Shrewsbury in Ireland see: David Hayton, 'The Crisis in Ireland and the Disintegration of Queen Anne's Last Ministry', in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 22 (1981), 193–215. For Lorraine see, Jérémy Filet, 'The Duchy of Lorraine and the 1715 Rebellion'.

⁷⁵ The French had sought to dominate Jacobite diplomatic affairs since the late 1680s and had subsidised Jacobite diplomats to serve them. Corp, *Stuarts in France*, 68–9.

In response to the ministry's proposal, the Stuarts had ordered their supporters in England to obey the government.⁷⁶ Peace preliminaries were signed between Britain and France in September 1711 with a view to opening a peace congress at Utrecht in 1712. Oxford and Torcy would ultimately be the ones who negotiated over the question of James's residence. While Oxford had suggested either Rome or Lorraine as James's new residency, Bolingbroke had opted for James to be sent further away to Rome, the Empire or Switzerland. It would be Torcy who eventually had Bolingbroke agree to James's going to Lorraine: **'It may so happen that the most well-intentioned of the English could take umbrage at this prince living in a country so remote from the British Isles.'**⁷⁷

From a careful examination of Forstner's letters, it is possible to spot the shrewdness with which the ministry dealt with Leopold and his envoy. Leopold had written directly to Oxford in May 1712 to reaffirm his requests for British support in the ongoing peace negotiations.⁷⁸ When Forstner returned to London in May 1712, Oxford clarified that the French could not force Leopold into hosting James. Yet, it was Oxford who had suggested Lorraine to Gaultier earlier that same month.⁷⁹ The ministry had informed Forstner that the proposal for James's stay would be made via Louis XIV. By the first week of September, the arrangement had been agreed upon between Louis XIV and Leopold. Once again, Forstner was assured of Anne's support for Leopold although the Lorraine envoy was now advised to be patient.⁸⁰ Within a few weeks, Bolingbroke's had informed British representatives at Utrecht that Anne would be of little use in assisting Leopold.⁸¹ By November 1712, Forstner

⁷⁶ Ibid., 68; Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics*, 184.

⁷⁷ Torcy's memorandum, 19 August 1712 quoted in Corp, *Stuarts in France*, 72.

⁷⁸ BL Add MS 70029 f. 116, Leopold to Harley, 11 May 1712.

⁷⁹ ADMM 3F 421 f. 64, Forstner to Leopold, 27 May 1712; Corp, *Stuarts in France*, 72.

⁸⁰ AAE CP Lorr. 83 fos. 13–4, D'Audiffret to Louis XIV, 6 September 1712; ADMM 3F 421 fos. 126–30, Forstner to Leopold, 8 September 1712; Forstner to Leopold, 19 September 1712.

⁸¹ Bolingbroke to Plenipotentiaries, 24 September 1712 in Adrian Lashmore-Davies, ed., *The Unpublished Letters of Henry St. John, First Viscount Bolingbroke, Volume II: Letters 29 May 1711–30 December 1712* (London, 2020), letter 570.

was told that ‘whilst the general event of things remained uncertain, he could [not] expect very great instances’ from Britain in support of Leopold.⁸² Anne and her ministry were now only prepared to support Leopold’s demands concerning the Treaty of Ryswick of 1697. All articles concerning his sovereignty in that treaty should be honoured in any treaty agreed at Utrecht. However, in so far as any other territories were concerned, the queen could only wish Leopold success. Her plenipotentiaries would not insist upon the duke’s pretensions to be indemnified for the loss of Mantua and Monferrato.⁸³ By the time that the ministry had curbed its support for Leopold, the duke had already agreed to host James and he was certain that the Stuart prince would eventually be restored. **Additionally, it should be remembered that Leopold was a former exile in his own right, and aware of the propaganda and prestige which could be generated on his own behalf in hosting the exiled James. This was something which he would take full advantage of while James was his guest from 1713–15 and evidence has shown that this support continued until the duke’s death in 1729.**⁸⁴

However, Forstner’s claims regarding the ministry’s support for James and their preparation for his restoration should also be compared with what is known of Oxford and Bolingbroke’s activities during this time. The peace preliminaries, which had been signed in September 1711, served only to alienate the ministry from the Hanoverians. This grew as negotiations began in Utrecht in January 1712. Indeed, Oxford was already attempting to reconcile with Hanover and had introduced a bill which was to give precedence of all peers to the electoral family.⁸⁵ While rumours of a Jacobite restoration were circulating, Oxford had

⁸² Bolingbroke to Plenipotentiaries, 28 November 1712 in *Unpublished letters*, letter 612.

⁸³ Bolingbroke to Plenipotentiaries, 3 February 1713 in Adrian Lashmore-Davies, ed., *The Unpublished Letters of Henry St. John, First Viscount Bolingbroke, Volume III: Letters 30 December 1712–18 September 1713* (London, 2020), letter 667.

⁸⁴ Griffin, ‘Duke Leopold of Lorraine’, 1244–69; Jérémy Filet, ‘Many Happy Returns’, *History Today*, Vol. 73 (2023).

⁸⁵ Corp, *Stuarts in France*, 71; Hill, *Robert Harley*, 176.

gone to Hanover: 'to give the elector true notions of the condition' which had led Britain to sue for peace with France. Oxford's ministry was seeking to convince the Hanoverians that they, and not the Whigs, had the elector's best interests at heart.⁸⁶ As for the Jacobites, Oxford was willing to deal with them to secure his political position at home, and he had professed his support to James to curtail French invasion threats. At the same time, Oxford would attempt to have James leave Lorraine and convert to Anglicanism. This was in order to quell accusations from being made in parliament that he was pro-Jacobite, and to gain favour with the House of Hanover.⁸⁷ Meanwhile Bolingbroke travelled to Paris for negotiations with Torcy in the summer of 1712 and famously attended an opera on the same evening as James. Still, aside from attempting to uncover Whig correspondents with the Stuart court through Gaultier, Bolingbroke had little contact with the Stuarts prior to December 1713.⁸⁸

Although we cannot be certain, Oxford may have been working to convince Forstner of the benefits for Leopold in hosting James and his court. Bolingbroke may have encouraged this too as the negotiations with France could not progress while James remained at St. Germain.⁸⁹ Therefore, it suited both the ministry and the French to see James removed as quickly as possible. Additionally, Forstner had only spoken with one other individual concerning French proposals for James to stay in Lorraine. The person in question was Steingens the Palatine envoy **and Oxford's adherent**.⁹⁰ **Whoever** Forstner's sources were, he made it clear to Leopold that welcoming James was the best course of action for his duchy. As a small state ruler attempting to advance the honour and prestige of his house and

⁸⁶ BL Add Ms 70029, fos. 169–72, St John to Oxford, 18 June 1712.

⁸⁷ Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory politics*, 185–87.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 190; Gregg, *Anne*, 359.

⁸⁹ Corp, *Stuarts in France*, 73.

⁹⁰ ADMM, 3F 421, Forstner to Leopold, June 1713.

seeking to press his own political interests at Utrecht, Leopold decided to play host to the Stuart court.

Leopold, the Jacobites and the '15: the Forstner connection

Leopold did indeed think a Stuart restoration likely to happen because of his knowledge of the state of Jacobitism in Britain. He thus welcomed James between 1713 and 1716, as though he were the future king of Britain and Ireland. This challenges the idea that Louis XIV pressured Leopold to accept James into his duchy.⁹¹

In June 1712, Leopold was receiving news from Forstner that the Tory ministry was showing interest in James's well-being:

Monseigneur, I cannot help but report the words spoken by the Duke of Hamilton, one of the most powerful Lords in the dominant party, when he enquired about what the Gazette printed regarding the time the Pretender would spend in Bar or Commercy. I answered by more or less repeating what Mr John [Bolingbroke] told me at the end of his speech: 'tis that this 'illustrious exile' hath attained some sense of contentment at finding himself in the territories of a Prince, who was long an 'illustrious exile' himself.⁹²

From October 1712 to the death of Anne, Leopold asked his envoy for regular updates on the situation at her court, and on the government's inclination toward James. From the very beginning, Forstner thought that James had a good chance of being restored,⁹³ and

⁹¹ Baumont, *Règne de Léopold*, 97. McCluskey, 'The Neutrality of Lorraine', 37.

⁹² ADMM 3F 421 f. 79, Forstner to Leopold, 14 June 1712.

⁹³ 'Car à la vérité, Monseigneur, on est icy si malcontent de la conduite de l'electeur de Hannovre, et la nation même en general commence a temoigner une si grande aversion pour ce prince, que je ne puis jamais m'imaginer qu'il montera du moins paisiblement sur le trône.' ADMM 3F 421, Forstner to Leopold, 2 October 1712.

Leopold had already received signals that the government was carefully monitoring who could be in Bar with James and in what capacity.⁹⁴ On 3 August 1712, Forstner wrote:

The discontent the ministry and a fair part of the nation express towards the House of Hanover leads me to assume that the Prince of Wales could one day reclaim the throne. There is a man here, in favour with Milord Treasurer, who guarantees the Queen possesses a written cession from the Pretender stating that he renounces his rights as long as his sister the Queen lives. Yet, some believe that this prince comes bearing the title Prince of Walles once the peace signed, and thus be declared heir presumptive.⁹⁵

This passage clearly suggests that a favourite of Oxford had implied that James could be restored. Forstner believed him because he had noticed the circulation of several tracts defending the interests of the Pretender around Queen Anne's court.⁹⁶

On 21 February 1713, James arrived in the castle of Bar-le-Duc with a small retinue of Jacobites, and under the incognito the Chevalier de St Georges.⁹⁷ Although Leopold could not greet James officially because of his status, he did travel from Lunéville to Bar on 9 March with an array of subordinates.⁹⁸ By mid-1713, Forstner's reports became clearer (and more biased) about the possibility of a Stuart restoration in Britain. Leopold was now convinced that his royal guest would become the next king of Britain and Ireland. On 10 June, Forstner wrote to Leopold that most of England is unhappy apart from 'the London

⁹⁴ Anne's ministry was aware that a Major Butler, an Irishman from Leopold's regiment of guards, would be appointed to James's guard; ADMM 3F 421 f. 124, Forstner to Leopold, 2 September 1712.

⁹⁵ ADMM 3F 421 f. 111, Forstner to Leopold, 3 August 1712.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ ADMM 4F 14, 'Memoir Concerning the Sojourn of the Chevalier de St George in Bar-le-Duc'. This is confirmed by: Bodleian Library: Carte MS 212 f.50: Nairne's letter book, 17 and 23 February 1713. Also see: Lucien Bély, 'L'incognito des Princes: l'exemple de Jacques III', *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Vol. 46 (1992), 40–3.

⁹⁸ Corp, *Stuarts in France*, 285.

merchants' and that tensions are high, especially in Scotland. There was also news that Oxford and others were to defect to James.⁹⁹ In September, Forstner went even further and assured Leopold that Anne and her ministry wanted to 'introduce' James into England to avoid a civil war.¹⁰⁰ Leopold trusted his envoy and he ordered Forstner to return to Lunéville on 26 October 1713, and to stop in Bar-le-Duc to meet with James. The duke's orders were clear: Forstner was to update James about the favourable situation of Jacobitism in Britain, and to advise him to start a correspondence with Torcy, whom Leopold believed was ready to help the Jacobite cause.¹⁰¹

By the beginning of 1714, Leopold still believed that James would be king after Anne's death. He continued to invite James to the ducal court where he could meet with members of the French, Lorraine, and German nobility.¹⁰² In fact, Leopold was unaware that Torcy and James were awaiting word from Oxford to press ahead in Jacobite matters. From March to December 1713, Oxford kept making empty promises but did nothing of significance before the conclusion of the peace. Even though Oxford and Bolingbroke 'had assured him [Torcy] that after the Queen's death they would never have any master but James'.¹⁰³ By May 1714, the two men asked James to change his religion. Even Torcy knew that 'James would never be king as long as he remained a Catholic'.¹⁰⁴ James had no intention of converting stating in March 1714 that: 'I neither want counsel nor advice to remain unalterable in my first resolution, of never disembling my religion; but rather to

⁹⁹ ADMM 3F 209 f. 27, Forstner to Leopold, 10 June 1713.

¹⁰⁰ ADMM 3F 209 f. 28, Leopold to James, September 1713.

¹⁰¹ ADMM 3F 422 f. 5, Leopold to Forstner, 26 September 1713.

¹⁰² *Gazette de Hollande*, No. 59, July 1714; *Gazette de Hollande*, No. 59, January 1715; Amongst those whom James met were Louis de Melun, Prince of Epinoy (1673–1704); Marc de Beauvau, Prince Craon (1676–1754), Charles-Henri, Prince of Vaudémont (1649–1723), Charles-Joseph, Elector of Trier (1680–1715). *Gazette de Hollande*, No. 50, Paris Supplement; *Gazette de Hollande*, No. 72, September 1713; *Gazette de Hollande*, No. 60, July 1714; *Gazette de Hollande*, No. 63, July 1714; *Gazette de Hollande*, No. 15, February 1715.

¹⁰³ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of Stuart Papers belonging to His Majesty the King preserved at Windsor Castle: Volume I* (London, 1902), 321–3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 322.

abandon all than act against my conscience and honour, cost what it will'.¹⁰⁵ This was no secret and the French government probably understood that from at least May 1714.¹⁰⁶

However, Forstner was much more optimistic:

I cannot say whether I am mistaken to put the Queen as the lead here, but I have heard that bishops have made moral quandaries of her usurping the throne to the detriment of the legitimate heir, and that she could only save her soul by putting back the crown back on her brother's head. Besides, she is said to have an incommensurable aversion for the House of Hanover and a love for the established religion, so she has been assured that the Pretender could neither change it, nor want to try doing so after seeing what happened to his late father the king, and that his long exile has made him all the wiser.¹⁰⁷

In this passage Forstner states his belief that Anne was a supporter of her half-brother's restoration. Therefore, France and Lorraine's joint hope for James's restoration were distinct, and both countries adapted their support for the Stuart court according to the evidence at their disposal. Louis XIV already had little hope left for the restoration of the Stuart monarchy, while Leopold still thought the return of James was very likely after Anne's death.¹⁰⁸ This might explain Leopold's role in the production of Jacobite propaganda during the years 1713–15.¹⁰⁹ His cooperation was so blatant that George I refused to receive Leopold's newest envoy to his court: Nicolas-François, Marquis de Lambertye

¹⁰⁵ Martin Haile (Mary Hallé), *James Francis Edward: the Old Chevalier* (London, 1907), 152

¹⁰⁶ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Clairambault 295, fos. 353–79: 'Mémoire sur les espérances que le chevalier de St Georges peut avoir à la succession de la Reine Anne', 1 September 1714.

¹⁰⁷ ADMM 3 F 210, 'Mémoire de Forstner sur l'Angleterre et la Maison de Hanovre', 24 May 1713.

¹⁰⁸ France adapted its position several times in accordance with the developing political turmoil within Britain and played a fine political game between 1714 and 1716. See, Daniel Szechi, "'A Nation much given to changes': the French Understanding of English Politics in 1715" in *Journal of the Western Society for French History*, Vol. 32 (2004), 65–81.

¹⁰⁹ Gérard Voreaux, *Les Peintres Lorrains du XVIIIème Siècle* (Paris, 1998), 135–40, 150–1.

(1682-1741).¹¹⁰ With rumours circulating that Lambertye was distributing James's declaration in London, Leopold feigned ignorance about the existence of such seditious material and ordered Lambertye to return to Lorraine.¹¹¹

Conclusion

The correspondence between Forstner and Leopold not only sheds new light on the discussion surrounding the place of residence of the Jacobite claimant to the throne of Britain and Ireland, but also adds complexity to the traditional Franco-German perspective usually employed to study the history of the Duchy of Lorraine. It is now difficult to believe that James's residence in Lorraine was a result of the plenipotentiaries of Utrecht forcing Leopold to welcome the Stuart court to Lorraine. Rather, it was in many ways the result of Forstner's incapacity to make sense of the political negotiations at Queen Anne's court and the contradicting Jacobite intrigues surrounding the Hanoverian succession.

Leopold's views and actions were in fact dictated by the flow of information delivered by Forstner. However, the duke was ignorant of the composition of his envoy's information network. **Although an analysis of one's social networks based upon their written correspondence will always be anecdotal, an examination of Forstner's social network in this context would suggest that he largely associated with the Tory party and its supporters. Forstner's perspective was distorted by his social circle, and this was presumably exacerbated by his involvement with Bolingbroke, Oxford, and Oxford's minion Steingens. As a result,** Forstner's reports were influenced by the political affiliations of his contacts.¹¹² The envoy surrounded himself with ministers whose Tory inclinations were

¹¹⁰ ADMM 3F 211 f. 8, Leopold to Lambertye, 8 November 1714; *Gazette de Hollande*, No. 94, November 1714.

¹¹¹ ADMM 3F 211 f. 12, Leopold to Lambertye, 9 November 1714.

¹¹² It is also worth noting that Forstner did not set up a proper intelligence network of paid informers; there is no evidence in the Lorraine archives of Leopold allocating any budget for his envoy to use on such an important endeavour.

instrumental in shaping both the content of the reports sent to Lorraine, as well as the subsequent orders he would receive from Leopold. One may wonder whether Forstner was aware that he was receiving biased intelligence. From his missives to Leopold, it is very difficult to identify whether Bolingbroke was delivering the Queen's orders to Forstner, or rather his personal instructions. As such, it is unlikely that the envoy was fully aware of his shortcomings.

All in all, Forstner did not **achieve** the objectives set by his master. Leopold's instructions were given to realise future schemes designed to expand his territorial pretensions at Utrecht. Still, it seems that Forstner was out of his depth, both on the front of the multifaceted negotiations surrounding the peace of Utrecht, and on the thorny question of James' place of residence. In contrast, Louis XIV and Torcy had a much more nuanced understanding of the situation and were 'playing both sides of the British dynastic crisis with consummate skills'.¹¹³ Although Leopold managed to maintain the independence of his duchy, the real beneficiaries of Forstner's time in London were Anne **and James**. Anne's detractors could no longer accuse her of making a 'Jacobite peace'.¹¹⁴ **Meanwhile, James was welcomed into Lorraine by Leopold** who made sure that the Jacobite court was well cared for in the case of a Stuart restoration. As early as January 1715, the French ambassador to Britain, Charles François de la Bonde, Marquis d'Iberville (1653–1723), deduced, as Forstner had also done, that trouble was brewing in the British Isles. D'Iberville informed Torcy that tensions were so high in Britain and Ireland that there was no way they would 'not produce real trouble'.¹¹⁵ Indeed, after George I's accession, Jacobitism was more stimulated

¹¹³ Szechi, "A Nation Much Given to Changes", 80.

¹¹⁴ George Bennet, 'English Jacobitism, 1710–15: Myth and Reality,' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 32 (1982), 137–51.

¹¹⁵ D'Iberville to Torcy, 27 January 1715 quoted in Szechi, "A Nation Much Given to Change", 71.

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than ever, and Leopold, still believing that James could be restored, supported the preparation of the 1715 rising from the Duchy of Lorraine.

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