

IN THIS SERIES

- 1 Thomas O'Connor (ed.), *The Irish in Europe, 1580-1815*
- 2 Thomas O'Connor & Mary Ann Lyons (eds), *Irish migrants in Europe after Kinsale, 1602-1820*
- 3 Thomas O'Connor & Mary Ann Lyons (eds), *Irish communities in early-modern Europe*

Irish Communities in Early-Modern Europe

Thomas O'Connor & Mary Ann Lyons
Editors



FOUR COURTS PRESS

Nathaniel Hooke (1664–1738) and the French embassy to Saxony, 1711–12*

Thomas Byrne

From the Baltic to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic coast to the steppes of Russia, Europe was a continent beset by war in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The Spanish War of Succession (1702–13), the Great Northern War (1700–71),¹ and the Hungarian uprising (1703–11)² combined left no region of Europe unscathed; indeed the Spanish War alone has been called a real world war since skirmishes occurred throughout colonial possessions world-wide.³ This conflict was precipitated in November 1700 when Charles II of Spain (1661–1700) died without an heir. Given the chronic fragility of his physical and mental condition, his demise had been awaited for nearly forty years. Anticipating an acute crisis in the absence of a designated successor, diplomatic endeavours had produced agreement to avoid armed confrontation on the issue through a pre-emptive division of the territorial spoils. However, contrary to the pre-existing partition agreements made amongst the great powers, Charles's will unexpectedly named the grandson of Louis XIV of France (1643–1715), Philippe, duke of Anjou (1683–1746) as successor to the throne of Spain and the entire Spanish Empire. If this came to pass, the Bourbon dynasty would supplant their long-term rivals, the Habsburgs, south of the Pyrenees.

* The author acknowledges the contribution of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences Scholarship in facilitating the research on which this essay is based. ¹ The Great Northern War was fought between King Karl XII (1682–1718) of Sweden and a coalition led by the Russian tsar, Peter I, 'the Great' (1672–1725). By the end of the war, Sweden had lost her supremacy as leading power in the Baltic region to Russia. ² The Hungarian uprising was led by Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi (1676–1735). ³ Joseph Bergin discusses this prevalence of war and its impact in the long seventeenth century, 'the age of the soldier', in his introduction to J. Bergin (ed.), *The seventeenth century: Europe, 1598–1715* (Oxford, 2001), pp 9–10. A.J. Veenendaal gives a good outline of the complex subject of the Spanish Succession War in his chapter, 'The war of Spanish Succession in Europe' in J.S. Bromley (ed.), *The new Cambridge modern history. VI: the rise of Great Britain and Russia, 1688–1725* (Cambridge, 1971), pp 410–45. See R. Frost, *The northern wars, 1558–1721* (Harlow, 2000) for background and analysis of the long drawn out wars in the north, and M. Hochedlinger, *Austria's wars of emergence: war, state and society in the Habsburg monarchy, 1683–1797* (London, 2003) for the context of the Hungarian risings.

The potential for conflict was increased greatly when Louis XIV decided to accept the terms of the testament.⁴ England and the Netherlands, as well as Habsburg Austria were now gravely concerned at the prospect of a dynastic and commercial union of France and Spain. However, this was still a war that nobody wanted. After the recent horrific experience of nine years of debilitating warfare from 1688 to 1697,⁵ few argued for further conflict. Indeed, a negotiated settlement based on a renewed and renegotiated division of the Spanish inheritance seemed feasible. In the event, these hopes proved sadly elusive, dashed by what were viewed as provocative actions on Louis's part. In a manner reminiscent of the outbreak of World War I, extensive French and Austrian war preparations in northern Italy quickly escalated. Thoughts of war became war itself. Other allied states were rapidly drawn into this conflagration that marked the first decade of the new century as one of 'death and devastation, taxation [and] food shortages'.⁶

The year 1711 proved crucial in bringing this long drawn out struggle to a close. All parties to the conflict were war weary. In 1706 civic unrest had broken out in Vienna when, prefiguring the events of 1848, students went on the rampage in protest at the continuing war.⁷ The 'common people' of the Netherlands, subject to high taxes, also grew less supportive of their country's involvement and a political revolution seemed possible.⁸ In England, tensions were rising to such an extent over finance, foreign policy and political control that dark rumours of coups and civil war were circulating.⁹ Despite these pressures, negotiations to conclude a general peace had failed in 1709 in The Hague and again in Geertruidenberg in 1710.

However, developments in 1711 augured well for renewed efforts at peace-making. The political situation in Britain, the paymaster of the Grand Alliance, was changing decisively.¹⁰ The new Tory administration under Robert Harley (1661–1724), which had replaced the previous aggressively pro-

4 Louis faced a difficult dilemma regarding the testament. If he accepted the terms, war would certainly be declared by those powers anxious for a share of the spoils. However, if he declined, the testament stipulated that the entire inheritance would then go to the next claimant, Archduke Charles of the Austrian line of Habsburgs. This again would force France to go to war to defend its own interests. See D. Parrot, 'War and international relations' in Bergin (ed.), *The seventeenth century*, pp. 135–36. 5 The War of the Grand Alliance (1688–97). This war between France and a coalition of European powers is also called the League of Augsburg, King William's War and, after 1689, the Grand Alliance. 6 J. Black, 'Warfare, crisis and absolutism' in E. Cameron (ed.), *Early modern Europe* (Oxford, 1999), p. 209. 7 Anonymous informant to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, marquis de Torcy, 9 Feb. 1706 (Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Correspondance politique (hereinafter AAE, CP), Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, ff. 212r, 212v). 8 Anonymous informant to de Torcy, 16 Dec. 1704 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 106r.); Anonymous informant to de Torcy, 13 Jan. 1705 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 124v). 9 N. Hooke, Relation de l'exécution des Ordres du Roy, confiez au Baron de Hooke, après du Roy Auguste, en 1711, et en 1712, 24 May 1712 [with later annotations and marginalia], (Bodleian Library (hereinafter Bodl.), MS D 26 ff. 483–84). 10 Hooke, Relation, f. 476.

war Whig government after the election of 1710, was anxious to end hostilities.¹¹ Added to this, on 17 April 1711 the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph I (1678–1711) died suddenly. His anticipated successor, Archduke Charles of Austria (1685–1740), the Habsburg pretender to the Spanish throne, would now reign over the reunited Habsburg Empire of Charles V (1500–58) if his claim to the Spanish succession was made good. This presented at least as great a threat to the balance of power in Europe, and to British and Dutch commercial interests world-wide, as a Bourbon king on the throne of Spain.¹²

For France, this rupture in the Grand Alliance was especially timely. It opened a much more favourable vista for the near exhausted country, providing promising diplomatic possibilities on two fronts and raising morale considerably. In the western sphere, a British administration amenable to peace and increasingly diverging from the Dutch alliance in the wake of King William's death in 1702, augured well for a successful outcome to renewed peace initiatives while in the eastern sphere, the death of the emperor and the ensuing election of a successor offered the opportunity for possible French intercession in the process. One of the central figures in French diplomacy during this crucial period was an Irishman, Nathaniel Hooke (1664–1738). To understand how and why he assumed that position, we need to investigate the background and formation of one of the more successful Irish Jacobites who left Ireland for foreign service on the Continent.

Nathaniel Hooke was an unusual recruit into the ranks of Jacobitism. He was born near Drogheda in 1664. His father, John Hooke (*fl.* 1640–70) was a non-conforming Protestant clergyman who was ejected from his church living following the restoration of Charles II (1630–85) and of Anglicanism in 1660. Moreover, the family was not only Protestant but had been closely attached to the parliamentary side during the Civil Wars (1642–51) and the Interregnum (1649–60). At the time of Nathaniel's birth, the family was relatively prosperous, having successfully established themselves as merchants in Dublin from the 1640s. His grandfather, Alderman Thomas Hooke (d. 1670) rose through the ranks of the municipal government of the city, becoming mayor in 1654.¹³ By virtue of being closely involved in and benefiting from the workings of the Cromwellian polity, especially in relation to land transfer, Thomas emerged from this turbulent period far wealthier than he had entered it.¹⁴ This

11 For the background to this shift in power in British party politics see W.T. Morgan, 'The ministerial revolution of 1710 in England' in *Political Science Quarterly*, 36, no. 2 (1921), pp. 184–210. 12 Anonymous informant to de Torcy, 6 Oct. 1711 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 278v). For a discussion of the issue of trade as a factor in the Spanish Succession War, see C. Nettles, 'England and the Spanish-American trade, 1680–1715' in *Journal of Modern History*, 3, no. 1 (1931), pp. 17–32. 13 T.C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English government and reform in Ireland, 1649–1660* (Oxford, 1975), p. 82. 14 W.H. Hardinge, 'On manuscript mapped and other townland surveys in Ireland of a public character, embracing the Gross, Civil

allowed Nathaniel to attend the best schools in Ireland. Despite his privileged upbringing, by 1681 Nathaniel, then aged seventeen, had rapidly entered and just as rapidly exited three universities in three countries in three years, namely Trinity College, Dublin in 1679, Glasgow University in 1679/80 and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge in 1681.¹⁵

The personal reasons behind this academic flitting were intimately linked to and reflective of the wider politico-religious crisis transfixing the Three Kingdoms in this period. The power centre of this constellation of politics – parliament in London – was in a state of almost constant agitation from 1678 onwards. Widely disseminated rumours of ‘popish’ plots, and counter plots, of rampant crypto-Catholicism at court, of assassination attempts against the king, of imminent rebellion and putative invasions from abroad had stoked fears of tyranny and raised apprehensions of tumultuous times on the scale of the vividly remembered 1640s once again. Events in Europe also heightened tension and contributed to a climate of hysteria and widespread paranoia. What was perceived as the menacing power of Catholic France loomed large across the fragile defensive barrier of the English Channel. Huguenot refugees landing in England and Ireland recounted animated tales of marauding dragoonades, graphically demonstrating the ruthless attitude of Louis XIV in relation to Protestants.

As already mentioned the Hooke family had long been staunchly Protestant. Thomas Hooke, the family patriarch at the time of Nathaniel’s birth, had been an active and enthusiastic member of the Independent congregation of the Church of Saint Nicholas in the 1650s, eventually being chosen to discharge the responsibilities of an elder of that church. As a prominent figure within the Independent community in Dublin, he formed close working relationships with the influential Independent divines, Samuel Mather (1626–71) and Samuel Winter (1603–66).¹⁶ These men had arrived in Dublin in the wake of the parliamentary armies. The two Independent congregations, one centred at Christ Church and made up mainly of military officers, and the other, predominantly civilian at St Nicholas’s, owed their existence to the parliamentary invasion and their vitality, in the early 1650s, to the new political, social and

and Down Surveys, from 1640 to 1688’ in *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, xxiv (1862), p. 67. ¹⁵ *Dictionary of National Biography*, xiv (1900), s.v.; T. O’Connor, *An Irish theologian in enlightenment France: Luke Joseph Hooke, 1714–96* (Dublin, 1995), p. 13. ¹⁶ Mather was a graduate of Harvard, and a scion of the New England Puritan family of clergymen and theological writers, of whom Cotton Mather became the most renowned. Samuel’s brothers, Nathaniel and Increase, also lived in Ireland for a period. Mather maintained his Independent conventicle in Dublin until his death in 1671. Thomas Hooke left Mather 40 shillings for a ring in his will of 20 June 1670. See *The correspondence of Col. N. Hooke for the years 1703–07*, ed. W.D. Macray (2 vols, Edinburgh, 1870), ii, ii. Winter became provost of Trinity College, Dublin during the Interregnum, see Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, pp 112–13.

religious dispensation established by the sympathetic regime of Charles Fleetwood (1618–92), Oliver Cromwell’s son-in-law and governor of Ireland.¹⁷

Thomas Hooke was more than an opportunistic leech on the Cromwellian body politic. A supporter of the new order in practice, he also identified himself publicly with its philosophy, even the more dangerous aspects. His statement that the execution of King Charles ‘had been just and that it was [authorised by] a just act of parliament’¹⁸ was reported to the Irish Privy Council in 1662, and he was very fortunate to have escaped censure. In matters of religion, Hooke had also been judged a sufficiently trustworthy and knowledgeable person to be appointed to a committee to test the suitability and orthodoxy of aspiring ministers in the 1650s.¹⁹ In a bittersweet irony, the sins of the father were visited on the son when John Hooke was expelled from his living for failing to conform to Anglican church orthodoxy after the Restoration.

This family history had a predictably profound affect on the formation of Nathaniel Hooke’s religious and political attitudes and beliefs which were in conflict with the orthodox Anglican doctrines of Dublin’s Trinity College. Although he enrolled in Trinity in June 1679, to the young Nathaniel, Scotland’s Glasgow University and its Calvinist tradition appeared a more attractive institution. The university was situated close to the heartland of radical Presbyterianism in south-west Scotland, a hotbed of field conventicles organised by ministers deprived of their livings at the Restoration for refusing to accept a watered down form of episcopacy. A short-lived rebellion seeking a return to covenanting principles had been organised in 1666. Despite defeat the underground religious movement remained strong and adamantly opposed to the government’s policies. The religiously inspired rebellion in Scotland that emerged from this ongoing tension during the summer of 1679 may have acted as a strong motivating and magnetic factor, precipitating Nathaniel’s arrival at Glasgow University. However, in the wake of the suppression of the covenanter rising, the Scottish administration reacted with severe repression against those suspected of being involved in or sympathetic to radical Presbyterianism. Wisely, Hooke made discretion the better part of valour and left Scotland. In 1681 he enrolled in Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, Oliver Cromwell’s Alma Mater.²⁰

Cambridge in the early 1680s was rife with radical political activity aimed at curbing the absolutist and pro-French tendencies of Charles II (1630–85) and

¹⁷ Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, pp 100–101. ¹⁸ Unsigned accusation of disloyalty among members of Dublin Corporation, 1663 (*Cal. S.P. Ire.*, 1663–65, p. 499). ¹⁹ *Ireland under the Commonwealth: being a selection of documents relating to the government of Ireland from 1651 to 1659*, ed. R. Dunlop (2 vols, Manchester, 1913), ii, 588. ²⁰ J. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900* (Cambridge, 1922).

preventing his Catholic brother, James, duke of York (1633–1701) from succeeding to the throne. Despite the good intentions of Charles II, English society at this stage was marked by severe religious intolerance; the 'Popish Plot' (1678) further exacerbated the climate of hysteria.²¹ Hooke became caught up in this radical political ferment, being recorded as one of the signatories of the 'monster petitions' of 1679 in favour of excluding the Catholic heir.²² Delving deeper into the turbulent waters of English politics, Hooke left Cambridge in 1681 without graduating. Two years later, determined not to compromise his political and religious beliefs, he travelled to the Netherlands, at that time the main base of exiled English opposition to Charles II.²³

Hooke quickly established himself as a trusted aide to James Scott, duke of Monmouth (1649–85) and became his Independent private chaplain.²⁴ In 1685 he was sent by Monmouth to London to raise a popular rebellion there diverting government forces from the main rebel force that continued to fight in the English West Country.²⁵ Ultimately, however, this rebellion against James II came to nothing as Monmouth's small force was quickly routed. Hooke, evading the clutches of Hanging Judge Jeffries²⁶ (1648–89), managed to escape back to Amsterdam.²⁷ In 1688, after three nerve-racking years as a wanted fugitive, he took his life in his hands, returned to England and surrendered to James II. His audacity paid off. James was impressed by Nathaniel's sincerity and granted the young Irish rebel a full pardon.²⁸ This proved a turning point in Hooke's life: he swore allegiance to James II and even converted to Catholicism, remaining loyal when William of Orange (1650–1702) landed.²⁹

21 S. Mandelbrote, 'Religious belief and the politics of toleration in the late seventeenth century' in *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History*, 81, no. 2 (2001), pp 93–114, examines the dynamics and mentalities of toleration in England, and includes a brief comparison with the huguenot experience in France. 22 M.S. Zook, *Radical Whigs and conspiratorial politics in late Stuart England* (University Park, PA, 1999), p. 198. 23 G.F. Nuttall, 'English dissenters in the Netherlands, 1640–89' in *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History*, 59, n.s. (1978–9), pp 37–54; J. Walker, 'English exiles in Holland during the reigns of Charles II and James II' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 30 (1948), pp 111–25. 24 Letter from unidentified informant in Utrecht to Ambassador Bevil Skelton, 23 May 1685 (n.s.) (British Library (hereinafter BL) add. MS 41817 f. 49); V. Wyndham, *The Protestant duke: a life of Monmouth* (London, 1976), p. 149; B. Bevan, *James, duke of Monmouth* (London, 1973), p. 194; J.N.P. Watson, *Captain-General and rebel chief: the life of James, duke of Monmouth* (London, 1979), p. 221. 25 *Original papers containing the secret history of Great Britain from the restoration to the accession of the House of Hannover, to which are prefixed extracts of the life of James II as written by himself*, ed. J. MacPherson (Dublin, 1775), p. 145. 26 Hanging Judge Jeffries gained notoriety when he presided at the so-called 'Bloody Assizes' that followed Monmouth's rebellion against James II in 1685. 27 R.L. Greaves, *Secrets of the kingdom: British radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688–89* (Stanford, 1992), p. 309. 28 *The Ellis correspondence: letters written during the years 1686, 1687, 1688 and addressed to John Ellis esq ...*, ed. George Agar Ellis (London, 1820), p. 103. 29 Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the manuscripts of F.W. Leyborne-Popham, Esq. of Littlecote, County Wiltshire* (Norwich, 1899), p. 270.

He fought at the Boyne in July 1690 and left Ireland, like thousands of others, for France in 1691.³⁰ After further service on the Continent, Hooke was demobilised following the Peace of Ryswick in 1697. His military career soon recommenced as a colonel in the Galmoy Irish regiment in 1701.³¹ Transferred to the Regiment de Sparre in 1703, Hooke participated in several subsequent campaigns. He was also involved in other missions including an audacious scheme to invade Scotland in 1708, in the course of which Hooke was created Lord Hooke of Hooke Castle, County Wexford by James III and promoted to brigadier general by Louis XIV.³²

In 1709 Hooke fought at the battle of Malplaquet, the greatest battle of the War of Spanish Succession.³³ The invading armies facing France stalled and the stalemate led to peace talks. However, the harsh conditions demanded by the Allies made peace impossible. The breakdown in negotiations meant the resumption of war but shortly afterwards, the new Tory government in Britain initiated direct and unofficial peace talks with France.³⁴ By the spring of 1711 these talks were well advanced when the English chief minister, Robert Harley was seriously injured in an assassination attempt.³⁵ The sudden death of the

30 *Mémoires de Saint-Simon*, ed. A. Boislisle (45 vols, Paris, 1879–1930), xv, 405. 31 This was the infantry regiment of Pierce Butler, Viscount Galmoy, formed from the remains of the Charlemont infantry regiment and the Queen's Dismounted Dragoons in 1698, and continuing as a unit of the French army until incorporation in the regiment of Dillon in 1715. See J.C. O'Callaghan, *History of the Irish brigades* (Glasgow, 1870), p. 149. 32 M. Pinard, *Chronologie historique militaire, contenant l'histoire de la création de toutes les charges, dignités et grades militaires supérieures; de toutes les personnes qui les ont possédés; ... des troupes de la maison du roi: ... des toutes les régiments et autres troupes: ... enfin une table raisonnée des ordonnances militaires, tant imprimées que manuscrites, rendues depuis le règne de Louis XIV jusqu'à présent, tirée sur les originaux. Avec des éclaircissements en notes critiques des auteurs qui ont travaillé à l'histoire de France et militaire* (8 vols, Paris, 1760–78), vii, 29–30. 33 J.A. Lynn, 'The trace italienne and the growth of armies: the French case' in *Journal of Military History*, 55, no. 3 (July 1991), p. 314; W. Doyle, *Old regime France* (Oxford, 2001), p. 190, cites 35,000 dead; D. Parrott, 'War and international relations' in Bergin (ed.), *The seventeenth century*, p. 125, calculates a casualty rate of 25 per cent for the six hours of battle. Parrot also discusses the significance of the battle as a crucial defining moment in European military and political history, see Parrot, 'War and international relations', pp 125–7. Intriguingly such was the notoriety and resonance of the battle in wider society that it become the subject of an opera called *Last year's campagne* performed by puppets in London's Punch theatre in 1710. Amidst the scenes of the slaughter it also apparently featured 'several comical entertainments of Punch in the camp', see E. Hinderaker, 'The "four Indian kings" and the imaginative construction of the first British Empire' in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 53, no. 3 (July 1996), p. 498. 34 Anonymous agent to de Torcy, 13 Oct. 1711 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 276v.; *Réflexions générales sur l'état de la négociations d'Angleterre*, July 1711 (National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office London State Papers, 31/3/197, f. 358) gives an overview of the peace negotiations underway in early 1711. A major point of discussion was the future of James III and his continued residence in France, see de Torcy to Oxford, 8 Apr. 1712 (TNA: PRO French transcripts 31/3/198, f. 45). 35 B.W. Hill, *Robert Harley: speaker, secretary of state and premier minister* (London, 1988), p. 150.

emperor added to the fluid state of international relations throughout Europe. Old certainties and old alliances were changing quickly.

In this rapidly developing situation Hooke was selected by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the marquis de Torcy (1665–1746), as the most suitable candidate for a covert mission to King Augustus II (1670–1733) of Saxony-Poland.³⁶ This was a singular mark of confidence in Hooke's abilities. De Torcy himself was perhaps the best-qualified and best-trained candidate for the post of foreign minister in the history of French diplomacy. He was the son of Charles Colbert, marquis de Croissy (c.1625–96), foreign minister from 1679 until his death in 1696 and nephew of Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–83), one of Louis XIV's most powerful ministers. De Torcy's entire education had been conceived with the intention of succession to the post of foreign minister. He studied law, languages and made a diplomatic Grand Tour of Europe in the 1680s, visiting Portugal, England, Scandinavia, Italy and Germany. He was perceived by contemporaries as eloquent, persuasive and honest, having a penetrating insight into men and their driving forces.³⁷

His desire for order and efficiency led him to organise a permanent diplomatic archive in the Louvre and to set up a training academy for diplomats, l'Académie Politique, in 1712.³⁸ As befitted a man with an intelligent and ever curious mind, he amassed a collection of over 4,000 books. Heeding the advice of his father, who had viewed the study of history as essential, the majority of these were historical works, ranging widely from ancient to modern, from French to foreign and from religious history to secular histories.³⁹ This breadth of interest was also reflected in Hooke's in-depth knowledge of European international relations. Even after Hooke's death, de Torcy's regard for his former agent was evident as he used his continuing influence as an elder statesman to pressurise the French administration into providing Hooke's widow with a pension.⁴⁰

In addition to Hooke's credit with de Torcy, he had proven ability in the conduct of covert operations.⁴¹ Another more specific factor in Hooke's selec-

tion for this mission to Saxony-Poland was his conversion to Catholicism, something he shared with Augustus. Hooke's religious background in many instances was a significant advantage. As a former Protestant minister, he was a rarity and thus uniquely valuable in the French diplomatic system. His informed insight into, and extensive knowledge of, Protestant religion and culture, and his innate personal understanding of Protestant mentality gave him an uncanny ability to operate effectively in Protestant countries such as Scotland and Saxony.

The majority of Saxons were conspicuously proud of Martin Luther's Saxon roots and their country's rôle in the origin and defence of the Reformation. Lutheranism was regarded as an essential element of Saxon identity, so much so that the conversion of their pragmatic king had greatly unsettled the majority of Saxons (Augustus's wife left him upon hearing of his decision), who feared the future imposition of Catholicism, by stealth or by edict, along with a Catholic dynasty. Consequently, great interest and concern surrounded the religious education and principles of the heir to the electorate, Prince Frederick Augustus. In the weeks immediately prior to Hooke's arrival at the court of Augustus II in Dresden (June 1711), the city was gripped by rumours that the prince of Saxony had converted (spontaneously or forcibly) to Catholicism in Prague. In an attempt to stifle this conjecture, the city was said to have been 'plunged into a general silence and all conversations are constrained'.⁴² To Hooke, who had witnessed and participated in the turmoil and heightened political tensions engendered by the issue of Catholicism and succession in England during the exclusion crisis in England (1679–81), the political-religious situation in Saxony presented many familiar parallels.

Even if the Saxon court had not been exercised by intermingled politico-religious matters, Hooke's mission was already far from straightforward. Relations between France and Saxony were poor. France had long viewed close relations with Poland as important in terms of French foreign policy in Eastern Europe. Political and military alliance with Poland offered the possibility of opening a second front against the Habsburgs. In 1697 the elective nature of the Polish monarchy had offered the opportunity to secure the French position in Poland. However, French prospects were undermined by the machinations

³⁶ Frederick Augustus became elector of Saxony in 1694 as Frederick Augustus I. Following his election as king of Poland-Lithuania in 1697 he assumed the name Augustus II in that kingdom. Poland and Saxony remained distinctly separate entities despite sharing a ruler. However, his Polish title is most often used as historical shorthand when referring to his involvement in European history. ³⁷ W. Roth, 'Jean-Baptiste Colbert, marquis de Torcy' in R. Mousnier (ed.), *Le conseil du roi de Louis XII à la révolution* (Paris, 1970), pp 175–203. ³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 175–203. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 194. ⁴⁰ The marquis de Torcy to the secrétaire d'état de la guerre, 31 Oct. 1738 (Service Historique de la Défense, Département de l'armée de terre, Vincennes (hereinafter SHD, AT), 4YD 1464, personal file of Nathaniel Hooke). This letter was written within six days of Hooke's death on the 25 October, with the speed of response testifying to de Torcy's loyalty to the family. I am deeply indebted to M. Guillaume Vautravers for locating and copying these documents on my behalf. ⁴¹ Hooke's analysis regarding the geo-strategy situation in Europe as outlined in a mémoire to de Torcy demonstrates a keen awareness and understanding of politics

and diplomacy not only on a European scale but from a wider international perspective. For instance, he refers to events and conditions in North America and Asia, evidencing an early version of an Imperial world-view; see *The correspondence of Col. N. Hooke*, ed. Macray, i, 1–11. ⁴² George Mackenzie, secretary of the British legation in Dresden, to the duke of Queensberry, 7 July 1711 (n.s.) (TNA: PRO SP (Poland and Saxony) 88/19 f. 77). The religion of Augustus's son was of great interest in international relations. Mackenzie was detailed to keep a watching brief on the situation and appraise the British government of developments. The depth of interest in the situation was such that when the Frederick August made a trip to Italy in the latter half of 1712, Mackenzie was ordered to leave Dresden and follow his movements closely.

of (the then) Frederick Augustus I of Saxony to raise his state to the top rank of European powers. The Saxon elector, an ambitious and vainglorious man, was determined to emulate the power and prestige of Louis XIV and force his way onto the wider European stage. To achieve this he needed more land, more people and a royal title. Through lavish bribery, rapid military action and the sterling services of his envoy, Colonel Jacob-Heinrich von Fleming (1667–1728) who utilised his powerful family connections in Poland to the full, Augustus II snatched the throne of Poland from under the noses of the French.⁴³ This double victory gave him the pleasure of besting the Sun King while furthering his own aims in one daring gambit.⁴⁴ The French, however, never forgot this blow, nor did they give up attempts to recover influence in the east.

The somewhat tarnished reputation of Augustus also complicated Hooke's mission. Prior to ascending the Polish throne in 1697, he had erratically commanded the emperor's army against the Ottomans. The emperor was greatly relieved by Augustus's timely departure from his post to pursue the Polish crown in 1697.⁴⁵ In other areas of life Augustus II was similarly inconsistent and easily distracted from applying himself to tasks in hand. Hooke states that Augustus placed great trust in his first minister, Count Fleming (the man who had facilitated the election in Poland and who had risen quickly after his exploits there) 'not because of inclination but because of indolence'.⁴⁶ In this analysis, Hooke echoed Louis XIV's view of Augustus as a flawed ruler whose greatest failings were a lack of conviction and consistency.⁴⁷ Louis's view was based on painful firsthand experience of the most capricious of Europe's sovereigns.

In 1701 preliminary articles of alliance had been negotiated and signed with France when Augustus stalled ratification with a succession of excuses.⁴⁸ The extent of his double-dealing became evident when he signed a treaty with the emperor, reinforcing his position in Poland. Augustus extracted this favourable treatment by informing the emperor of the rival French offer, thereby capitalising on the traditional rivalry between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs.⁴⁹ To

43 Anon., *An account of a battle between some young men of the p. of Conti's party and the elector of Saxony's, now king of Poland, and the defeat of the former* (London, 1697); C. Sass, 'The election campaign in Poland in the years 1696–97' in *Journal of Central European Affairs*, 12, no. 2 (1952), pp. 111–27. This latter article suffers from some surprising errors in regard to the spelling of the names of French diplomatic personnel but on the whole contains useful information. 44 T.C.W. Blanning, *The culture of power and the power of culture: old regime Europe, 1600–1789* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 60–63. 45 J. Lukowski, *Liberty's folly: the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in the eighteenth century, 1697–1795* (London, 1991), p. 123 (hereinafter Lukowski, *Liberty's folly*); Sass, 'The election campaign in Poland', p. 122. 46 Hooke, *Relation*, f. 455. 47 L. Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1990), p. 210 (hereinafter Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs*). 48 *Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France depuis les traités de Westphalie jusqu'à la Révolution Française*, ed. L. Farges (31 vols, Paris, 1884–ongoing), v, Pologne, xxii. 49 *Instruction pour le sieur Hooock (sic)*, Brigadier

antagonise the French further and as an example of what could lie ahead for Hooke, on 11 November 1702 the then French minister in Dresden was seized by a lieutenant colonel and fifty dragoons on his way back from supper and unceremoniously expelled from Saxony. As one diplomat put it 'one can never tell whom [Augustus] will betray next'.⁵⁰

Hooke arrived in June 1711 at what was fast becoming the most extravagant court in Europe.⁵¹ Augustus was determined to create a centre of cultural splendour in Dresden, a 'Florence on the Elbe'. The Zwinger palace, still under construction in 1711, was intended to rival Versailles and provide the ultimate setting for the royal court to act out lavish pageants and parades, reflecting the grandeur of the king himself. Hooke entered the Saxon capital not openly as a representative of France but incognito, posing as an ordinary traveller drawn by the city's enhanced reputation as an attractive destination on the European Grand Tour. However, his effort at dissimulation was not entirely successful.

His presence was noted by the secretary of the British diplomatic mission in Dresden, George Mackenzie (1669–1725), in his report addressed to James Douglas, second duke of Queensberry (1662–1711) in July 1711.⁵² Mackenzie was suspicious of Hooke from the outset, being 'assured by more than one that he is from Versailles'.⁵³ The ramifications from the recent change of power in England also contributed to his apprehensions. An ardent Whig,⁵⁴ distrusted by the new secretary of state, Henry St John (1678–1751) for his 'correspondence with those who labour to undo the [peace] negotiations',⁵⁵ Mackenzie had been left in Dresden by the departing British envoy to Poland, another Scot, John Dalrymple, second earl of Stair (1673–1747).

Stair was intimately linked with John Churchill, first duke of Marlborough (1650–1722), the lynchpin of the pro-war Whig grouping that had so recently lost political primacy in Britain, and with it almost all powers of placement and patronage.⁵⁶ Marlborough's own position as captain-general, which had up to

d'infanterie dans les armées du roy, 6 May 1711 (AAE, CP, Pologne, vol. 131, f. 210v.) (hereinafter *Instruction pour le sieur Hooock*). 50 Lukowski, *Liberty's folly*, p. 123. 51 Mackenzie to the duke of Queensberry, 10 July 1711 (n.s.) (TNA: PRO SP (Poland and Saxony) 88/19, f. 88). 52 Queensberry had died on 6 July, before Mackenzie's dispatch reached London. Queensberry's position as secretary of state (Scotland) was an addition to the previous complement of two office holders with this designation, secretary of state (northern department) and secretary of state (southern department), see J.C. Sainty, *Officials of the secretaries of state, 1660–1782* (London, 1973), p. 22. After Queensberry's death, his unconventional rôle in foreign affairs was reincorporated into the responsibilities of Secretary St John. 53 Mackenzie to the duke of Queensberry, 10 July 1711 (n.s.) (TNA: PRO SP (Poland and Saxony) 88/19, f. 88). 54 Hooke, *Relation*, f. 459. 55 Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs*, pp. 345–6. 56 Hooke was contemptuous of the party that he had so ardently supported in his youth, stating that 'the Whig party of today is not the same one called by that name in other times. It consists only of a few prominent families and their creatures. The majority of the nation is against them and their

this point been insulated from the political bloodletting by his military renown and hold over the army, was now severely threatened.⁵⁷ His vocal support for continuing the war was the chief line of attack upon which the Tories aimed to undermine finally his declining credit at the English court. Backstairs machinations had already largely turned Queen Anne (1665–1714) against her former favourite. If it could be convincingly argued that Marlborough's enthusiasm for renewing hostilities was based on self-interest, charges of war profiteering would swiftly end his supremacy as military commander.

Equally Marlborough was aware that if the war continued long enough to allow him to secure another spectacular victory such as Blenheim (1704), or to mount a successful invasion of France itself, he would have a much better chance of escaping from the snare being laid for him by the Tories. This explains why Mackenzie received strict instructions from the duke of Marlborough's secretary, Adam Cardonnel (d. 1719) to 'keep a watchful eye toward him [Hooke] seeing as the duke of Marlborough is of the opinion that the French have sent him here for some design'.⁵⁸ Any negotiations that might culminate in hastening the end of the war would jeopardise Marlborough's survival strategy.

Hooke's instructions charged him to reopen relations with Augustus.⁵⁹ This moment was particularly promising for such an attempt. Following the death of an emperor, the elector of Saxony traditionally assumed the position of regent or vicar of the Empire until the election of a successor.⁶⁰ Hooke was to suggest that from this unique position of strength, as no successor to the throne had been officially endorsed, Augustus had an excellent opportunity to seek the imperial throne himself. A number of lines of reasoning were used to

leaders are not popular'. See Hooke, *Relation*, f. 484. Hooke was comparing the situation with the great days of the Whig party in the late 1670s and early 1680s when Shaftesbury and the other popular Whig leaders had mobilised widespread support for their position, see M. Knights, *Politics and opinion in crisis, 1678–81* (Cambridge, 1994), and T.J. Doyle, 'The duke of Ormond, the Popish Plot and the Exclusion crisis, 1678–82' (unpublished M. Litt thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2004) for an Irish perspective on this period. ⁵⁷ Stephen Saunders Webb has argued that Marlborough's dominant position and widespread influence in James II's armed forces had allowed him to instigate and direct what was in effect a military coup in November 1688. See S.S. Webb, *Lord Churchill's coup: the Anglo-American empire and the Glorious Revolution reconsidered* (New York, 1995). While this interpretation is contentious, Marlborough's Tory opponents in 1711 were acutely aware of his alarming hold over the army and navy through a combination of family links and patronage. His request to be awarded the captain-general's position for life had evoked comparisons with Oliver Cromwell (or given his Imperial connections, fears of an English Wallenstein) and his well-known predilection for self-aggrandisement added grist to the rumour mill. Hence the Tories need to proceed cautiously and deliberately in engineering Marlborough's fall. ⁵⁸ Mackenzie to the earl of Dartmouth, 2 Oct. 1711 (n.s.) (TNA: PRO SP (Poland and Saxony) 88/19, f. 183). ⁵⁹ Instruction pour le sieur Hooke, f. 211v. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 211v; F.L. Carsten, *Princes and parliaments in Germany: from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century* (Oxford, 1959), p. 235.

support this proposition: the Saxon dynastic lineage was as distinguished as any in the Empire; Saxony was a sufficiently important state to lend credence to a bid and a successful outcome would secure a position as a front rank power. Augustus's position in Poland was still precarious and internal opposition to Saxon rule was growing. His alliance with Russia, a newcomer to the sphere of mainstream European geopolitics but a rapidly growing regional power in the Baltic at Sweden's expense, was proving to be a double-edged sword, with the Saxon first minister expressing his growing fear of the tsar, Peter I, 'the Great' (1672–1725).⁶¹

The French diplomatic line proposed that as Holy Roman Emperor, Augustus could free himself from this dangerous dependency on Russia by calling on the aid of all the German states to maintain his possessions, as the Habsburgs had done. As a convert to Catholicism from the heartland of German Lutheranism, he would be acceptable to both Protestant and Catholic states of the Empire. Failing this, Augustus could move to use his temporary position of power to seek his own election as king of the Romans, effectively installing himself as the designated successor to the new emperor, Charles VI (1685–1740). France would wield its influence on his behalf in both cases.

The other major option presented was a bid for the crown of Hungary. This kingdom, previously subject to the Ottoman Empire had now fallen under the sway of the Habsburgs, following a decisive Austrian victory over the Turks in 1687.⁶² The Hungarian magnates, 'cruel, proud, revengeful . . . and inclined to war',⁶³ were deeply divided among themselves. Though 'all hated the Germans',⁶⁴ some saw the Habsburgs as their best defence against the Turks and were prepared to acknowledge that the crown of Hungary, previously an elective monarchy, was now an hereditary possession of that dynasty. Others believed that their noble status and prerogatives were being usurped once more by an outside power. Religion also figured as an extra complicating factor with a large proportion of the rebels adhering to Lutheranism.

The admixture of social, political, ethnic and religious tension frequently gave rise to rebellion. George I Rákóczi (1591–1648) 'Prince of Transylvania, lord of a part of the kingdom of Hungary and Count of Zekella' initiated a rebellion 'for love of the Hungarian nation, defence of liberty, religious freedom and the erection again of the statues and laws of the kingdom'⁶⁵ in

⁶¹ This was borne out in 1715 when civil war broke out and Augustus was rescued only by Russian intervention, henceforth to act as little more than a Russian surrogate in Poland, a country described in this period by Thomas Carlyle as a 'beautifully phosphorescent rot-heap'. See N. Davies, *God's playground: a history of Poland* (2 vols, Oxford, 1981), i, 492. ⁶² [Chargé d'affaires Maron?] to de Torcy, 8 Apr. 1711 (AAE, CP, Pologne, vol. 131, f. 201v.). ⁶³ A. Boyer, *A geographical and historical description of those parts of Europe which are the seat of war* (London, 1696), p. 168. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.* ⁶⁵ G. Rákóczi, *The declaration or, manifesto of George Rákóczi, prince of Transylvania, to the states and peeres of Hungarie, together with the reasons added thereunto of his modern taking up of armes the 17 of February, anno 1644* (London, 1644), p. 5.

February 1644. This strain of anti-Austrian feeling was often intertwined with a confessional element as the Counter-Reformation supported by the Habsburgs gained ground against Protestantism. Further rebellions broke out in 1670 and 1678–85.⁶⁶ George I Rákóczi's grandson, Ferenc I Rákóczi (1645–76) was a central figure in the former while the latter uprising, the Kuruc (Crossbearers') rebellion, was led by Imre Thököly (1656–1705), who married Rákóczi's widow, Ilona Zrínyi. This rebellion attracted the support of Louis XIV who sent 100,000 silver thalers, Europe's most widely accepted currency, and 2,000 men to aid the rebels in 1677 before the outbreak of hostilities.⁶⁷ Even when not at war with Austria, Louis was keen to cause the greatest possible discomfort to his Habsburg dynastic rivals (even if this meant aiding, paradoxically, the survival of Protestantism, conflicting with his increasingly draconian domestic policy regarding the Huguenots). These efforts to destabilise the Habsburgs had a long history: French links with Hungarian insurgents stretched back to the 1640s.⁶⁸ Directing Austrian concentration to the east in the 1670s served to distract attention from the ongoing Réunions campaign in the west, where French forces were engaged in occupying disputed lands claimed by Louis XIV under the Treaty of Nijmegen (1678).⁶⁹

The Hungarian insurgents also had the support of the Ottoman Empire. The rebellious state of the Hungarian lands became one factor motivating the Ottoman attack on Austria of 1682 and a significant detachment of Hungarians fought alongside the Ottoman forces during the siege of Vienna in 1683.⁷⁰ This rebellion was suppressed in the wake of the relief of Vienna but the underlying unrest was not extinguished. Taking advantage of Austrian military deployment in the west, the Hungarian malcontents again sought to reassert their independence. Backed by the French, open rebellion under Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi (1676–1735) broke out in 1703 and the rebels initially enjoyed a number of successes against Habsburg forces.⁷¹ Rákóczi, grandson of George

66 For Ferenc I Rákóczi (1645–76) and the rebellion of 1670, see P. Jurieu, *Pastoral letters directed to the suffering Protestants of France, groaning under the cruel persecution of the bloody tyrant Lewis XIV* (London, 1691), p. 637. 67 J. Black, *From Louis XIV to Napoleon: the fate of a great power* (London, 1999), p. 47. French contacts with Hungarian malcontents in the 1660s were again linked to French designs on the Polish throne. An abortive treaty agreed financial and materiel aid from France to the Hungarian campaign against the Ottoman Empire and the Turks to liberate and reunite Hungary. In return the Hungarians would supply military support for the prince de Condé's schemes in Poland. The plans came to nothing with the failure of French efforts in Poland; see L. Bély, *Les relations internationales en Europe: XVII-XVIII siècles* (3rd edn., Paris, 1992), pp 220–22. 68 Bély, *Les relations internationales*, pp 147–48. 69 J.A. Lynn, *The wars of Louis XIV, 1667–1714* (Harlow, 1999), pp 161–65. 70 *Memoirs of Emeric Count Teckely in four books, wherein are related all the most considerable transactions in Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, from his birth, anno 1656, till after the battel of Salankement, in the year 1691*, ed. J. Le Clerc (London, 1693), p. 155. 71 Anonymous agent to de Torcy, 24 Nov. 1704 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, ff 98v., 99r.). 'Ragotski' (*sic*) ignored the threats of Queen Anne to send a powerful force to reduce the Hungarians into submission in the same as the Bavarians had

I Rákóczi, son of Ferenc I and stepson of Imre Thököly, all thorns in the side of the Habsburg Empire, had been educated in Vienna under the strict supervision of the Habsburg court. This attempt to produce a loyal subject of the empire failed with Rákóczi ultimately becoming a Hungarian national hero.⁷²

More significantly in European terms, his rebellion became a major distraction for Austria, causing the diversion of thousands of troops from its campaigns against France.⁷³ For this reason Britain and the Netherlands were now striving to settle this diversion in the East on terms dictated by their own strategic imperatives.⁷⁴ Despite the Peace of Szatmár, signed by a faction of the leadership in May 1711 when Rákóczi was absent seeking support in Poland, Louis XIV and de Torcy believed that 'most of the Hungarian nation [would] be favourable to'⁷⁵ Augustus taking the throne. Augustus himself had considered such a bid at the very outset of his rule in Poland, with the aim of creating a hereditary Wettin state in the Balkans.⁷⁶ If he wished now to reactivate these plans, Hooke was authorised to say that France would promise to accord new subsidies to Rákóczi and to put his Hungarian confederates in a state of readiness they had never before reached. His Majesty (Louis XIV) would intercede with the Porte to ensure the goodwill of the Ottoman Empire towards King Augustus's state.⁷⁷ The advantage to France in these scenarios was the diversion of Austrian armies to campaigns in the east, away from assaults on France's borders. This policy was a prominent element of French grand strategy.⁷⁸

Hooke observed that the Saxon court was deeply divided between two factions, one largely orientated towards Austria and the other to France.⁷⁹

been humbled. He responded to the English ambassador by 'mocking these advances, coldly stating that he did not believe that the queen wished to make such a long journey'. 72 Rákóczi's paternal grandfather, George Rákóczi had been Protestant and a resolute defender of that confession's rights in Habsburg dominated Hungary. Rákóczi himself was Catholic but his beliefs were heavily influenced by the Jansenism of Port-Royal. This religious mentality combined with his familial associations with Lutheranism accounted for the unusual situation of a largely Protestant rebel force calling on a Catholic nobleman for leadership. See G. Barany, 'Hoping against hope: the enlightened age in Hungary' in *American History Review*, 76, no. 2 (1971), p. 325. 73 D. Sturdy, *Fractured Europe, 1600–1721* (Oxford, 2002), p. 281. Even when the rebellion was suppressed the troops which were withdrawn from the Hungarian front were largely unfit for further service such had been the rigours of the campaign. Detachments sent to form an army of observation, the so-called Corps of Neutrality, in northern Germany were described as 'in a very poor state'. See anonymous informant to de Torcy, 21 Oct. 1711 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 287r.). 74 Report of British ambassador in Berlin, Thomas Raby, on Hungarian affairs to secretary of state St John, 20 Jan. 1711 (TNA: PRO SP (Prussia) 90/5 ff 471–92); Raby to St John, 21 Feb. 1711 (TNA: PRO SP (Prussia) 90/5 f. 586). 75 Instruction pour le sieur Hooock, f. 214v. 76 Lukowski, *Liberty's folly*, p. 124. 77 Instruction pour le sieur Hooock, f. 218r. 78 Anonymous informant to de Torcy, 20 Jan. 1706 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 128r.); anonymous informant to de Torcy, 9 Feb. 1706 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 212r.); anonymous informant to de Torcy, 20 Jan. 1705 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 217r.). 79 Hooke, Relation, ff 465–7, 476.

Count Jacob-Heinrich Fleming remained the central figure of the Saxon administration. Fleming had accompanied William III on his invasion of England and had a varied career before entering Saxon service. In many ways he resembled Hooke, and both men were emblematic of the spirit of the time combining with relative ease several different rôles which later became very much more differentiated. Fleming demonstrated his versatility in fulfilling the duties of soldier, diplomat and minister. He also dabbled in the intellectual affairs of the age, becoming involved in a heated debate on the philosophical views of Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716).⁸⁰ While this discourse can be characterised as an early representation of Enlightenment rationality, older systems of thought and mentalities derived from divine right doctrine were still very much in evidence. Hooke reported that Fleming had been born in Pomerania, a Swedish territory on the Baltic coast (part of modern Poland).⁸¹ Fleming had never formally renounced this connection. Therefore Fleming was regarded as still a subject of Karl XII (1682–1718) of Sweden. When he invaded and conquered Poland in 1702 and Saxony in 1706, Karl was firmly convinced that he was Fleming's rightful sovereign and therefore Fleming, acting in the interests of Karl's enemy, Augustus, had betrayed his duty as a subject. Fleming only very narrowly escaped grave punishment for what Karl regarded as base treason.⁸² In his report on his mission, Hooke described Fleming as very intelligent, insightful and knowledgeable but also arrogant, intimidating and extremely brusque.⁸³ To complicate further Hooke's endeavours in Dresden, Fleming, growing less enamoured with the workload and responsibility foisted upon him by his pleasure-loving master,

⁸⁰ *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (56 vols, Leipzig-Munich, 1875–1912), vii, 117–18.

⁸¹ Pomerania had been partitioned between Prussia and Sweden at the Peace of Westphalia, at the end of the Thirty Years War. Fleming therefore had the same problematically mixed identity as Hooke. By geographical definition he was Swedish, by ethnicity a Brandenburger and by residence and political affiliation a Saxon. To complicate matters further he succeeded in his ambition of attaining a place at the Habsburg court and died in Vienna. ⁸² N. Hooke, *Mémoire de ce qui s'est passé de plus considérable dans le nord depuis l'année 1700 jusques en 1710 et le caractère des princes qui ont eu part, 1712* (AAE, CP, Pologne, vol. 132, f. 389r.). Hooke described Karl as modelling himself on a military legend from the classical past, Alexander the Great, and not without foundation in Hooke's view, see *ibid.* (AAE, CP, Pologne, vol. 132, f. 347r.). Karl's rival, Augustus II, despite his coldly calculating image, also appears to have had a Janus-like mentality, partly orientated to and shaped by the past but balanced by a desire to create and a fascination with innovation. Hence the same man could bring himself to believe in the potency of a prophecy casting him as the 'mighty lion' who would forge a great state from the Baltic to the Black Sea while at the same time directing significant amounts of revenue to metallurgical experimentation and ordnance improvement. The Meissen porcelain factories provide the ideal example of this dual mindset: what became the hallmark of the advanced state of Saxon manufactories developed as the accidental by-product of alchemy. The age of reason was still very much in its infancy. ⁸³ Hooke, *Relation*, f. 454.

and anxious for preferment and service at the Imperial court, was ardently pro-Austrian.⁸⁴

Chief among the pro-French faction were Prince Anton Egon von Furstenberg (1656–1716) described by Hooke as sincere and a devout Catholic⁸⁵ and King Augustus's *maitresse en titre*, Anna Constanze von Brockdorff (1680–c.1765) countess of Cosel, a woman of knowledge and quick wit but lacking in patience.⁸⁶ This power struggle at court also had a confessional dimension as the majority of those orientated towards France were converts to Catholicism. Interestingly this confessional aspect was also counterpoised by ethnic considerations on the part of one of Hooke's most useful contacts at court, the secretary of the Saxon council, Jacob Le Coq, a French Huguenot. Hooke describes him as 'a French refugee, very wise, a hard worker with a quick mind ... [who] had left Metz with his family at the age of nine and had a great desire to return there.' Hooke stressed that Le Coq 'is by no means attached to heresy and he has always seemed very well intentioned for the service of His Majesty'.⁸⁷

On arriving in Saxony, Hooke was granted an audience with Augustus and promptly set the French proposals before him.⁸⁸ Although Augustus himself was keen on some engagement with the French, Fleming, despite Hooke's best efforts, was less than taken with these proposals, as he clearly saw that the principal French objective was diverting the Austrians away from the west.⁸⁹ He repeatedly stated that Augustus could not and would not entertain any such prospects while the Swedish war still continued.⁹⁰ In any event, Fleming argued, the arrangements for the election had already been made and could not be changed. However, this ignored the fact that the original desire of the Viennese court for a speedy election of Charles VI had been stalled by the opposition of Augustus himself. Diplomatic reports in mid-summer 1711 were dominated by this unexpected and unexplained delay. Diplomats from Vienna were already seeking votes among the eligible electors whilst the diplomatic nerve-centre of Europe at The Hague held its breath lest the election be contested.⁹¹ Such an impasse came about due to the suddenness of Emperor Joseph's death, without his brother, Charles having been nominated his

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 465. Furstenberg also found time beyond politics and religion to set the brewery of the same name on a commercial footing in 1705. ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 467. Countess Cosel paid dearly for her insistent demands when she overstepped the mark late in 1712. The faction led by Fleming prevailed on Augustus to have Cosel imprisoned for threatening to divulge details of a secret marriage contract. She died, still in captivity, over 50 years later. ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 481. ⁸⁸ Ambassador Charles Whitworth to St John, 30 June 1711 (TNA: PRO SP (Russia) 91/7, f. 37). ⁸⁹ Fleming to Hooke, 10 Oct. 1711 (BL, add. MS 61244, ff 223–5). ⁹⁰ Memorial of an interview between Field Marshal Count von Fleming and Baron de Hooke, 21 Feb. 1712 (Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden, 10026 Geheimes Kabinett, Loc. 69016, ff 34–42). ⁹¹ *Observations from The Hague and Utrecht: William Harrison's letters to Henry Watkins, 1711–12*, ed. L. Frey, M. Frey and J.C. Rule (Columbus, OH, 1979), p. 28.

successor. Augustus's legacy of untrustworthy and unprincipled actions made the election a live issue. Closely marshalled and heavily influenced by Fleming, however, Augustus, though tempted, did not accept the bait on this occasion and Archduke Charles was officially elected emperor on 12 October 1711.⁹²

Hooke's mission was not yet at an end. He received supplementary orders from Paris to remain in Saxony and continue attempts aimed at wooing Augustus into the French camp.⁹³ During Fleming's absence on a diplomatic mission to Berlin, the pro-French party gained the king's ear.⁹⁴ Hooke was frequently requested to attend the king at assemblies, audiences, masques and even while Augustus was hunting. In keeping with his indolent nature, Augustus declared his strong admiration for Louis XIV, his inclination for France and a desire to demonstrate his goodwill without actually ever doing anything to realise these aspirations.⁹⁵

The improved, if still tenuous, prospect of a French-Saxon alliance was thwarted by Fleming's return to Dresden. He reasserted his dominance at court, facing down the pro-French faction and, in the process, coming to plain dealing with Hooke. Interviews with the king were now severely curtailed.⁹⁶ Masterfully manipulating Augustus, Fleming managed to convince him to have orders issued for the arrest of Madame Cosel. (The news reached her during a social gathering at her house, and to Hooke fell the sombre task of reading the letter aloud to those assembled). Fleming intimated that Hooke's mission in Saxony should be brought to an end. In the spring of 1712 Fleming informed Hooke that 'somehow' the Imperial court had discovered the presence of a French representative in Saxony in contravention of Imperial rules. He expressed surprise at how this could have happened and his worry lest Hooke be kidnapped by agents of the emperor and dispatched to prison.⁹⁷ Hooke called his bluff, ignored this intimidation and refused to leave. In the

92 Hooke, Relation, f. 472. 93 Ibid., f. 475. 94 Ibid., f. 481. 95 Ibid., f. 485. 96 Ibid., f. 489. 97 If captured the least Hooke could expect would be a long imprisonment if not death. In January 1705 a French army colonel named Verville, attached to the Hungarian rebels of Ferenc Rákóczi, had been captured and sent to Vienna. Debate ensued concerning whether he should be 'regarded as a prisoner of war or as a spy who was attempting to incite the subjects of the Emperor'. After some weeks of deliberation and being 'examined several times', Verville was condemned to death. However, the situation was complicated by intricate international considerations. His execution was strongly advocated by Neapolitan representatives in Vienna in revenge for 'the death of the marquis de Sangro decapitated in Naples three years before'. On the other hand there were suggestions that he 'should be exchanged for Baron de Chaussinet a prisoner in France'. English and Dutch ministers, pressing the emperor to end the distraction of the Hungarian uprising quickly by signing a negotiated treaty allowing Imperial troops to return to the main sphere of action (in their view) against France in the west, wished to placate Rákóczi. The latter took the decisive action that settled the matter by 'threatening to hang without mercy a captured Austrian general if the French officer was put to death'. See Anonymous informant to de Torcy, 20 Jan. 1705 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, ff 127r., 128r.); Anonymous informant to de Torcy, 3 Feb. 1705 (AAE, CP, Brunswick-Hanovre, vol. 44, f. 135r.).

course of the following days, nothing untoward materialised.⁹⁸ However, Hooke's commission was to stay in Saxony only as long as he thought it useful.⁹⁹ Fleming's unbending opposition rendered any progress unlikely, especially as he steadfastly denied Hooke the right to accompany the king on his forthcoming military campaigns. Obtaining passports for France, covering two different routes in case Fleming had a final surprise in mind, Hooke reached France safely in May 1712 and took on a new rôle with the French delegation at the peace negotiations in Utrecht. These treaties eventually brought the War of Spanish Succession to an end and Western Europe, after some twenty-five years of conflict, finally had a respite from warfare.

Hooke's endeavours in Saxony made a favourable impression on Louis XIV. On 8 June 1712 Hooke was awarded a life pension of 1,500 francs by the king as a mark of satisfaction with his service.¹ Hooke's previous missions, such as his voyages to Scotland, had been of a different nature to his Saxony posting. With an official rank of envoy extraordinaire in the diplomatic hierarchy, second only to that of ambassador, the mission to Saxony was an important and prestigious appointment for Hooke. The awarding patent makes it clear that the pension was also a reflection of Hooke's consolidated career achievements in French service. Saxony proved to be Hooke's last extended mission outside of France. He remained an advisor to de Torcy until the latter's departure from office after the death of Louis XIV in 1715. Hooke, however, remained *au fait* with the world of diplomacy, intelligence and intrigue even after the departure of his patron. He was sounded out in regard to advising and assisting in plans for a Swedish supported Jacobite invasion of Britain in 1716. He was rumoured to have been considered for appointment as envoy to Prussia in 1718. The end of his active career was marked by promotion to *maréchal de camp* (major general), later in 1718. In 1721 he was enrolled as knight commander in the Order of St Louis, a prestigious honour.

Officially this decoration was bestowed in recognition of long and outstanding military service. In Hooke's case it also encompassed his diplomatic and intelligence accomplishments, hugely important facets of his career, but activities still in the early stages of development as distinct career paths. This ambivalent status of the world of diplomacy and intelligence renders classification as a diplomat problematic. Early-modern diplomats and intelligence agents have no service records to compare to their military equivalent. Not surprisingly in a world where secrecy and discretion were so vital, the archival record of the practitioners of intelligence and espionage is quite often fragmentary, scattered and difficult to reconstruct. The contents of diplomatic archives also remained sensitive and access difficult for much longer than other

98 Hooke, Relation, f. 477. 99 Instruction pour le sieur Hooke, f. 225r. 1 Order by Louis XIV for a patent of a pension of 1,500 francs to Sieur Hooke, 8 June 1712 (AAE, CP, Angleterre vol. 241, f. 138).

source material. Pursuing a career in diplomacy and espionage required more specific skills, a longer term commitment to the host country and a higher degree of trust than for example a military career, resulting in much more restricted access for non-natives. A smaller proportion of Irishmen were willing or able to embark on this demanding path, although an estimation with any degree of accuracy of the number of Irishmen involved in the area of diplomacy and intelligence has yet to be undertaken.

However, it is clear that a number of émigrés, such as Toby Burke (1671–1742), and Richard (Ricardo) Wall (1694–1778) did manage to carve out successful careers in the diplomatic service of France, Spain and other European countries. In doing so these Irish migrants adapted to and operated in a European context while also drawing on elements of their Irishness. Hooke's capability to fulfil his mission to Saxony stemmed in part from his experience of similar situations in both Ireland and England. He was intimately familiar with political factionalism and religious divisions. He had grown up and been educated in a country with a Catholic majority where an attempt, in which the Hookes had been deeply involved, was underway to advance Protestantism. Similarly Saxony in 1711 had an overwhelmingly Lutheran population amongst whom the adaptation and promotion of Catholicism by Augustus II was ill-received and largely unsuccessful. Augustus himself bore many similarities to Hooke's former master James II: a converted Catholic monarch who had succeeded his childless brother, who was now attempting to weld together disparate kingdoms, tenuously sharing a monarch, into a true unitary state of the first rank. Hence Hooke's personal experience and career development, like those of many of his fellow émigrés, had equipped him very well for his new rôle as a diplomat and intelligence agent in the troubled sphere of European international relations.

Until recently, for the reasons cited above, these career paths tended to attract less scholarly attention than those in military, religious and economic circles. Nathaniel Hooke's career vividly demonstrates, however, that there was another route to influence in the old regime beyond money, muskets and missals. We can gain a sense of perspective on the position Hooke reached by comparing his rôle as advisor and analyst to the marquis de Torcy, architect of the foreign policy of France, a contemporary superpower, with the modern equivalent of an Irishman serving the secretary of state of the United States. Hooke, however, was only one example of an Irish émigré who succeeded in scaling the ranks in diplomatic and intelligence circles. An assessment of the important but largely unexplored phenomenon of Irish diplomats within the broader context of the Irish in Europe must await the collation of results of further research.