

Institution: University of Hull
Unit of Assessment: D30: History
Title of case study: Reshaping the public image of the 'Alter Fritz': The 2012 tercentenary of Frederick II of Prussia
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The impact derives from research undertaken from 2007 to 2012 by Thomas Biskup (Hull) in collaboration with colleagues in Germany and Oxford. Marking the 2012 tercentenary of King Frederick II 'the Great' of Prussia (1712-86), the research contributed directly to a series of major public events in Germany and the UK. The impact assumed two main forms. First, these research-informed public events benefitted the economy of Brandenburg by stimulating tourism, and increasing the number of visitors and overnight stays to record highs. Second, as part of the on-going process of re-defining German national identity and the place of Germany in Europe, the public image of Frederick II was reshaped.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Working with the Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg (SPSG, Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation) and Katrin Kohl (Oxford), Biskup drew upon the holdings of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv PK and Staatsbibliothek in Berlin and the British Library to analyse the politics and culture of eighteenth-century Prussia. This resulted in a re-assessment of the reign of King Frederick II 'the Great' (1740-1786), who raised Prussia from relative obscurity to one of Europe's five 'great powers', and an examination of the perception of Frederick's reign both by contemporaries and later generations.</p> <p>The tercentenary conferences and publications offer a fresh perspective on one of the central figures of eighteenth-century European history. Before 1945, Frederick had served various German regimes as the epitome of supposedly German virtues, such as military service, and unquestioned loyalty to the state. Although this image was not actively promoted by state authorities or the education systems of West Germany and the GDR after World War II, it was not challenged until German re-unification in 1990 made accessible the archives and historic sites of Potsdam and East Berlin. Biskup has been at the forefront of this post-1990 re-evaluation. The tercentenary provided a unique opportunity to consider the public image of this historic figure at a time when the debates surrounding the reconstruction of the eighteenth-century royal palaces in Berlin's and Potsdam's city centres highlighted issues regarding the place of Germany's monarchical past in a contemporary Federal Republic.</p> <p>Biskup gave papers in 2007, 2008, 2011 and 2012 at four events organised by the SPSG as part of the preparations for the major <i>Friederisiko</i> exhibition in Potsdam. These were published online by the Max Weber Stiftung – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland ([A], [B] in section 3).</p> <p>The <i>Friederisiko</i> exhibition, which was organised by the SPSG and curated by an international team led by Jürgen Luh, was held in the sumptuous setting of the Neues Palais, a highly appropriate context in which to display Frederick's love of luxury and sophisticated taste, sense of dynastic rank, and artistic and literary patronage. Biskup and Peter H. Wilson (both Hull) curated the exhibition area 'Prussia, Britain, and the Atlantic World', and wrote the respective chapter in the catalogue [C], which included another two chapters by Biskup [D]. As well as contributing to an international conference series held at the Villa Vigoni 2009-12, with proceedings published in May 2012 [E], Biskup published a substantial monograph, <i>Friedrichs Größe: Inszenierungen des Preußenkönigs in Fest und Zeremoniell, 1740-1815</i>, which investigates how Frederick's image was shaped in ceremonial and festivals in Europe's society of princes, the enlightened public sphere, the revolutionary era, and the age of emerging Prussian and German nationalism during the Napoleonic Wars [F].</p> <p>In July 2012, Biskup and Kohl organised, in collaboration with the SPSG and the Voltaire Foundation, Oxford, an international conference <i>Frederick the Great and the Republic of Letters</i> [G].</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>[A] Thomas Biskup, 'Höfisches Retablissement: Der Hof Friedrichs des Großen nach dem Siebenjährigen Krieg', in: <i>Friedrich300 - Colloquien, Friedrich der Große - eine perspektivische Bestandsaufnahme</i> (2008), http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

[colloquien/friedrich-bestandsaufnahme/biskup_retablisement](#)

- [B] Thomas Biskup, 'Preußischer Pomp: Zeremoniellnutzung und Ruhmbegriff Friedrichs des Großen im Berliner "Carousel" von 1750', in: *Friedrich300 - Colloquien, Friedrich der Große und der Hof* (2009),
http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-hof/Biskup_Pomp
- [C] Thomas Biskup and Peter H. Wilson, 'Großbritannien, Amerika und die atlantische Welt', in Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg (ed.), *Friederisiko. Friedrich der Große. Die Ausstellung* (Munich, 2012), pp.110-23.
- [D] Thomas Biskup, 'Eines "Grossen" würdig? Hof und Zeremoniell bei Friedrich II.', in Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg (ed.), *Friederisiko. Friedrich der Grosse. Die Essays* (Munich, 2012), pp.88-105.
- [E] Thomas Biskup, 'Der kinderlose "roi philosophe": Herrschertugend und Sexualmoral', in Bernd Sösemann and Gregor Vogt-Spira (eds.), *Friedrich der Große in Europa: Geschichte einer wechsellvollen Beziehung* (Stuttgart, 2012), pp.21-35.
- [F] Thomas Biskup, *Friedrichs Grösse: Inszenierungen des Preußenkönigs in Fest und Zeremoniell 1740-1815* (Campus: Frankfurt-on-Main, 2012), 316 pp. ISBN 978-3-593-39484-8
- [G] <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=4820>;and,
<http://frederick.mml.ox.ac.uk>

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4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Public interest in the palaces and gardens of the now-defunct state of Prussia has rendered Potsdam one of Germany's most popular tourist destinations since re-unification. The *Friederisiko* exhibition and accompanying events have enhanced these attractions, and helped to increase the number of paying visitors and overnight guests to record highs. The exhibition took place in the Neues Palais, Germany's largest surviving eighteenth-century palace and part of Potsdam's UNESCO world heritage site. The Palais, which was opened for this event in its entirety for the first time since 1939, was visited by 348,796 people (c. 50,000 more than had originally been estimated), making *Friederisiko* the single most popular historical exhibition in Germany in 2012. Biskup's involvement was facilitated by financial assistance and workload adjustment from the History Department. His research informed the projection of the exhibition to the public by the German media ([i] in section 5). The exhibition catalogue, with three chapters by Biskup, sold 15,590 copies and was made 'book of the month' in October 2012 by Süddeutsche Zeitung and TV/Radio corporation Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Hamburg [ii]. Berlin's tourist agency, 'visitBerlin', promoted the exhibition and accompanying events as destinations, and major travel agencies, such as Studiosus and Kulturreisen, organised special cultural trips in close co-operation with the SPSPG (<http://www.studiosus.com>; www.kulturreisen.de). There were particular tours for children, for whom a special website was designed (<http://www.schloessergaerten.de/>). An interview with Biskup formed the basis of an article in the 2012 issue of *Reisewelten*, the journal of the Brandenburg tourism agency, TMB GmbH, to advertise the exhibition to potential visitors. Many visitors stayed for several days in the Berlin/Potsdam area, and the exhibition and accompanying events are credited with an increase in overnight stays in Berlin's and Brandenburg's hotels, despite the unusually wet summer. For the first time ever, Potsdam hotels and guest houses recorded more than 1 million overnight stays in 2013, an increase of 13.6%, while the federal state of Brandenburg recorded more than 11.5 million overnight guests, an increase of 4% [iii]. The re-staging of Frederick's 'Carrousel' tournament played an important role in the exhibition. It was meticulously reconstructed by the *Höfische Festspiele Potsdam GmbH*, and staged in July 2012 in a series of performances outside the Neues Palais attended by 5192 visitors over four evenings, with 91% per cent of the available tickets sold. The accompanying programme booklet, containing an essay by Biskup setting the tournament in its historical context, sold over 2100 copies. Approximately 32% of the Carrousel visitors came from outside the region of Berlin-Brandenburg, and travelled more than 50km to the event, whereas 75% of those involved in the

staging of the event came from the Potsdam region, which thus benefitted economically from the Carrousel [iv]. Biskup served as historical advisor, and delivered a public lecture on the site before the premiere [v].

The media interest generated by the Frederick II tercentenary provided an excellent opportunity to reflect upon, and reconfigure, the public image of the king. A range of media partners, notably the German national TV station ZDF, regional TV broadcaster RBB, radio stations *Kulturradio RBB* and *Inforadio*, as well as national paper *Die Welt*, covered the opening of the exhibition and special events like the 'Carrousel'. The attention generated by the tercentenary also included coverage of Biskup's conference contributions by the German press [vi], as well as of his research on Frederick II's aristocratic libertinism, which was the subject of a dedicated article in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in July 2012 [vii]. German press and radio also reported on the UK Tercentenary lecture and concert in October 2012, which Biskup organised with Katrin Kohl (Oxford) under the auspices of Oxford's Faculty of Modern Languages. Here, research on Anglo-Prussian relations was particularly highlighted, which re-assessed the cultural preferences of the famously 'francophile' king [viii].

A significant outcome of this interaction with the media was a revision in public perceptions of Frederick. Whereas he had been afforded a central role as the ultimate German hero in the jubilees celebrated by Imperial Germany in 1912 and Nazi Germany in 1936, West German academics and media used the 1986 anniversary of his death to highlight the problematic nature of the policies he pursued through military aggression [ix]. This deployment of his reign as a warning to the present, however, only turned the earlier praise of 'military virtues' on its head without changing the framework. The 2012 tercentenary events went beyond these perspectives for the first time, and served to re-shape the public image of the king, while specifically questioning if he had any relevance to contemporary Germany. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* noted how Biskup's 'highly original' research had contributed to shaping a very different image of the iconic king [vii]. Reporting on one of Biskup's conference contributions, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* pointed out that Frederick's sophisticated use of ceremonial made him look very different from the conventional picture of a military hero [ix]. By problematising as well as strictly historicising the figure of Frederick II, the exhibition, accompanying events, and books finally separated the king's historic significance from any 'exemplary' function for the present, and thus put an end to long-lasting attempts at linking Frederick and German national identity. This is particularly relevant as, following re-unification, the staging of the 2006 World Cup, and the fall-out of the financial crisis of 2007, a new German 'patriotism' is being discussed across Europe, and the question of its historical 'roots' is more prominent than ever. The Frederick tercentenary has contributed to the belief that a 'return to Prussia' and 'Prussian values' is not an option [x].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [i] http://www.spsq.de/Presseinfo_2012-10-29.html
- [ii] <http://www.potsdam.de/cms/beitrag/10114793/1761152/>
- [iii] <http://www.pnn.de/pm/707313/>; <http://www.statistik-berlin-brandenburg.de/pms/2013/13-02-20.pdf> .
- [iv] <http://www.pnn.de/potsdam-kultur/698292>
- [v] <http://carrousel-de-sanssouci.de>
- [vi] *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 October 2008; *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten*, 11 October 2008 - <http://www.pnn.de/potsdam/1092/>; *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten*, 4 October 2011 - <http://www.pnn.de/potsdam-kultur/582850/>; *Märkische Allgemeine* - <http://www.maerkischeallgemeine.de/cms/beitrag/11930736/13799255/Eine-Potsdamer-Konferenz-liess-Friedrich-den-Grossen-standesgemaess.html>; Conference 2012, *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*, 30 September 2012 - (<http://www.mz-web.de/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=ksta/page&atype=ksArtikel&aid=1348125982642>)
- [vii] *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 31 July 2012
- [viii] *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 October 2012, Deutschlandradio Kultur: <http://www.dradio.de/aod/html/?broadcast=348876&page=4>
- [ix] <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/kunst/ausstellung-friederisiko-in-den-schatzkammern-des-philosophenkoenigs-11732973.html>
- [x] <http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/kultur/festakt-zum-300--geburtstag-von-friedrich-ii--friedrich-ii--war-kein-vorbild,10809150,11507322.html>