

of the Habsburg family was its representation in the burgeoning press. Reports of its whereabouts outside Vienna and the activities of its members had the effect of making the imperial family appear closer to its subjects as its members were increasingly seen to be engaged in the ordinary pursuits of recreational tourism: plays and concerts, sightseeing excursions, picnics, hiking—the wandering Empress Elisabeth was a great walker—and climbing. As well as its charts, the book includes some evocative illustrations and represents an interesting and useful, if narrowly focused, contribution to spa history.

The Habsburg effect is still strong in Ischl, recently designated a European City of Culture, as it is in Meran/Merano, now part of the Italian Alto Adige, where the likeness of the Empress Elisabeth greets visitors to the *Touriseum* (Tourist Museum) housed in the Trautsmannsdorf Castle, where she used to stay. Empress Sissi possessed star quality, and in her lifetime even relatively unknown places, such as Herkulesbad in Transylvania, where she had a villa, benefited from the royal stardust.

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## **Im Schatten des Staatsmanns. Johanna, Marie und Marguerite von Bismarck als adelige Akteurinnen (1824–1945)**

**By Andrea Hopp. Paderborn: Brill/Ferdinand Schöningh, 2022. Pp. 550. Cloth €59.00. ISBN: 978-3506708359.**

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This book is a challenge. It consists not only of almost 500 pages of text, but it also raises important questions about the influences on Otto von Bismarck and his afterlife and furthermore for what we consider general standards of historical research. The title suggests that this is a book about the women in the shadow of the first German chancellor as well as their noble status. The introduction highlights that, aside from gender and nobility, space, language, and emotions form frames of reference. The text is structured around the lives of Otto von Bismarck's wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law. One of the book's key claims is that noble identity and an associated feeling of superiority played a major role in these women's perceptions of the world and in their actions.

Johanna von Bismarck grew up in conservative and Pietist Pomerania, which remained a point of reference throughout her life. Over the years, she established what the author calls "a different 'Bismarckian system'" (99), meaning a refuge for the rising politician and later statesmen from a world considered hostile. In this sphere, all family members were called upon to support Otto. Furthermore, for Johanna this was a space in which she and her husband loved and hated together, with the effect that the chancellor's political emotions were not attenuated, rather his wife intensified Otto's "confrontational political style" (186). Next up is Marie von Bismarck (married zu Rantzau). Andrea Hopp describes her education together with her brothers as a positive experience, which came to an end when the brothers left home. In particular, the boys' trip to England in 1869 is described as a moment in which Marie became lonesome. The death of her first fiancé further increased her misery. And while she did eventually marry, again his untimely death threw her into despair. Aside from this, her life remained "completely dominated by her

father and his political office” (299). She found some refuge in “food, children, animals” (300) but could not help the fact that her enmeshment with the family made her unhappy and sick. Finally, Marguerite von Bismarck (née Countess Hoyos von Stichsenstein) came from an English-Austro-Hungarian background. She was not the first choice of bride for Herbert von Bismarck, but the first woman his parents approved of. Though integrated into the “Bismarckian system,” she managed to keep her cheerfulness. Being the guardian of Bismarck-memory, she tried to influence her father-in-law’s image over the first half of the twentieth century and was an important point of contact for anti-republican conservatives and Nazis trying to placate their connection to the dead chancellor.

The book merits a number of critical remarks. Overall, the many digressions, together with sections focused on other Bismarcks (particularly in chapter 4), tend to confuse the argument. Long footnotes alternate with statements without any proof. The latter often relate to the supposed “noble identity” of the three women. However, the fact that they have a noble name does not mean that (almost) all their actions are infused with a spirit of nobility. Although much research literature on the nobility is mentioned in passing, there is no in-depth engagement with those works that have highlighted the difficulties in distinguishing between nobility and bourgeoisie, or the fact that the Prussian state did not actually make these distinctions anymore when it came to its officials. The same superficial treatment is true when looking at the quoted literature on the history of emotions. Though I tend to believe Hopp’s argument on emotions, historians of the field may likely take issue.

Finally, a few glaring, and for this reviewer easily researchable, examples on how research literature is engaged with throughout the text: On page 444, Hopp speaks about the term “aristocracy” after 1900. In this, she quotes the reviewer’s own book, which states that the concept of nobility was detached from “a social content” (407, not as in Hopp’s footnote 377 and 379), which in Hopp’s quote transforms into “its social content.” This is no small error, but a significant difference, as the former statement captures the nobility’s heterogeneity, while the latter creates a false impression. Furthermore, the original text talks about the mid-nineteenth, not the early twentieth, century and speaks about the nobility, not the concept of aristocracy. Again, these are important differences. Similar issues reoccur when Hopp quotes Norbert Elias’s work on Louis XIV’s France or Ewald Frie’s work on the period around 1800; in both cases, Hopp uses the literature as support for statements on the later nineteenth century. This is to add just two more examples out of many.

Thus, while the book manages to highlight the important role that the women around Bismarck played, this is not the kind of scholarship that supports solid arguments in the future.

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## The Brothers Grimm and the Making of German Nationalism

**By Jakob Norberg. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022.  
Pp. viii + 257. Hardcover \$99.99. ISBN: 978-1316513279.**

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It is an understatement to say that North Americans are familiar with Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Their names and work have long been an integral part of American culture: from