# Frederick the Great

Theodor Schieder

Edited and Translated by Sabina Berkeley and H.M. Scott

*Frederick the Great*

*This page intentionally left blank*

# *Frederick the Great*

Theodor Schieder

*edited and translated by*
Sabina Berkeley and H.M. Scott

LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2000 by Pearson Education Limited

Published 2013 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

Copyright © 2000, Taylor & Francis.

The right of Theodor Schieder to be identified as author of this Work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notices
Knowledge and best practice in this field are constantly changing. As new research and experience broaden our understanding, changes in research methods, professional practices, or medical treatment may become necessary.

Practitioners and researchers must always rely on their own experience and knowledge in evaluating and using any information, methods, compounds, or experiments described herein. In using such information or methods they should be mindful of their own safety and the safety of others, including parties for whom they have a professional responsibility.

To the fullest extent of the law, neither the Publisher nor the authors, contributors, or editors, assume any liability for any injury and/or damage to persons or property as a matter of products liability, negligence or otherwise, or from any use or operation of any methods, products, instructions, or ideas contained in the material herein.

ISBN 13: 978-0-582-01769-6 (pbk)

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue entry for this title is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Schieder, Theodor.
[Friedrich der Grosse. English]
Frederick the Great/by Theodor Schieder; edited and translated by Sabina Berkeley and H.M. Scott.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-582-01769-6 (PPR). — ISBN 0-582-01768-8 (CSD)
1. Frederick II, King of Prussia, 1712–1786. 2. Prussia—Kings and rulers Biography. 3. Prussia (Germany)—History—Frederick II, 1740–1786. I. Berkeley, Sabina. II. Scott, H.M. (Hamish M.), 1946– . III. Title.
DD404.S2813 1999
943′.053′092
[B]—DC21 99–20828
CIP

Set by 35 in 10/12pt Graphic Bembo

# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | List of maps | vii |
| | Preface to the English edition | viii |
| | Introduction to the English edition | ix |
| 1 | Frederick's youth – the international situation and personal destiny | 1 |
| | Europe's political constellation | 1 |
| | Father and son | 7 |
| | The court martial of the Crown Prince and Frederick's eventual rehabilitation | 22 |
| 2 | The King and his Prussia | 33 |
| | Court and dynasty | 33 |
| | Army and officer corps | 43 |
| | Society of Orders: *Gutsherrschaft* and peasant subordination | 53 |
| | The beginnings of a middle class | 63 |
| 3 | The *Anti-Machiavel* and Machiavellianism | 75 |
| 4 | Prussia and Austria | 90 |
| | Justice and might: the origins of the conquest of Silesia | 90 |
| | Frederick in great power politics: the War of the Austrian Succession | 101 |
| | On the edge of destruction: the Seven Years War | 115 |
| 5 | Russia – a dangerous neighbour | 149 |
| 6 | Prussia and the Holy Roman Empire: from the Imperial Ban to the League of Princes | 169 |
| 7 | The Frederician state: the theory and practice of government | 181 |
| | Enlightened Absolutism | 181 |
| | Cameralism and mercantilism | 196 |
| | Impopulation and the second *rétablissement* | 212 |

8 Soldier-King 218

9 Philosopher-King 233
  Historian of his times 233
  Philosophical reflections 240
  Voltaire's political role 248

Afterword 268

Further reading 270

Chronology of major events 274

Maps 278

Index 282

# *List of maps*

1 Prussia in the age of Frederick the Great 278
2 The military campaigns of Frederick the Great 280

# *Preface to the English edition*

We have produced this abridged translation of Theodor Schieder's study of Frederick the Great with the demands of English-language teachers and students in mind. We have therefore excluded sections which were part of the original study but which are primarily of interest to German readers and to specialists: the section on the King and German literature, the accounts of Frederick's rather tangential contacts with some of his contemporaries (though by far the most important of such relationships, that with Voltaire, is included in the English version) and the rather rambling chapter which closes the volume on the subject of historical greatness, have all been cut. We have also removed the footnotes, believing that specialists will consult the original German edition, and have substituted a guide to further reading in English, together with a chronology of the major events. In translating Schieder's Baroque German, we have removed some of the many repetitions found in his text, together with a few passages of purely German interest, but have tried to retain something of the distinctive style of the original. Not infrequently the German text has seemed ambiguous to us, and we are of course entirely responsible for any errors in the English version which may have resulted.

Sabina Berkeley
H.M. Scott

# *Introduction to the English edition*

When it first appeared in German in 1983, Theodor Schieder's study of Frederick the Great was immediately recognised as a major contribution to the study both of Prussia's most important King and of Europe's eighteenth century. Until then Frederician historiography had been dominated by Reinhold Koser's panoramic life-and-times, completed just before the First World War and consolidating the previous half-century's scholarship on the King.[1] Though the next generation saw numerous publications on Frederick and his reign, together with the inevitable distortions introduced by the Third Reich, no book emerged to rival Koser's political biography in scope and scholarly authority. After 1945, earlier epochs in German history and especially Prussia's eighteenth century were neglected in favour of an understandable preoccupation with Germany's traumatic recent past.

During the later 1970s and early 1980s a noted revival of popular and, to a lesser extent, academic interest in Prussia's earlier history, the so-called 'Prussian Wave' (*Preussenwelle*), was apparent, stimulated in part by the large-scale 1981 Berlin exhibition, and this has gathered pace during the past fifteen years.[2] It was further encouraged by the two-hundredth anniversary of Frederick's death, which was celebrated in 1986. Though standing rather apart from the 'Prussian Wave', Theodor Schieder's book was one of the earliest contributions to the King's anniversary and also the most substantial. It was immediately recognised in Germany as a distinguished study, the most important single contribution to the field since Koser. The product of a lifetime's study of and reflection upon the whole course of modern German and European history, Schieder's book was characterised by sharp and penetrating

1. *Geschichte Friedrichs des Grossen* 3 vols. (6th–7th edns.; Berlin, 1925), but essentially completed before 1914.
2. See the catalogue, and the four volumes of scholarly essays which accompanied it: *Preussen: Versuch einer Bilanz* 5 vols. (Hamburg, 1981). For Frederick the Great's reign, the publications of the distinguished East German scholar Ingrid Mittenzwei stand alongside Schieder as the most enduring legacy of the 'Prussian Wave': see her *Preussen nach dem Siebenjährigen Krieg* ([East] Berlin, 1979), and her short biography, *Friedrich II. von Preussen* ([East] Berlin, 1980).

insights and was a landmark in the historiography of Prussia's eighteenth century. Yet it received surprisingly little attention in the Anglo-Saxon world, where it has only been known and admired by specialists. The year after its publication it was the subject of a notable review by T.C.W. Blanning, but with this single exception it does not seem to have been reviewed in a major British or North American historical journal.[3] It here appears in an abridged English version, which requires a few words of introduction for an Anglophone readership who may find its format and approach rather distinctive and even unusual.

Schieder's purpose, as he makes clear in his 'Afterword',[4] was not to produce a biography in the conventional sense of the term: that is, a chronological life, a study which follows its chosen subject from the cradle to the grave. His intention was rather to write – and thereby demonstrate the value of – what he termed a 'structural biography'. Since the 1950s, when the term came into widespread use, 'structural history' (*Strukturgeschichte*) has been the Holy Grail for a generation of German scholars who have focused primarily upon the social dimension of the past. Schieder's own interests by contrast were more exclusively political, though in his studies of parties and political change he was a forerunner of the 'social history of politics' associated with the Bielefeld school. His belief that 'structure' was 'the social and historical matrix that shaped and constrained the actions of individuals' underpinned his biographical study of Frederick and determined its contours.[5] This study is episodic in the sense that it focuses upon certain key phases or dimensions of the King's life which Schieder believes were crucial in his development and that of his state. Frederick slowly emerges out of his own times and out of the Prussian and European context, as a picture of his remarkable personality is built up piece by piece. In the 'Afterword' the author, in order to describe his book's distinctive format, employs the metaphor of a photographer who continually changes his viewpoint in order to provide the most lifelike pictures of the subject, which presented a contrasting series of faces.[6] Schieder believed that frequent changes of perspective were essential if all the dimensions of the King's multifaceted personality and impact upon his age were to be fully comprehended.

A series of overlapping essays is therefore devoted to central themes in Frederick's life and times: the contest with Austria for the possession of Silesia

3. See the *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute London* no. 16 (1984), pp. 10–13. Schieder's book was subsequently mentioned by Professor Blanning in the course of a major and notably lively review article on 'The death and transfiguration of Prussia', *Historical Journal* 29 (1986), 433–59, which provides an excellent introduction to the 'Prussian Wave'. It does not seem to have been reviewed in the *English Historical Review*, *History*, the *American Historical Review* or the *Journal of Modern History*.
4. Below, p. 268.
5. James Van Horn Melton, 'Introduction: continuities in German historical scholarship, 1933–1960', in Hartmut Lehmann and James Van Horn Melton (eds), *Paths of Continuity: Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s* (Washington, D.C., and Cambridge, 1994), pp. 1–18, at p. 15.
6. Below, p. 269.

which dominated the first half of the reign; Frederick's troubled relations with Russia; his changing attitude towards the Holy Roman Empire; his role in government; his position as a 'soldier-king'. Though this inevitably leads to a degree of repetition across the individual chapters, unity is provided by Frederick's own personality and attitudes which emerge as the central core of the entire book. Successive essays slowly build up an overall picture of the King and a unified interpretation of his reign. With this aim in view, Schieder therefore provides an account in the first chapter of the dramatic episodes which shaped the life of Frederick before he became King and did so much to form his character and to determine his distinctive psychology: his education, the attempted flight from Prussia in 1730 and subsequent trial, and the reconciliation with his father, Frederick William I (1713–40), which followed. His education and upbringing are seen as having created a distinctive personality with an indestructible core, in this way exerting an influence upon Prussian and European history during the half century after 1740.

One legacy of his formative years was the dichotomy between the French-educated Crown Prince who signed himself 'Frederick the philosopher' and the heir-apparent to the spartan, militaristic Prussian state, a ruler in waiting whose education and training aimed only to prepare him for the role of King within a highly personalised monarchy. The distinctive Prussian social and administrative system is examined at length in the second chapter, which provides an essential context for the remainder of the study. This dichotomy, which was strengthened by Frederick's upbringing, is viewed by Schieder as one of the several unresolved tensions within the King's personality, which were apparent in his actions and his statecraft. The German version was given the sub-title *Ein Königtum der Wiedersprüche*. This is very difficult to render into idiomatic English, but has the sense of 'A King full of contradictions' or the 'Janus King'. It accurately expresses the central dialectic within Schieder's portrait of Frederick the Great: the extent to which the King was a transitional figure who both looked back to earlier dispensations in Prussian and European history, and forward to the political structures of a later age, a tension which once again is only fully articulated in his 'Afterword'.

Such an interpretation came naturally for Theodor Schieder, who turned to the study of the Prussian eighteenth century towards the end of a very distinguished career, a career which had been devoted primarily to writing about the problems of history and historiography during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both in Germany and more widely in Europe.[7] His study of Frederick the Great was his last important work. The King's life and reign are frequently illuminated by means of comparisons and perspectives informed by its distinguished author's wide-ranging knowledge of later German and

7. Biographical information can be found in the extended obituary and tribute by Lothar Gall, 'Theodor Schieder, 1908–84', *Historische Zeitschrift* 241 (1985), 1–26. A difficult but rewarding introduction to Schieder's historical thought is provided by Jörn Rüsen, 'Continuity, innovation, and self-reflection in late historicism: Theodor Schieder (1908–1984)', with a comment by Charles S. Maier, in Lehmann and Melton (eds), *Paths of Continuity*, pp. 353–96.

European history. One dimension of Schieder's wider historical and methodological interests may puzzle an Anglophone readership: the appearance in the text of several quotations from the writings of the nineteenth-century cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt. During the second half of his own career Schieder – like Friedrich Meinecke before him – was increasingly drawn to Burckhardt's writings and attracted to his concept of cultural continuity as the mainspring of human history. This appeared a way of resolving the fundamental problem with which all post-war West German historians wrestled: that of dealing with the discontinuity of the Third Reich, which at times almost seemed to invalidate history itself, or at least the established historicist paradigm.

Schieder had himself lived through Germany's time of troubles and experienced at first hand the many vicissitudes of its twentieth-century history. Born in Bavaria in 1908, he was a central figure in the West German historical profession during the generation after the Second World War. For many years a professor at the University of Cologne, he was also editor of the *Historische Zeitschrift*, at that time the leading German-language historical periodical, and President of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. His influence as a scholar, teacher and organiser was enormous. More importantly, he played a central role in – and was himself undoubtedly influenced by – the agonised reappraisal of the nature and value of history in West Germany after 1945. During the generation which followed the Second World War Schieder stood at the very heart of the West German historical establishment and contributed significantly to its evolution. He himself wrote extensively about the history of nation-state formation, the history of political parties and the problem of revolution during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and participated in the intense methodological debates which characterised these decades.

In other respects, however, the study of Frederick the Great arose naturally out of certain of Schieder's enduring concerns as a historian. He had written his dissertation on nineteenth-century Bavarian party politics and his publications as a mature scholar were largely to be on the period after the French Revolution. But he had briefly been at the University of Königsberg (in what had been the eighteenth-century Hohenzollern province of East Prussia) and had in fact written his all-important *Habilitationsschrift* (that is to say: his second-level thesis which secured entry into an academic career) on the political culture of Royal (after 1772 West) Prussia over the period from the Union of Lublin until the second Partition of Poland.[8]

8. It was published as *Deutscher Geist und Ständische Freiheit im Weichsellande: Politische Ideen und politisches Schriftum in Westpreussen von der Lubliner Union bis zu den polnischen Teilungen (1569–1772/93)* (Königsberg, 1940); its conclusions are summarised in 'Landständische Verfassung, Volkstumpolitik und Volksbewusstein: Eine Studie zur Verfassungsgeschichte ostdeutscher Volksgruppen', in H. Aubin, O. Brunner et al (eds), *Deutsche Ostforschung: Ergebnisse und Aufgaben seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg* vol. ii (Leipzig, 1943), pp. 257–88. At this period in his life Schieder was involved with the *Ostforschung* school of German historians who emphasised their nation's decisive contribution to the development of 'Slavic' areas in Eastern Europe, and he subsequently sponsored editions of documents on this theme: Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: a*

His study of Frederick was also a logical culmination of Schieder's long-standing interest in the role of personality in history.[9] Albeit not a biography in the conventional sense of the term, his study of the Hohenzollern King was primarily a study of the impact of a towering personality upon the Prussia and Europe of his own day. That personality, however, was animated by distinctive ideas, rather than simply pragmatic responses to the situations he faced and the context within which he operated, far less any belief in historical materialism. Here the distinctive intellectual approach associated with German idealistic philosophy and particularly with Hegel clearly left its imprint upon Schieder. Throughout his career, the author believed that individuals were primarily driven not by economic forces but by the power of ideas, which were of fundamental importance throughout human history. As he notes in the German edition of his study, it was based almost entirely on printed material and especially the King's own writings.[10]

Schieder presents a complex and persuasive analysis of Frederick's intellectual development, across the half-century from the 1730s to the final years of his reign, and this stands at the heart of his interpretation. Time and again quotations from Frederick's own voluminous writings, both works of philosophical speculation and practical statecraft, are used to illuminate an argument or buttress a conclusion. More characteristically, Schieder sees Frederick's actions and policies as the working out in practice of a distinctive philosophical system. Once again he identifies tensions within Frederick's intellectual world-view: primarily between his idealism, seen at its clearest in the *Anti-Machiavel* (which is discussed at length, particularly in Chapter 3), and the exigencies of power-politics and Prussia's distinctive geostrategic position.

In other respects, however, Schieder's portrait of Frederick is firmly within an established German – and German nationalist – tradition. This goes back to the second half of the nineteenth century, when historical writing in Germany underwent a scientific revolution associated above all with the career and influence of Leopold von Ranke, who himself contributed significantly to the study of Frederick the Great and whom Schieder cites on several occasions, always with approval. Scholarly study of Prussia's leading eighteenth-century King began during the period which saw first the Unification of Germany during the wars of 1864–71 and then the consolidation of a Prussian-dominated German Empire. This imparted a nationalist tone to studies of Frederick the Great which has endured. Since Germany had been 'unified' by means of the expulsion of Austria, and since this process had begun in the 1740s, when

*Study of* Ostforschung *in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1988) provides the essential German perspective. There is a real problem establishing Schieder's intellectual development during the Weimar and Nazi periods: after a careful survey of the evidence, Jörn Rüsen concluded that, although Schieder was involved in some politically driven projects during the early phases of his career, he was more influenced by 'folk' history than by the ideological programme of Nazism: 'Continuity, innovation and self-reflection', p. 367.

9. Gall, 'Theodor Schieder', p. 20.
10. *Friedrich der Grosse* (Frankfurt/M.-Berlin-Vienna, 1983), p. 495.

the King had seized the Habsburg province of Silesia, Frederick became a kind of patron saint for a united Germany. A nationalist historiography of the King developed, which rested upon the publication of great documentary series devoted largely or even entirely to Frederick's reign.[11]

There are echoes of such an approach in Schieder's study, though they are far less dominant than in earlier studies and particularly in the last book on the King by a major German scholar to be published in an English translation, Walther Hubatsch's Prussophile study of Frederician government and administration.[12] Anglophone readers will value the insights as well as the underlying ambiguity of Theodor Schieder's portrayal of the dominant Prussian as well as a central European personality of the eighteenth century, with its picture of a King as a transitional figure who was wedded to the old order, which his own actions would do so much to undermine.

H.M. Scott

11. Above all the *Acta Borussica* which began publication in 1892 and produced volumes of documents in several series bearing on the internal development of eighteenth-century Prussia, and the *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols.; Berlin, 1879–1939), which is the major source for the King's foreign policy.
12. *Frederick the Great: Absolutism and Administration* (trans. P.F. Doran; London, 1975).

CHAPTER 1

# *Frederick's youth: the international situation and personal destiny*

## EUROPE'S POLITICAL CONSTELLATION

The ruler known to history as Frederick II of Prussia was born on 24 January 1712. He was the son of the Prussian Crown Prince, Frederick William, and his wife, Sophia Dorothea of Hanover. The couple's fourth child, Frederick followed two brothers who had died in infancy and a sister, Wilhelmina, who was three years older than him. Destiny had determined him to be the heir to the Prussian throne in accordance with the law of succession through male primogeniture.

These simple facts record an event which was to have an extraordinary effect upon the history of Germany and Europe during the eighteenth century. It was unusual for men of real distinction to ascend Europe's monarchical thrones, whether by traditional right or as a result of veiled usurpation. The offspring of marriage alliances formed within the narrow confines of ruling families were unlikely to have inherited any extraordinary qualities. They were influenced rather by an upbringing in a world which, despite placing them in positions of authority, expected a certain, but often limited, talent for the tasks of political and military leadership. A prince was, from the very beginning, put on a pedestal. In public it was never questioned whether he merited this elevated position as a man, statesman and military leader. The world of the ruler was a traditional one, and it did not encourage or expect great achievements from the favoured individual, since power and splendour were bestowed upon him as a matter of course. The situation was quite different from that in revolutionary societies, in which the ascent to power involved exceptional risks and possessed none of the safeguards, provided by inherited right, which could prevent a fall into the abyss. Most legitimate rulers, in any case, contented themselves with upholding the status quo. Those who attempted to do more than this were compelled to extract herculean efforts from the state apparatus which they had inherited and attempt a revolution from above.

The eighteenth century offers several examples of such men: Charles XII of Sweden appeared to many, including Frederick himself, to represent the epitomy of failure; Peter the Great of Russia provided the model for creating a powerful empire through internal and external reorganisation. Since the time of the Elector Frederick William (the Great Elector, 1640–88) in the seventeenth century, Prussia had been a second-rate state, showing little, if any, signs of ever playing the role of a great power. In order for it to become a great power, decisive dynastic leadership was needed, and this was provided first by the Great Elector and then by King Frederick William I (1713–40). The leader who wished to transform Prussia into a great power had to rely on and make use of the existing administration and army. The option of proceeding, as Napoleon and Lenin would do, after a destruction of the existing political and military order, did not exist. In order to achieve the goal of territorial aggrandisement and political expansion, such a leader was not obliged continually to destroy his enemies, but needed only to summon the 'courage of his soul' (J. Burckhardt) to deter external foes. Frederick overthrew Europe's existing political order, not Prussia's social order, which he was always concerned to uphold.

This overthrow depended for its success upon Frederick's possession of three qualities rarely found in the same person: political decisiveness, an aptitude for military leadership and practical administrative talent. It is pointless to ask why and from whom the King had inherited these traits of character. His ancestors included such outstanding personalities as the leader of the Dutch Revolt, William the Silent, and the French Huguenot, Admiral de Coligny, both of whom possessed such qualities, but these names can also be found in the genealogies of other rulers. The enigma of great ability cannot be solved through recourse to ancestral lineage, nor simply through an analysis of the historical context. More important is the process whereby circumstances and trends combine with individual potential and allow it to develop. To chart this interaction is the specific responsibility of historical scholarship. Frederick, marked by his fateful youth, sought and found the great opportunity in the history of his time.

He was born during the final stages of the War of the Spanish Succession. In the month before his birth, diplomats assembled at the Peace Congress of Utrecht and this led, a year later in April 1713, to the conclusion of the Peace of Utrecht. Resistance to France's hegemony and her claim to the Spanish inheritance (the possession of which would have made her unassailable) led to the introduction of a new principle of political order, the balance of power. Its proponent was England, the island state which was preparing to rule the oceans, dominate maritime trade, and build an Empire beyond the seas. Since the Glorious Revolution of 1688/89, it had begun to develop a new type of constitutional structure in which power was shared by Crown and Parliament, at a period when absolute monarchy was the order of the day in most other European states. From that time onwards, the struggle for supremacy on the world stage revolved around the Anglo-French conflict, on which

King Frederick II's calculations depended so vitally when he embarked on his first, decisive action, an action which was to have a determining influence on his whole life – the conquest of Silesia. Once the great western conflict of the Spanish Succession was on the wane, the simultaneous struggle in northern and eastern Europe continued unabated. Peter the Great's wide-ranging internal reconstruction and the increased influence which European technology and ideas now had within Russia had prepared the way for her formidable advance westwards. She drove Sweden from the Baltic coast, destroyed the Swedish great power position and made her own presence felt throughout the Baltic region. Poland-Lithuania, too, became totally caught up in the maelstrom of Russian politics. The Empire of the Tsars had carved its way into the whole European states system. Europe's politics could no longer be conducted without paying due regard to the rising power on its eastern rim.

As a result of her extended geographical position, straggling across the territory between the rivers Rhine and Memel, Prussia was located directly between the two spheres of conflict in East and West. Various treaties tied her to the Grand Alliance against Louis XIV, and compelled her to provide troops to serve in the Southern Netherlands, Italy and the Rhineland. This did little to advance Prussia's own interests, except perhaps in the Lower Rhine region. Only after the Peace of Utrecht did the main focus of her own military activity shift to the neighbouring territory of Pomerania, which lay to the north of Brandenburg. In October, 1713, Russia allowed Frederick William I, who had become King on 25 February of that year, to occupy the important port of Stettin and the territory up to the river Peene until the peace settlement should be concluded. This important acquisition was not formally approved until 1720, when Frederick was just eight years old.

During the years when the eighteenth-century power constellation was taking shape, a new generation of monarchs and even new ruling families ascended Europe's thrones. These changes were particularly significant at a period when political power, in continental Europe at least, was personified by absolute monarchy. In 1711 Emperor Joseph I had died after only a brief reign. The resulting accession of his brother, Charles VI, made it inevitable that the Spanish inheritance would be separated from the Austrian Habsburgs, and thus laid the seeds for the destruction of the great alliance between the two branches of the Habsburg family. The year 1714 saw the accession to the British thrones of the Hanoverian dynasty in the person of George I, brother of the Queen of Prussia. This, too, was an event with considerable repercussions for German politics. On 1 September 1715, Louis XIV died. He had been responsible for the most glorious epoch in France's history, but at the same time it had become clear that the power of the French monarchy had reached its zenith at home and abroad. The concept of a French 'universal monarchy', the foundation of which would have been the union of France and Spain, had clearly failed. No European alignment could henceforth come about without the approval of Great Britain. For some time, however, it was impossible to prevent the hegemony of the French language, French thought and

French culture, a process which did not reach its climax until the age of the Enlightenment, even though the English contribution to that movement was to be significant.

The death of Louis XIV signalled a transition which was already under way: Europe lost its monarchical focal point from which the other continental rulers had all taken their lead. The move away from the image of kingship personified by this sovereign can nowhere be more clearly observed than with the accession in 1713 of Frederick William I, the son of the first King in Prussia. The change of personnel in the five years between 1710 and 1715 did not produce a European crisis, unlike the momentous and almost simultaneous changes in 1740 in Prussia, Russia and Austria, with the deaths of Frederick William I, the Russian Empress Anna and the Emperor Charles VI. The earlier changes, however, certainly did not have a stabilising effect, since the exhausted French monarchy henceforth faced severe domestic problems which proved enduring, while the dynastic change in Britain as well as the question of the succession in Austria brought with them difficulties which would loom large during the ensuing decades.

Following the establishment of the French Bourbon dynasty in Spain in 1700 and the resulting gain by a French company of the monopoly for the black slave trade to Spanish America, Britain secured a share in this odious human commerce, gaining the right to send an annual ship under the Asiento agreement (March 1713), an addition to the Anglo-Spanish peace settlement. Spain had declined economically as well as politically; while the Dutch Republic had lost its dominant position both in the Baltic grain trade and in commerce with the East Indies, and had been decisively eclipsed by Great Britain. Sweden's *dominium maris baltici*, her military and political dominance of the Baltic, which was also based upon economic control of its ports, had slowly been eroded since its peak around 1660; now, with the loss of Stettin, a further important component of its position was removed. The French monarchy never recovered from the strains caused by the wars of Louis XIV and by France's simultaneous emergence as a maritime as well as a continental power. Nevertheless, in the eighteenth century she entered once more into a worldwide conflict with England, in North America and India. Frederick II's seven-year struggle with Austria (the Seven Years War of 1756–63) was merely a sideshow in this crucial global struggle which was being fought to secure the riches of the New World.

In the years following the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession, Europe entered a new age in other respects too. Paul Hazard, describing the period 1680–1715, spoke of a 'crisis of the European conscience' and highlighted two distinctly opposing cultures: 'Hierarchy, discipline, an order secured by authority, dogmas which regulated life with a firm hand – that's what the people of the seventeenth century craved; force, authority, dogmas are what the people of the eighteenth century, their immediate successors, cordially detested . . . The majority of Frenchmen used to think like Bossuet, and yet suddenly the French think like Voltaire; it is a revolution . . .'. Pierre

Bayle referred to the two forms of thought as that of the 'believers' and that of the 'rationalists', whose struggle for adherents was watched with interest by all Europe's intellectuals. A few decades later this struggle was played out afresh within the Prussian King's own family, in the conflict between Frederick William I and his son, Crown Prince Frederick, the friend of Voltaire.

What role did Prussia play in the world in which Frederick grew up? It was still not a unified state, as the name might imply, and took its designation from the most eastern of the Hohenzollern territories. East Prussia was that land which was 'of no importance to anyone but God and its own subjects' and which had been elevated to the status of a kingdom by the Elector Frederick III (1688–1713), after 1701 'King in Prussia' as Frederick I. Since Kings, unlike Electors, could create titled nobility, the Hohenzollerns were obliged to locate their royal dignity outside the Empire, within which that right was a powerful and profitable Habsburg monopoly which Vienna was determined to uphold. Apart from the other ruling titles and possessions held by the Prussian monarchy, the Hohenzollerns significantly held sway over the Electorate of Brandenburg. From this core the authority of the ruling family extended to all the outlying territories. At the time of the accession of Frederick William I, however, the process of territorial integration was only in its infancy. What Voltaire would later refer to mockingly as a 'kingdom of mere border strips' was an 'aggregate of territories' which stretched from the Rhine to the Memel, but did not amount to a solid, unified geographical area except in its central province, the Electorate of Brandenburg.

Apart from the functions exercised by the court and the absolute ruler himself, along with his councillors and close advisors, the only institution which covered all the Hohenzollern territories was the Prussian army, which was to be considerably strengthened under Frederick William I. Under the previous ruler, Frederick III/I, it had been the enormously lavish court with its array of honorific offices which had represented the rudimentary elements of a unified state, though it conveyed the impression rather than the reality of power and also devoured the monarchy's budget. The international position of the Prusso-Brandenburg state was that of an auxiliary whose army could decisively tip the military balance and which was therefore courted by all sides, as – for example – were other second-rank states such as Savoy-Piedmont or Bavaria. Prussia still lacked most of the essential attributes of a real great power. The adolescent Hohenzollern monarchy simply displayed the intention to become one, particularly since becoming a kingdom. It did not possess decisive political clout, despite the efforts of the Great Elector. The principal reason for the weakness of this political entity was its territorial fragmentation; this was much more acute than that of other dynastic creations within the Empire. In contemporary eyes, its size in 1713 of 2,043.67 square miles and population of 1.65 million qualified it, at most, as a second-rate power.[1]

1. The author here and elsewhere gives the size in the much larger German miles. One 'German mile' = 4.6 English miles.

The capital was as incomplete as the state itself. Berlin had only existed as a unified town since 1709 and the amalgamation of the city with the outlying districts of Cölln, Dorotheenstadt, Friedrichsstadt and Friedrichswerder. With around 56,000 inhabitants, the capital was more than double the size of the 'Royal residence and principal town of East Prussia', Königsberg, which had barely 25,000 inhabitants. By the end of Frederick the Great's reign, the disparity was even more striking: Berlin's population numbered 147,000 in 1786, while Königsberg at much the same time had only 48,692 inhabitants. Berlin grew along with the Hohenzollern monarchy: the city was politically and socially a creation of the state and its court. It had a military garrison, factories, palaces and a distinct social structure. Around 1720, the proportion of Huguenot refugees amounted to some 9 per cent of the total population. This percentage was considerably higher than the national average and was indicative of the fact that the state had not yet mustered the strength to build up its capital by itself.

Unlike the cities of Karlsruhe, Ludwigsburg or Rastadt, which were also the seats of ruling families and the locations of their princely courts, Berlin was not an artificial creation, but grew from humble beginnings as a small provincial town to become the capital city of an expanding territorial state. In its expansion, the years around 1700 were of particular importance architecturally, when the ambitious first King in Prussia and his Queen, Sophia Charlotte, provided artistic momentum to the Hohenzollern state. The focal point of this building programme was Berlin's late-sixteenth-century Renaissance town palace, which may well be described historically as a 'memorial in stone to the Hohenzollern dynasty'. Significant alterations were made in Frederick I's time, when Andreas Schlüter, entrusted with the rebuilding, transformed it by converting three wings of the inner courtyard and refurbishing the façade into a Baroque construction of such colossal splendour that it conveyed the impression of a powerful Prusso-Brandenburg state, even if the reality was a little different. It resembled the palace in Stockholm with its massive block shape, which gave the impression of a fortress, and blended the particular North German Baroque style with an Italian influence. The further rebuilding, following Schlüter's downfall, was supervised by the Swedish architect Johann Friedrich Eosander, Freiherr von Göthe, who wished to give expression to the confidence of the new kingdom by adding a high dome, which was not, however, completed until the nineteenth century. Eosander von Göthe worked in Berlin from 1707 to 1715. During that time, his endeavours created the palace as it was known to the young Crown Prince Frederick. Many of Eosander's great plans, however, remained uncompleted.

In the years around 1700 the Hohenzollerns followed the example of their own high nobility who, through the building of castles, had erected princely memorials for themselves, and it was only this which transformed Berlin into a city which was fit to be a royal capital. Between 1695 and 1699, Lietzenburg palace was built near the village of Lietzow for the Electress, later Queen, Sophia Charlotte. After her death in 1705, it was renamed Charlottenburg.

The garden palace of Monbijou, built by Eosander between 1703 and 1710, was a present from Frederick I to the Queen, who gave concerts and balls there. It was to remain the private residence of subsequent Prussian Queens. This architectural programme, which also included ecclesiastical buildings such as the church of Sophia, built in 1712, formed the basic core of the new royal capital, before the focal point of the monarchy moved to Potsdam. The plans for the rebuilding of Berlin's cathedral, a task for which the Dutchman Jean de Bodt was signed up, were never completed. Likewise the colossal plan adopted by Frederick I in 1704 to allow the architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach to create a Prussian Versailles never came to fruition, though Fischer von Erlach did submit plans. The scheme's purpose had been to put the young kingdom on an equal footing with the established powers – a bold concept, though one which was somewhat premature.

The world of the court stretched beyond the capital into the Mark Brandenburg, and here two locations are of particular interest: Königswusterhausen and Rheinsberg. Königswusterhausen, or 'Wendisch-Wusterhausen' as it was originally known, belonged as early as 1683 to the Crown Prince, later King, Frederick, who passed it on to his ten-year-old son, Frederick William, in 1698. Throughout his life, Frederick William had a special affection for this palace, which he rebuilt and refurbished. There, he created a model of an idealised state, and spent at least two months a year during the hunting season. It was already clear that this was a favoured retreat when, after his own accession as King, it was used in the autumn of 1713 for festivities dominated by hunting. The gloomy palace of Königswusterhausen had notably cramped living conditions. According to her memoirs, Princess Wilhelmina was forced to share two small attic rooms with one of her sisters. Königswusterhausen was a hateful place for her and for her brother, Fritz, the location where the conflict between father and son was to reach intolerable heights in 1728.

Königswusterhausen is always associated historically with Frederick William I. Rheinsberg, on the other hand, is remembered as the place where, between 1736 and 1740, Crown Prince Frederick spent his happiest years. In the previous century, it had been bestowed by the Great Elector on General Du Hamel, who promptly sold it. Frederick William I acquired Rheinsberg in 1734 and bestowed it upon his son, who employed the noted architect Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff to rebuild it between 1737 and 1739. The result was distinctly reminiscent of the Trianon at Versailles, since Frederick envisaged transplanting 'a piece of France . . . into the sandy Mark' (P. Gaxotte). The transition from Schlüter to Knobelsdorff also reflected a decisive change in architectural style.

## FATHER AND SON

Frederick was barely one year old when the death of the first King on 25 February 1713 brought his father to the Prussian throne. Frederick William I's accession was far more than a simple change of ruler. It brought about a

fundamental transformation in the whole lifestyle, political world and established hierarchies of the Prussian monarchy. Frederick I, like many other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German princes, had been a representative of a form of absolutism which had taken as its model the France of Louis XIV. What distinguished his own position from that of his fellow German rulers was the honour of the royal title which lent greater dignity to the sovereign territory which lay beyond the boundaries of the Empire. Two other Electors, those of Hanover and Saxony, did of course rise to royal rank by becoming Kings of Great Britain and Poland-Lithuania, while other German dynasties concluded marriage alliances with foreign crowned heads. For the Kings of Great Britain, however, Hanover sank to the status of a secondary possession, while the association of the Saxon Elector Augustus the Strong and his son with the Polish throne can hardly be viewed as having represented a real increase in power and income for their homeland of Saxony; at most it was a considerable gain in prestige. Only for the Elector of Brandenburg did the royal dignity act as an integrating factor for all his widely scattered lands. Admittedly this process had scarcely begun by the time of the first Prussian King. Frederick III/I announced a claim through the display of royal ceremonial, which thus had a different function than in the established kingdom of France. The coronation of 1701 was an act of usurpation, the launching of a programme which challenged the established monarchies.

Prussia's new King did not yet have at his disposal a state which was a closed territorial unit internally or externally, but he possessed a court of substantial size: with a *Schlosshauptmann* (literally 'head of the palace', that is to say majordomo), *Hofmarschall* ('marshal of the court'), *Oberschenk* ('principal cup-bearer'), sixteen *Kämmerer* (chamberlains), thirty-two *Kammerjunker* (gentlemen of the bedchamber), seven *Hofjunker* (gentlemen of the court), twenty-four pages, and a great number of chamber and household servants. Below these were the liveried servants (*Heiducker*), valets and royal stablehands, the court's chief cook, five royal cooks, eight master chefs, three bakers, seven pastry cooks, five butchers, two fish-keepers, one poultryman. In its upper echelons, there thus existed a network of holders of largely honorific posts, exactly the situation at the courts of many minor German rulers.

In contrast to the French court, its Prussian counterpart did not hold an irresistible attraction for noblemen, who based themselves in the provinces; for a time it remained an artificial creation, lacking any function. Norbert Elias's celebrated explanation of the French court and of court society in general, namely that it served to deprive the aristocracy of its independence and strengthen its reliance upon the King, the court thus performing the double function of providing for and at the same time taming the high nobility, did not yet apply in the case of Brandenburg-Prussia. The Prussian court, understandably, could not hope to match the dimensions of the French where the King's own household employed a staff of 4,000. The inherent weakness of the rapidly established court system of Frederick I explains the ease with which his successor was able to destroy it.

As Crown Prince, Frederick William had already come to appreciate the inherent fragility of his father's regime, particularly the large state debt and the dependence upon foreign powers and their subsidies. Soon after taking over the reins of government, therefore, the new King overthrew in a matter of weeks the prevailing absolutism which had reached its climax in the court and its institutions. Most of the court posts were abolished, while the number of appointments and salaries was drastically reduced and all forms of luxury suppressed. In place of the court society with its extravagant tastes and hierarchy of posts, the holders of which seemed solely concerned with the prestige which accrued, a military system of ranks and offices was established. The 'Table of Ranks' of 21 April 1713 confirmed the dominant position of the army: whereas until then the *Oberkämmerer* (Lord High Chamberlain) had represented the peak of the pyramid, the field-marshal now took his place. The *Grandmaître* of the court was demoted from fourth to seventh position and was now responsible to the lieutenant-general, the *Schloßhauptmann* to the major-generals. The chamberlains were ranked below colonels, who were moved upwards from forty-third to nineteenth position. The *Kammerjunker* were placed under the captains, who were thus promoted by no less than fifty-five places in the hierarchical ladder.

In the new King's state, stripped of its Baroque embellishments, the existing social hierarchy remained, but it was now governed by military ranks. Aristocratic principles were still important, but the new social order was clothed in military uniform. This was evident in a sharp rise in the size of the army, whose numbers rose, first from 40,000 in 1713 to 60,000 and, finally, to 80,000 by 1740. Its composition was also changing: although the proportion of foreign mercenaries was still considerable, that of native soldiers from rural areas was rising. Individual regiments were each allocated particular recruiting districts known as cantons. The officer corps was recruited exclusively from the ranks of the nobility and this process was at times enforced through draconian measures. Brandenburg – Prussia was an almost entirely agrarian state, and the whole economy was geared towards the army, while the royal domain lands were enlarged and their yield increased by rational farm management. The army, instead of the court, was now the largest consumer, often devouring more than two-thirds of the state revenues, while the court only secured one per cent. Prussian mercantilism was a state-directed economic programme to support the army. Any surplus income was stored up in the *Tresor*, the state treasury, which, by the end of Frederick William's reign, contained 8,000,000 thaler. The mercantilist theory of an increase in the monetary pool as the goal of trade and other economic activity, in this case, had a distinct purpose. In this way a material base was established which provided his successor, Frederick, with political freedom of action.

After 1725, Frederick William I constantly wore a uniform, a fashion which caught on amongst the European aristocracy, even if the Prussian system it represented was not adopted. Militarism was inherent in the Prussian state created by Frederick William. It was its *raison d'être*, born out of the enormously

overstretched resources of a poor country, which did not possess the means to support a great power role, but which, through its attempt to play such a role, was constantly exposed to foreign threats. Standing armies had been created in all the larger German territorial states after the end of the seventeenth century, but these forces played a politically neutral role. In Prussia by contrast the army took over the whole state apparatus and was assimilated by it. The aristocratic duty of the officer was the basis of a military state machine. Militarism was not an end in itself, but an instrument of the state's quest for power and this led to the modernisation of the administration and the army. The relatively passive foreign policy pursued by Frederick William I, however, largely confined the Prussian regiments to the barrack square. There were minor exceptions but, in the main, the military system had time to become established within Prussia itself.

Those contemporaries who were affected by the King and his policies did not regard Frederick William as the instigator of deeply considered reforms, but as a hostile destroyer of culture, governed by unpredictable moods. Indeed, his personality, full of contradictions and lacking in social grace and conviviality, made it difficult to see him as an inspired creator. Throughout his life, he failed to curb his dangerous tendency to displays of violent temper, brutality and contempt for his fellow man, which conveyed the impression that he was the archetypal inhuman despot. Excessive in anger, he was also excessive in repentance and remorse. He was torn by violently conflicting emotions which seemed quite irreconcilable with the calculated and rational policies which he pursued. Nevertheless, both aspects of his personality were evident in these policies as well as in the upbringing of the Crown Prince. Bearing in mind his father's Baroque display of splendour, Frederick William's puritan austerity and harshness, which as in his treatment of his own son could reach the level of mental cruelty, were particularly noticeable. Although externally he gave the impression of a puritan, his basic principles were governed more by the influences of Pietism, to which he had been introduced by General Dubislav von Natzmer. His association with August Hermann Francke, the founding father of German Pietism, allowed him to experience the proven Christian value of practical action, but this need for practical action was not directed at man, but at the state, in which context human happiness was irrelevant. Power was to be found on the battlefield, where one must seek 'one's temporal welfare' as he put it. It is possible to perceive a curious combination of Lutheran and Calvinist principles; the concept of predestinarianism had such an unsettling effect on the Calvinistically raised King that he rejected it and did all he could to preserve his son from contamination by it. This in no way meant that he shrank from the responsibilities which his royal house and his own state demanded of him; quite the reverse, in fact. Like a person possessed, he did everything to prove to himself that his contribution to the rise of Prussia merited his being one of God's elect.

Frederick's childhood and early youth coincided with the first decade and a half of Frederick William's reign, a critical test period for the newly established

General Directory which transformed the state apparatus and the administrative order. This synchronisation of personal evolution and state development can be confirmed by specific dates: in the early part of 1722, the King drew up his Political Testament, intended to guide his successor in statecraft. At the end of the same year, the great 'Instruction' was issued, bringing into being the new governmental institution, the General Directory. The nervousness with which the King viewed any deviation on the part of the Crown Prince from the principles of statecraft laid down by Frederick William, may be explained by his awareness that these were still in their vulnerable infancy and that any divergence from the prescribed path could not be endured.

The conflict which began to brew between father and son, and later escalated into a full-scale crisis, can be attributed to several factors which must not be viewed separately, but whose combination and interaction served to fuel the struggle. First of all, there was clearly a generation gap, one that coincided with and was sharpened by the general abandonment of seventeenth-century values in favour of those of the 'century of Enlightenment', a development of which the participants were not necessarily aware. In addition, it was also a contest between contrasting political objectives, which was particularly highlighted by the question of marriages for Frederick and his older sister, Wilhelmina. Ultimately, it was, of course, a father–son conflict, which was exacerbated by their totally opposing natures. Freudian analysis based upon the notion of an 'Oedipus complex' is futile, since in Frederick's case the basic prerequisite of a strong maternal bond was lacking. Frederick William's character was divided by an untamed choleric temperament which combined in him a violent temper, brutality, unpredictability and lack of tact on the one hand, with calculated rationality, immense diligence, an attention to detail in his daily business but also pedantry and stubbornness. Side by side with a puritan work ethic, the King derived what appeared to be a barbaric pleasure from the company of coarse men. Similarly contradictory is the deep, religious feeling of remorse which often followed outbursts of unbridled temper. Frederick William was the archetypal autocrat in whom an incredibly assertive will was united with a mastery of the smallest details which allowed him to be competent in nearly all the areas of political life. He had at his disposal a state which although in every sense incomplete, was sufficiently malleable to allow him to make his mark.

Frederick William's basic concepts of statecraft were simple. Emphasis is often given to their pragmatic origins, but their intrinsic unity and interdependence must not be overlooked: state power was totally at his disposal and at best it only served its people indirectly, life and the well-being of the individual were of no consequence. This systematic disregard corresponded with the King's own nature, since the possibility of self-determination for his subjects did not occur to him – only a religiously determining influence was acceptable: 'One must look to God for eternal salvation, but to me for everything else.'

Frederick William subjected his state and his subjects to a harsh learning process, imposed from above and carried out by governmental institutions,

but not based on the conscious cooperation of those it affected. The sons of Junkers, for example, were forced to become cadets in military academies set up to provide a steady stream of officers for the army. At this point, similarities can clearly be detected between the rigorous educative policies imposed upon the state and the upbringing of the Crown Prince. Frederick William determined that the latter be conducted according to a plan which his father had laid down for his own education in 1695 and which also incorporated some of Leibniz's ideas. He was untroubled by the fact that, in the past, he himself had demonstrated that these intractable instructions could not be implemented. As soon as the Crown Prince reached the age of six in 1718, responsibility for his education was placed in the hands of two senior officers, Lieutenant-General Graf von Finckenstein and Colonel von Kalckstein, who had been instructed by the King to employ the programme of 1695, which had shaped his own childhood, embellished by Frederick William's own pietistic additions, as the basis for their teaching. Thus, fear of God was to be given the utmost importance since 'great princes who recognise no humanly imposed punishment or reward' cannot, unlike other mortals, be encouraged to do good or, conversely, prevented from doing evil by rewards or punishments imposed by the highest of legal authorities. It was, therefore, the religious ties which served to remind the absolute monarch of the only limitation upon his power. It was in keeping with the spirit of Pietism that the individual should display personal piousness with the 'ultimate aim of attaining God's eternal salvation'; as a result, the King expected that 'operas, comedies and other such worldly vanities' would be foregone. In addition, the preservation of orthodoxy was an important component of religious education – this meant guarding against 'all sects and aberrations intent on malicious destruction, such as the Atheist–Arian–Socinian society, and also . . . against the Catholic religion'. Moreover, the King prohibited what he regarded as the deeply disturbing teaching of predestinarianism, the 'particularist' doctrine which limited God's grace to only a chosen few. It had been a recurring nightmare of Frederick William's own youth that he did not belong to the elect. He had, unknowingly at first, awakened the same fear in the young Crown Prince, who saw the sense in a preordained fate for man. The subject remained a constant topic of discussion right up to the great crisis of 1730.

In the educational plan, it is possible to detect basic Pietist ideas: for example, the breaking of a natural self-will pitted against God as the final goal of the educative scheme and the assimilation of 'Christian teaching' which dictated that such wisdom should then affect the actions of those who had acquired it. However, the Crown Prince was to become not only a pious Christian, but also a 'good host' and to be prepared 'to play the part of an officer and a general'. It clearly did not seem difficult for the King to reconcile the idea of a chivalrous lifestyle with his own religious ideals: next to the fear of God, he believed, there is nothing which stimulates the princely mind to do good and discourages it from doing evil more than 'the true splendour of and yearning for glory, honour and bravery'. This peculiar synthesis of ethical guiding

forces was to be one source of Frederick's almost vocational search for glory. It is this which clearly provided the impetus for his invasion of Silesia. Glory was virtually a royal status symbol, as honour was for the nobility. In all aspects of the educational plan, strong emphasis was placed upon questions of morality. This applied both to the 'moderate exercise' that had been planned for the Prince, as well as to times of 'honorable recreation' engaging in 'certain decent games, but not cards or games of chance'. The purely pedagogic element played something of a secondary role, whereas in other educational plans it occupied a dominant position as, for example, in that of Frederick's younger contemporary, the future Joseph II.

Although it is impossible merely to limit one's analysis of Frederick's education to broad generalisations, certain trends are discernible. It seems almost as if this severely practical education was an anticipation of things to come; Latin and Ancient History were scrapped and the main emphasis placed upon Mathematics, Artillery, Economy, Geography, Modern History, and a knowledge of the affairs of state. History served to convey an understanding of practical action. Accordingly, the King ordered the study of the 'History of the House of Hohenzollern' and insisted that the histories of those states particularly associated with Prussia – England, Brunswick and Hesse – also be given especial emphasis. The absence of any mention of the history of Austria, as well as that of the Empire, reflected a certain political naiveté. Regular teaching in 'Natural Law and in the Law of Nations' was not, however, overlooked. This was an area in which Joseph II, too, was to be given detailed instruction by legal scholars. In a complementary clause of 1721 to the Educational Instruction, the King laid down that the present condition of European states, 'the strengths and weaknesses, size, urban wealth or poverty of all the European powers' be taught, possibly along the lines of Pufendorf or even just using the *Theatrum Europeum*.

All of this bore the King's somewhat unsystematic, arbitrary stamp, which can also be detected in many other areas. The Instruction of 1718, although very much in the tradition of other princely political testaments and writings on education, had purely pragmatic goals. Its theoretical content was peppered with contradictions and its educational value is questionable, not least because it lacked any understanding of an adolescent's psyche. Much more influential than the educational programme, however, was the personal relationship between Frederick William and his son. This was shaped by a series of factors which silently interacted. Like any father, Frederick William undoubtedly hoped to mould his son in his own image, or even the idealised image of himself which he had striven for but failed to attain. Behind this lay the dreadful fear that Frederick could re-establish the odious, ruinous system of government of Prussia's first King: the semblance of power, the trumpery of a dazzling culture without the solid basis of a healthy economy, the claim to royal sovereignty at the cost of dependence upon a power-hungry nobility. This trauma of a return to obstacles which had already been surmounted weighed heavily upon the King's mind. Added to this, especially with the

passing years, was probably a certain jealousy of his son, of 'the rising sun', while experiencing his own physical decline. All this made it difficult, even impossible, for the King to remain objective with regard to Frederick and to exercise moderation in his dealings with him. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that eventually he could not bear him as a person, he was obliged to raise the heir to the throne in the fashion laid down by *raison d'état.*

When one speaks of the educational programme for the Crown Prince, one is referring not only to the regulating of discipline and the subject-matter of learning, but the total regimentation of daily life. Frederick's day was organised down to the last minute – much like the quotidian routine of the members of the General Directory after the Great Instruction of December 1722. The need to carry out his prescribed daily tasks proved to be an overwhelming strain on the Crown Prince, whose constitution was stretched to its limits by this regime. The King perceived this regimentation to be the pivotal point of his son's education, an education which did not allow for normal adolescent development, but only aimed at coercing Frederick into a system. 'He truly believed that a mind can be trained like a regiment, and that a soul can be cultivated like a royal demesne' (Carl Hinrichs). Flexibility or a regard for the psychological needs of the individual played no part in this educational system. Everything had to be done as laid down by the programme. The Crown Prince constantly heard the same, seemingly inflexible formulae: he was to prepare to become 'God's bureaucrat', a 'good host' and a 'soldier and general'. He was perhaps most touched by the example of the 'honnête homme', the high social ideal which stemmed from France and to which the rest of the European aristocracy aspired. In the mind of Frederick William, who used the term constantly, the idea acquired overtones of German uprightness and respectability, and it became for him simply a description of an honourable man, who, while not repudiating the still largely aristocratic moral code, turned more for guidance towards the truths of the Christian faith. Though Frederick William was steeped in the continuing tradition of Western chivalry, this had little direct impact on his utterances. One thing cannot be overlooked: all these models served a single purpose, that of turning the Crown Prince into an autocrat; not an autocrat wallowing in luxury and majesty, but one dedicated to work and subject to the 'majesty of God'.

It is difficult to establish precisely how the young Prince was affected by these exacting educational demands. There is very little documentation from contemporary observers and next to nothing written (at that time, at least) by Frederick himself. The only option left for the historian is therefore to examine later material, and in particular the chapter entitled 'The Education of the Crown Prince' in Frederick's own first Political Testament, finalised in 1752. Here Frederick refers to many incidents and experiences from his own upbringing, and it is possible to unearth a great deal of hidden criticism of his father's educational methods. For example, there is the ironic remark about the parents of a Prince striving to turn him into a model of perfection and completeness (*modèle parfait*), one free of enervating passions, and one who, at

the age of fifteen, was to have reached the level of intellectual maturity that a Frenchman would only achieve at forty. On religious matters, which were allocated such an important place within Frederick William's educational plan, Frederick remained silent. He dismissed the practice of early marriage, since in his opinion this could only turn out badly. His own experience of an adolescence filled with conflict seems to lie behind his recommendation that a young Prince should be allowed the freedom to do as he chooses. His governor should refrain from following him everywhere, but should scold or punish him for any pranks. Thus, the Prince will learn to discipline himself, and fear of retribution will make him wise in his own way. A love of hunting, music, dancing and games should be encouraged to such an extent that he himself will learn to tire of them.

Despite the veiled critique of his own upbringing, however, one of Frederick William's basic educational principles, against which Frederick had reacted during his own youth, was now fully accepted and recommended: this was the encouragement of a love of militarism, since both father and son were fully aware that the army was the very foundation on which the Prussian state was built. Frederick only stipulated that this should be taught in the guise of an enjoyable game, rather than be turned into an oppressive chore. There are further echoes of the Crown Prince's own youth when Frederick recommended that a Prince who has completed his training in the lower ranks of the army, should be given a regiment for which he would be responsible in the same way as a regular officer. Frederick William's educational system continued to exercise this dual influence over Frederick, at times encouraging, at others deterring him, even when the original wounds it had inflicted had long since healed. It is indicative of the strength of Frederick's own character, with its blend of enthusiasm and scepticism, that it was not broken by this exacting upbringing. Not until the first Political Testament, however, did he find words of thanks and gratitude, indeed admiration, for his father. With the passing of time, shared work brought them closer, but their personalities remained incompatible and the gulf between them could never be bridged. Their opposing positions became more entrenched in the years of increasing conflict and one has to look to Frederick's childhood and adolescence to find the origins of their attitudes.

Quite unlike his father's physical robustness, the Crown Prince as a child had a delicate, frail constitution. The latter's appearance was reminiscent of his Guelph ancestors, while his father's fuller figure recalled that of the Great Elector as portrayed by Andreas Schlüter in the famous equestrian statue. Frederick William's predisposition to convulsive attacks was not inherited by his son; indeed, in his first few years, it appeared that Frederick positively lacked liveliness. In her memoirs, which are a questionable source, his sister, Wilhelmina, claimed that he was slow to learn; others, however, dispute this and cite discontentment as its cause. Frederick certainly was not a precocious child prodigy (*Wunderkind*), in spite of the fact that traces of intellectual ability did reveal themselves at an early age. His inner turmoil found expression in

the melancholy air in which he enveloped himself, and the habitually disdainful, apparently haughty, attitude he adopted. In a painting by Antoine Pesne of 1718, a curious, pensive streak can be perceived in him: his eyes already have that piercing look which does not betray anything of his innermost self. There is little doubt that from the very beginning he reacted against the harsh reality of his existence. This later manifested itself in his predisposition towards mockery and arrogance – the result of a slow and gradual process of development, which owed much to the influence of the personalities who surrounded him. In the first few years of his life, women played a decisive part, in particular the French *émigrée*, Madame de Rocoulle, who had already brought up Frederick's own father. From 1716 onwards, the Crown Prince was placed in the care of Jacques Egide Duhan de Jandun, a French refugee and a highly educated dilettante whom Frederick William had met in the trenches during the siege of Stralsund. It is interesting to note that Huguenot *émigrés* clearly made a valuable contribution to the rising Prussian monarchy, while simultaneously being in the forefront of opposition to the growth of French absolutism.

In 1718 two high-ranking officers of East Prussian extraction were made responsible for the Prince's military education, and these men were to remain his tutors until 1729. Neither General Graf von Finckenstein nor Colonel von Kalckstein were strictly army-oriented or stiff military personnel; instead both men were imbued with distinct humanitarian principles. It was they who were also entrusted with the implementation of the Educational Instruction of 1718. There was never a formal breach of the kind that had occurred between Frederick William and his own tutors (indeed, later in life Frederick continued to express his gratitude to Duhan), but he did not bare his soul to anyone save his older sister, Wilhelmina, the future Margravine of Bayreuth.

Frederick's affection for his elder sister stemmed less from a sense of sibling allegiance and more from a desire to break free from family bonds. The family over which his father held sway clearly inhibited natural development. To an extent, Frederick was later to thank his father for not allowing him or his brothers and sisters to become royal showpieces at the mercy of court ceremony, but for bringing them up like ordinary children with common family mealtimes. There was, however, a limit to how far this could go. The total isolation of a private enclave within the court and court society contravened all social laws and was only just becoming an acceptable characteristic of bourgeois society. Despite the radical transformation of the role of the court in 1713/14, when it lost its Baroque status of being the centre of the social universe and the King was stripped of his aura of majestic inaccessibility and aloofness, the position of the royal family at court was preserved.

Continuity in personnel and appearance masked a decisive change in the roles assumed and played by the members of the court; henceforth, military rank determined status. 'When one speaks of the Berlin court,' ran a contemporary report, 'one is referring only to the military personnel, of which the court is almost entirely composed.' The nobility no longer held the monopoly