

Nobility and Religious Opposition.

Britain and the Habsburg Territories in Comparison.

18 September 2009

German Historical Institute
17 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2NJ

The workshop, jointly organized by the GHIL and Professor Ronald G. Asch (University of Freiburg), addresses the problem of religious opposition by the nobility or certain sections of the nobility in the Habsburg monarchy and the British Isles between c. 1560 and c. 1660. Whereas in Austria the majority of noblemen were Protestant before the turn of the seventeenth century and quite a number of noble families tried to defend and maintain their Protestant faith even after 1620 (at least in Lower Austria where the legal situation was more favourable than in Österreich ob der Enns and Inner-Austria), Catholic peers in England comprised only a minority of the aristocracy. Nevertheless this minority (before 1642 probably between 15 and 20 % of the peerage if one includes church Papists) managed against heavy odds to maintain their social status not least at the local and regional level. What is more some Catholics or crypto-Catholics even gained influence at court in particular during the 1630s but in some cases even under James I. Nevertheless both Protestant noblemen in Austria and Catholics in England were confronted by the problem of how to define their status and identity as nobles in a situation where access to offices was difficult or could only be gained at the price of hiding one's religious convictions. Moreover choices had to be made constantly between allegiance to a faith which had been rejected by the ruler and the need to preserve one's property and local influence. Thus the workshop aims to shed new light on the history of early modern nobilities and at the same time test theoretical approaches such as the confessionalization paradigm.

Programme

9.30 Welcome and Introduction (Andreas Gestrich and Ronald G. Asch)

10.00 **Section I: Confessional Allegiances in the British Isles**

Michael Questier (London)

The English Catholic Peers and their Clergy in late Jacobean and early Caroline England

James Kelly (London)

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Catholics, Conscience and Secular

Influence

in Late-sixteenth Century England

Jane Ohlmeyer (Dublin)

Religious Allegiance among the Irish Peerage in the Seventeenth Century

Commentator: John Morrill (Cambridge)

12.30 Sandwich Lunch

2.00pm **Section II: The Protestant Nobility in the Habsburg Monarchy**

Andreas Klein (Freiburg)

The Protestant Nobility of Austria and their Clergy 1570-1620

Arndt Schreiber (Freiburg)

Religious Opposition and Political Loyalty. The Protestant Nobility in Lower Austria after the Battle of White Mountain

Jörg Deventer (Leipzig)

Refashioning Confessional Identity. Conversions to Catholicism among the Bohemian and Silesian Nobilities

Commentator: Alexandra Walsham (Exeter)

5.00 Final Discussion