

Spies, Espionage and Secret Diplomacy in the Early Modern Period

Call for Papers

Universität Bayreuth, 5-7 October 2017

In recent years, historians of the early modern period have made clear that the wars of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries as much as geopolitics at large depended on information and communication systems – as much as on soldiers, weapons and supply systems. Spies, espionage and secret diplomacy were important elements in these information and communication systems.

With our workshop we would like to gain a better knowledge of spies, espionage and secret diplomacy in Europe and her colonies: Britain, France, the Holy Roman Empire, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and the Ottoman Empire. Is it always possible to clearly distinguish between official and secret diplomacy? Did specific cultures of spy systems arise?

We invite papers on the following aspects:

- Actors: Who acted as spies? Official court diplomats, servants, soldiers/army officers, migrants, merchants? Did new professions arise from the many wars of the early modern period, e.g. “free-lance” diplomats – as we know them from the Williamite Wars?
- Communication: We are interested in the “flows” of secret diplomacy and spy systems: networks, technologies, institutions.
- Recruitment and transcultural aspects of spy systems: Who recruited spies? Did communication/language problems arise? How were they addressed/resolved?

Conference languages will be German, French and English. A one page proposal and a short CV should be sent to PD Dr. Dr. Guido Braun (gbraun@uni-bonn.de) and Prof. Dr. Susanne Lachenicht (susanne.lachenicht@uni-bayreuth.de) by 15 June 2016.