Histories of Celebrity in Post-Revolutionary England

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Abstract: »*Geschichten von Berühmtheit im nachrevolutionären England*«. The history of celebrity has been revised in recent years. Particular claims have been made for the invention of a recognizably modern form of celebrity at various points in the 'long 18th century.' This putative rise of modern celebrity has been linked with the rise of a modern public sphere and in many ways is understood as an offshoot of it. Furthermore, modern celebrity is often presented as a commercial enterprise and perhaps another aspect of the equally popular claim that the 18th century witnessed a 'consumer revolution.' This essay argues that there is also a political history of celebrity that has its origins in traditional forms of charisma and public devotion to famous figures. The premodern histories of monarchy and sainthood are not irrelevant to the history of modern celebrity and these perspectives can and should be incorporated into any understanding of how celebrity emerged as a form of public notoriety and influence in the long 18th century.

Keywords: Celebrity, fame, infamy, glory, consumer revolution, charisma, monarchy, hagiography, life writing, biography, media studies, England, 18th century.

Celebrity has emerged as an important new topic of inquiry in 18th-century studies. Beginning with an exhibition at Tate Britain in 2005 on *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity*, scholarship on the history of 18th-century celebrity has taken off (Postle 2005). Stella Tillyard argued that

> like so much else that defines us in Europe and America now, celebrity appears to have been made in the eighteenth century and in particular in London, with its dozens of newspapers and print shops, its crowds and coffee-houses, theatres, exhibitions, spectacles, pleasure gardens and teeming pavements. (2005, 20)

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Her claim that the 18th century saw the invention of something new – celebrity – has now been echoed and refined by many other historians, literary critics, and art historians (Inglis 2010: Lilti 2017; Mole 2007, 2009; Rosenthal 2006) While there has been a certain amount of ambiguity with regard to what this new 'celebrity' was, and even more confusion about precisely when it might have emerged, a general consensus seems to have developed that the new media world and the distinctively 18th-century forms of sociability invoked by Tillyard helped to create a recognizably modern form of celebrity.

I wish to challenge this consensus by more critically examining two key elements of the history of celebrity: the definition of celebrity and the chronology of its putative emergence in the 18th century. The two issues are related. Claims for the invention of celebrity in the 18th century rest strongly on an argument that the word only began to take on its modern meaning in the 18th century. Now it is true that the word 'celebrity' was not used to describe a renowned or famous person until the 19th century. Tillyard notes that

> the *Oxford English Dictionary* finds the first printed use of the word 'celebrity' as applied to a person in 1849, and the persistent identification of individuals as 'celebrities' only entered everyday culture, in England at any rate, with the explosive growth of the popular press and mass literacy at the end of the nineteenth century. (Tillyard 2005, 21)[1]

She finds the distinctiveness of 18th-century celebrity in the difference between the Victorian era recognition of celebrity as a form of personal identity and the earlier Georgian era sense of celebrity as an experience:

> In the eighteenth century someone possessing celebrity was at a simple level someone celebrated, the centre of a throng, a person surrounded, the object of joyous attention. Celebrity was about being with others, together, adored in the here and now by an audience. (Tillyard 2005, 22)

This is an argument that has recently been reinforced by Antoine Lilti in his book, *Figures Publiques* (2014), which has recently been translated into English as *The Invention of Celebrity 1750-1850* (2017; see also the interview in this HSR issue: Lilti and Le Goff 2019, 19-38). Lilti finds the invention of celebrity in the century of Romanticism and Revolution from 1750 to 1850, and he sees it as a particularly western European experience, centred above all on the two great cultural capitols of London and Paris. Armed with the words usage data from a vast number of scanned texts provided by the American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language (ARTFL) and Google's N-Gram, he demonstrates that there is a clear uptake in the use of the word 'celebrity' in both French and English in the later 18th and earlier 19th centuries (Lilti 2017, 102-5). Lilti argues that celebrity should be distinguished from other forms of notoriety, most notably glory (*gloire*) and reputation. Glo-

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[1] See also Marsh 2011 and Plunkett 2016.

ry is the judgment of posterity, reserved for those who have achieved great things and have been remembered as such; reputation is a localized form of notoriety in which a person's character is known and judged by his or her peers. Early modern scholars will recognize glory as a 'keyword' of the era and its significance was enhanced by the neoclassical ideals of post-renaissance culture (Burke 1992, 5). The glory of the ancients remained an ideal to be striven for in the modern age (Ayres 1997; Coltman 2006; Levine 1991, 1999). Early modern elites strove to emulate the achievements of ancient Greece and Rome with the hope that their own accomplishments would be remembered just as long. Reputation was also key to understanding the honor culture that was so crucial to the maintenance of the pre-modern social order: reputation was the essence of one's place within the social order and it was key to the maintenance of identity within that order (Cust 1995; Kane 2010; Stater 1999). Unlike glory, reputation was important for everyone: it was not the preserve of magistrates and others elites. Women and commoners were equally invested in maintaining their sense of honor amongst their peers (Dabhoiwla 1996; Gowing 1996; Walker 1996).

Celebrity, by contrast, was something new according to Lilti. It is a particularly modern form of notoriety that allowed a general public to take an interest in, and to obtain knowledge (often detailed and intimate knowledge) about, an otherwise unrelated person (Lilti 2017, 6, 12). Modern celebrity, in other words, helped to create public figures through the mass mediation of private lives.

Lilti's argument helpfully distinguishes the form of celebrity that emerged in the 18th century from other forms of notoriety, and this is one of the virtues of his work. Nevertheless, arguments such as those adumbrated by Lilti, Tillyard, and others tend to draw too fine a distinction between the modernity of celebrity and other more traditional forms of fame or notoriety. Like so many other aspects of the pre-modern world, the history of celebrity can be understood as a *process* (rather than an invention) that has always existed in one form or another in most societies.[2] Curiosity about the lives of others (including people who are otherwise strangers) is not uniquely modern, after all, as any reader of Herodotus will quickly discover. The history of modern celebrity needs to be placed within a much longer *durée* history of fame.[3]

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[2] Just as there is now a relatively well developed historiography on the history of state formation, we also need a history of celebrity formation. A key text that establishes this agenda is van Krieken 2012.

[3] A particularly insightful example is Braudy 1986. David Marshall's forthcoming edited collection, *A Cultural History of Fame*, 6 vols., London, Bloomsbury Academic, will help contextualize the long-term relationships between the history of fame and the history of celebrity.

There is an important prehistory to the putative rise of celebrity culture described by historians such as Tillyard and Lilti. This prehistory has not been recognized by 18th-century scholars perhaps because it does not fit easily with a narrative that begins with the entertainment cultures of the London stage and Parisian salons and ends with the Hollywood entertainment 'industry' (Inglis 2010; Nussbaum 2010; Roach 2007; Worrall 2013). It is instead a story that is rooted in political and religious history. If every age creates its own distinctive celebrity culture, then the celebrities of the early modern era were saints, martyrs, and monarchs rather than the musicians, actors, and actresses that tend to dominate the more modern celebrity world. The long 18th century is therefore particularly interesting because it experienced the tail end of an older, more traditional form of 'sacral celebrity' as well as the more modern forms that have been identified by Tillyard and Lilti (Cowan 2018).

It is worth remembering that the English word 'celebrity' was not invented in the 18th century. The word can be found in 16th and 17th-century texts as well. It is true that in these earlier works, the term tends to refer to a solemn rite or ceremony, but it is occasionally also used as a synonym for fame or notoriety. The connection between the two senses of the word is important and it has been somewhat misrepresented by scholars who wish to emphasize the 18th-century invention of modern celebrity. Tom Mole sees the "original meanings of the word celebrity, concerning pomp, solemnity and the conduct of ceremonies" as having become "obsolete by the Romantic period" (Mole 2007, xi). The old sense of celebrity as *ceremony* was replaced by a new understanding of celebrity as *fame*, and later as a noun used to identify a famous person: by the mid-19th century, "celebrity was no longer something you had, but something you were" (Mole 2007, xii).

Astute historians may get the sense that they have heard all of this before. Arguments for the birth of a modern form of celebrity in the 18th century echo similar claims made for the emergence of a bourgeois public sphere at the same time. In Jürgen Habermas's famous formulation, the long 18th century saw the replacement of a traditional 'representative public sphere' with a new 'bourgeois public sphere.' The representative public sphere consisted of a highly staged presentation of power before a passive audience. Princes and other privileged elites "represent their power 'before' the people, instead of for the people" (Habermas 1989, 8). As Tim Blanning puts it,

> those who exercised power – monarchs, nobles, prelates – expressed their status in public in a concrete, non-abstract way, through insignia, clothing, gesture or rhetoric. Power was exercised and represented (in the sense of 'being made present') directly. (Blanning 2002, 7)

Pompous and solemn ceremony – in other words, the traditional meaning of the word 'celebrity' – is at the heart of Habermas's representative public sphere.

The emergence of a bourgeois public sphere, on the other hand, has been presented as the means by which modern celebrity culture was enabled (Mar-

shall 2014). The publicity facilitated by the efflorescence of print culture, and especially the emphasis of news culture on novelty, scandal, and exceptionally interesting people combined with the cultivation of sociable spaces for the discussion and debate of such newsworthy topics and people, created fertile ground for the birth of modern celebrity culture. The post-Restoration commercial theatre in particular has been identified as an important crucible for the forging of new celebrity performers (Engel 2011; Nussbaum 2010; Roach 2007; Wanko 2003). Salons and coffeehouses also played a role as spaces for gossip, reputation building, and the cultivation of notoriety (Cowan 2005; Lilti 2015). Just as the bourgeois public sphere relies upon active debate for the construction of legitimacy through ratification by 'public opinion,' so do modern celebrities rely upon the participation of their fans and followers in the making and the maintenance of their fame. Both implicitly and explicitly, most arguments for the novelty of 18th-century celebrity rely upon an assumption that this new celebrity was built upon the foundations laid by a bourgeois public sphere.

The problem with such arguments is that by positing a radical rupture between the traditional and the modern, they obscure the continuities between the two and particularly the persistence of traditional publicity (as well as celebrity) within the modern world. Representational power was not immediately eclipsed by the bourgeois public sphere, as the Victorian political commentator, Walter Bagehot, observed in his defense of English constitutional monarchy when compared to republican government.

> Royalty is a government in which the attention of the nation is concentrated on one person doing interesting actions. A republic is a government in which that attention is divided between many, who are all doing uninteresting actions. Accordingly, so long as the human heart is strong and the human reason weak, Royalty will be strong because it appeals to diffused feeling, and Republics weak because they appeal to understanding. (Bagehot 2001, 41)

In Bagehot's view, monarchy survived (in Britain at least) because of, not despite, the continuing appeal of traditional 'ceremonial' celebrity. Few theorists of modern celebrity have been able to account for the persistence of monarchical charisma in the modern age. This is particularly important for understanding celebrity in 18th-century Britain because post-Restoration culture was still working through the impact of the regicidal revolution of the mid-17th century. What place was there for traditional royal charisma, based very much so on ceremonial celebrity, in a monarchy that had to be restored after 20 years of revolutionary turmoil that had resulted in civil war, regicide, and the abolition of the institution of monarchy?

Royalism and republicanism coexisted during and after the civil wars, and the continuation of these political divisions affected the ways in which public opinion, and understandings of celebrity, were understood and developed. Kevin Sharpe's voluminous studies of the public relations of the 'kings and

commonwealths' of the Stuart era have made this clear. Sharpe saw "an ambiguity at the centre of Restoration England," one that divided the people of the time as well as their own minds. "For many," he noted,

> the impulse was to try to erase the bitter memories of the civil war and Revolution and to behave as though these had been forms of interlude – even if they suspected that the legacy of war and republic was deeper than that. (Sharpe 2013, xvii)

The revival of kingship after the Restoration brought new life to the powerful image making of the monarchy, but royal majesty would henceforth be tempered by the persistent memory that it could, and indeed had been, eclipsed by revolution (Jackson 2016; Jenkinson 2010; Keay 2008). The links between traditional monarchic charisma and the modern celebrity monarchy have not yet been fully studied.

One of the few works on the history of celebrity to explore the continuities of celebrity is Joseph Roach's idiosyncratic study of charismatic performance from the Restoration to the twentieth century, entitled *It* (Roach 2007). Roach explores the persistence of Restoration-era experiences of charisma, and especially the charismatic experience of restored sacral kingship over several centuries. In so doing, he develops a concept of the 'deep 18th century,' by which he means the sense in which the culture of Britain's long 18th-century has remained relevant up to the present day. He demonstrates the powerful mystique of the Restoration court and its theatre in the imaginary of early twentieth-century Hollywood, especially amongst scriptwriters such as Elinor Glyn (1864-1943), the eminence behind the rise of early film stars such as Clara Bow (the original 'It Girl') and Rudolph Valentino. Roach's study of the deep 18th century insists that 18th-century celebrity culture "isn't over yet" and that "it stays alive among us as a repertoire of long-running performances" (Roach 2007, 13). One of the implications of his work is that the relationship between the ceremonial, 'representational' politics of the Restored monarchy and the public sphere of modern celebrity culture is more intimate and complicated than arguments for a rupture between the two would suggest.

Histories of celebrity need to dig even deeper into Roach's deep 18th century, or indeed into *every* century. We need to explore the ways in which traditional and modern forms of fame construction intersected and coexisted. This can be accomplished by looking at the operation of traditional forms of charisma and public devotion to famous figures before the rise of the commercialized entertainment industry that has dominated most studies of celebrity culture (especially in 18th-century studies). In an earlier essay, Roach observes the connections between the celebrity of 18th-century commercial entertainers and earlier forms of celebrity.

> The celebrity of eighteenth-century actors and actresses was at least anticipatory and perhaps generative of modern celebrity because their images began to

> circulate widely in the absence of their persons, a privilege once reserved to
> duly anointed sovereigns and saint. (Roach 2003)

While Roach's interest was in looking forward from the 18th century, it is at least as important to look backwards as well. The history of several key aspects of pre-modern charisma such as sacral monarchy, court culture, and sainthood are all ripe for reconsideration in the light of celebrity studies.

In an important article, Aviad Kleinberg (2011) has asked: "Are saints celebrities?" His answer, in short, was 'yes, sometimes.' Some saints managed to generate enthusiastic reputations amongst people who did not know them, and indeed knew very little about them aside from the fact that they were great, holy men. Such saints were, to echo Daniel Boorstin's memorable phrase, "known for [their] well-knownness" (Boorstin 1962, 67). Kleinberg uses the more popular version of Boorstin's definition. Medieval saints were "famous for being famous." Their powers stemmed from the community that has chosen them as icons, as public persons (Kleinberg 2011, 395).[4] The media ecology of the Middle Ages was quite different from that of the 18th century, let alone that of the twenty-first century, but there was a media ecology that helped make some particularly interesting people very well-known celebrities. Although modern historians understand well that the history of celebrity must be studied as an aspect of the history of media and communicative practices, the tendency to think of 'the media' as a modern phenomenon limited to mass media technologies such as the press, photography, film, or the electronic media of the internet age has unfortunately left earlier communicative regimes less well integrated into the long term history of celebrity.[5]

The flourishing genre of saintly life writing is fertile ground for studying pre-modern mechanisms for fame construction, but these 'lives' need also be understood as part of a social process of name recognition and commemoration. Robert Bartlett's recent (and magisterial) study of the medieval cult of the saints argues that saints were distinguished by the ways in which they were treated by their devotees, or 'fans' if one wanted to use an anachronistic but heuristic analogy. The three key elements were "public recognition of the name and day of the saint; special treatment of the saint's bodily remains; and celebration of the saint in writing" (Bartlett 2013, 95). Some of these practices apply to modern celebrities as well: the main difference between the medieval saint and the modern celebrity is that the saint was almost always more celebrated posthumously than in life, whereas the modern celebrity has often faced trouble maintaining public attention throughout a lifespan, let alone after death. Pre-modern communication tended to take place at a different pace, and at a reduced scale: these factors made it more difficult for a charismatic (and espe-

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[4] Compare Boorstin 1962.
[5] Compare Briggs and Burke 2002, which begins with the invention of the printing press, and Clanchy 1979, which remains a classic example of medieval media history.

cially a non-elite) individual to become famous in the short space of one lifespan. Concomitantly, pre-modern notions of life, death, and the afterlife were much more fluid than they became in the modern age: although their bodies were dead to the world, saintly power acted as a real presence in the lived world of medieval people (Le Goff 1984).[6]

Nevertheless, understanding how saints became celebrities is important for early modern historians because the process of saint-making continued into the modern age and took on a particularly pointed form in post-Reformation culture with the development of competing Catholic and Protestant martyrologies (Burke 1987). The political culture of post-Reformation England was marked by a game of competitive martyrdom that was first fought between Protestant Reformers and Roman Catholics, but the competition expanded as religious and political divisions became ever more complicated over the course of succeeding regime changes along with the evolution of different confessional identities (Freeman and Mayer 2007; Knott 1993; Lake and Questier 2011; Monta 2009). Post-Reformation martyrology can be seen as a form of hagiography that created new, confessionally distinct, religious celebrities.

But the polarized world of religious belief that emerged in the wake of the Reformation's confessional divisions also created an impulse to publicize religious anti-heroes: cases of malicious sinners who were led astray by the perversities of wrong religious belief (Lake 2002; Lake and Stephens 2015). When the impulse to smear one's confessional enemies was merged with the relatively new technology of cheap print, a whole new media world of celebrity construction could, and did, emerge. Early 17th-century English crime writing can be understood as a means of creating a new genre of anti-hagiographical writing: although aimed at chastising and condemning the sinful actions of criminals, this cheap print played a key role in the construction of the criminal celebrity. By the later 17th century, crime writing of this sort had developed into the increasingly popular genre of criminal biography (Faller 1987; Shoemaker 2006).[7] Associated with the rise of criminal celebrity was the development of a feminized category of the sexual celebrity. Along with the efflorescence of criminal biographies, we find a proliferating number of female-centred narratives of sexual transgression sometimes referred to as 'whore biographies' or prostitute narratives (Conway 2010; Peakman 2016; Rosenthal 2006).[8] These stories presented a female subject who somehow managed to survive (and often prosper) despite flouting the norms of chaste sexuality that governed women's

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6 For early modern attitudes to death and the afterlife, see Houlbrooke 1998 and, for a case of posthumous 'ghostly' celebrity in the 17th century, see Marshall 2007.

7 Robert Shoemaker is currently working on criminal celebrity in 18th-century England. I am grateful to Prof. Shoemaker for our discussions on this topic. For a related study about crime reportage, see Shoemaker 2017.

8 For a modern edition of many of these texts, see Peakman 2007.

lives and social status in early modern society. Both the criminal biography and the whore's biography proved to be very influential in the development of the 18th-century English novel. Daniel Defoe's novels *Moll Flanders* (1722), *Colonel Jack* (1722), and *Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress* (1724) all contributed to the fictional development of this popular form of narrative (Faller 1993; Skirboll 2014). These forms of infamous celebrity would only become more influential by the later 18th century and are arguably a key aspect of modern celebrity culture. (Andrew and McGowen 2001; Spraggs 2001)

The efflorescence of martyrologies, and eventually more secular life writings as well, after the Reformation must form a key role in the history of early modern celebrity, but this early history of the emergence of biographical writing has not yet been studied as part of the process of celebrity formation (Freeman and Evenden 2011; Mayer and Woolf 1995; Pritchard 2005; Sharpe and Zwicker 2008).[9] Emerging out of hagiography, secular life writing became an increasingly popular genre in the 17th and 18th centuries, and it helped to cultivate an interest in the interesting particularities and, in some cases, the psychological complexities of individual personalities (Lee 2009). All of this was crucial to the development of the figure of the modern celebrity whose public and private lives were both fodder for consumption by a broader public.

The sacral or 'sacralesque' aspects of modern celebrity making has been recognized by scholars such as John Frow, who has asked 'Is Elvis a God?' in an influential article, but historians of modern celebrity have preferred to see it as a thoroughly secular phenomenon (Frow 1998). One particularly prominent exception has been the work of sociologist Chris Rojek on the parallels between the experience of celebrity and religious devotion. Unlike those social theorists and historians of celebrity who have insisted upon its essential modernity, Rojek posits a more complicated relationship between celebrity culture and religious experience. Instead of seeing celebrity culture as a modern phenomenon that has challenged and sought to replace religion as a source of personal and communal identity, Rojek claims that "the rites of ascent and descent that were originally developed in primitive religion have been taken over and recast by celebrity culture" (Rojek 2001, 98). Just as shamans, sorcerers, and medicine men, or cunning women, played an important social role in primitive societies as exemplars of magical power that could be used either to ascend beyond the usual confines of mundane social experience or to descend into self-destructive or perhaps socially disapproved behaviors, so too do modern celebrities. The now familiar narrative of the rise, fall, and redemption of Hollywood idols such as Hugh Grant or Robert Downey Jr. is not a new phenomenon according to Rojek; it has its origins in what Émile Durkheim (2001)

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[9] For the 18th century, see Cowan 2016.

called the 'elementary forms of religious life' in his so-named treatise (Rojek 2001, 56-7).

Durkheimian sociology does not figure prominently in histories of celebrity, but it would if historians were to heed Rojek's suggestive linkage between primitive religion and modern celebrity. Religion for Durkheim was fundamentally a social experience or, more precisely, it was the purest experience of the social. Primitive religion is exemplified by totemism, a form of worship in which the totem is both an object of worship and a symbol of collective identity. Thus Durkheim asked rhetorically:

> If the totem is both the symbol of god and of society, are these not one and the same? [...] The god of the clan, the totemic principle, must therefore be the clan itself, but transfigured and imagined in the physical form of the plant or animal species that serve as totems. (Durkheim 2001, 154)

Celebrity too is exemplified by transforming individual personalities into totems of a sort. Celebrity uses the image of a person to create forms of social identity for the celebrity's followers, or 'fans.' The religious nature of celebrity is clear if we consider saints to be celebrities, but it can also be discerned amongst the cult-like devotion displayed by fans of modern celebrities such as Elvis, Jim Morrison, or Donald Trump. Like religion, celebrity is fundamentally an experience of the social. Neither historians nor social theorists have yet satisfactorily explored the religious foundations of celebrity in the pre-modern or the modern age.[10]

Along with saints and martyrs, monarchs and their courts also need to be incorporated into the history of celebrity. Here, medieval history has much to contribute as well. Marc Bloch's *Les Rois Thaumaturges* (1924), a classic study of the claims made by French and English kings to have the ability to cure scrofula, emphasizes the sacral and charismatic basis for medieval monarchies (Bloch 1973). It can also be read as a history of the ways in which kings became premodern celebrities through adopting and refashioning techniques of sacral charisma such as magical healing, ritual celebration, and the presentation of the body before a crowd of devoted followers (Brogan 2015). The fact that touching for the 'king's evil' persisted in England until Queen Anne's reign and in France until the very end of the Bourbon dynasty in the early 19th century demonstrates the continued appeal and usefulness of the ritual performance and the claim to healing powers made by monarchs. The links between the parallel experiences of saintly and princely celebrity from the medieval to the modern era could be usefully explored with greater detail, and the history of celebrity can provide a means by which to do so.

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[10] On saintly celebrity in the modern age, see Graus 2017 and Luzzatto 2010.

A case has been made by medieval historian Nigel Saul to see the origins of the modern 'cult of celebrity' in the medieval courtly culture of chivalry. "It is tempting to say," Saul has argued

> that the first English celebrity was not the Georgian dandy or metropolitan courtesan, but the questing knight who caught the attention of the heralds and onlookers watching him show off his prowess in arms. (Saul 2011a, 22)

Elsewhere, Saul has claimed that

> to seek fame, honour and glory, as the medieval knight did, was to seek celebrity and to crave the plaudits of an adoring public. Quite possibly, in the most able and successful of all medieval English knights, William Marshal, we have a candidate for the first English celebrity. (Saul 2011b, 369)

While Saul recognizes that the medieval media system was quite different from the routinized news industry that developed in 17th and 18th-century England, his emphasis on the cult of personality that developed around the famous knights of the middle ages, along with their chivalric crusades, duels, and romantic adventures is a salutary one. Chivalric culture played an important role in the generation of a certain aura of distinction about, and widespread interest in, the princely courts of the middle ages. This legacy of courtly mystique would be developed in the early modern courts of the Tudors, Stuarts, and Hanoverians.

While kingship, queenship, and court culture have hardly been neglected historical topics, by and large they have not been studied through the prism of celebrity culture. If pre-modern monarchy has been understood as a natural part of the social and political order, the history of modern monarchy has been understood as a curious survival in an age of democratization, or at best, an institution transformed through a new engagement with philanthropy and the promotion of social welfare through charitable endeavors.[11] A few recent exceptions demonstrate the potential of thinking differently. Kevin Sharpe's impressive trilogy on the selling of the Tudor and Stuart monarchies to their subjects studied the ways in which early modern English kings and queens used the techniques of early modern propaganda, including print, ritual, and the display of visual majesty to present an image of monarchy that legitimized their rule (Sharpe 2009; 2013). For the modern era, Eva Giloi's fascinating study of *Monarchy, Myth, and Material Culture in Germany 1750-1950* (2011) demonstrates that this process of 'branding' monarchy continued, and indeed perhaps even expanded, even when monarchical rule itself was no longer the default option amongst European states. Studies such as these demonstrate that monarchy and courtly celebrity were hardly incompatible with consumer culture and

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[11] See the work of Prochaska 1995; 2000. Prochaska 2009 addresses the celebrity aspects of modern British monarchy.

a bourgeois public sphere.[12] Kings, queens, and courts were centrally located as the forms of fame construction changed along with the new media ecology of the long 18th century, and they need to be incorporated into any history of celebrity worth telling.

Despite the supposed triviality attributed to the topic of celebrity, the history of the phenomenon is complex and important. This article has argued that historians of celebrity need to incorporate an understanding of the ways in which celebrity has existed at the intersection of religious, political, and media history over the *longue durée*. Histories of celebrity as well as social theories of celebrity that insist upon the relative modernity of celebrity do so at the risk of ignoring the importance of longer term processes of fame construction, the mediation of personal charisma, and the making of publics focused around famous individuals. The modern history of the celebrity entertainer could be fruitfully enhanced by comparison with the histories of premodern celebrities such as saints and monarchs. Celebrity may not have been invented in the 18th century, but 18th-century historians have much to contribute to the history of celebrity if they can continue to contextualize it appropriately[13].

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12 It is worth noting that the only monarch discussed by Lilti (2017) is Napoleon, a ruler who was exceptional in that he had no dynastic claim to the title of emperor, and yet traditional in that he appropriate all of the trappings of an old regime monarchy. See also Berenson 2010.

13 For an elaboration of this point, see Cowan 2016.

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