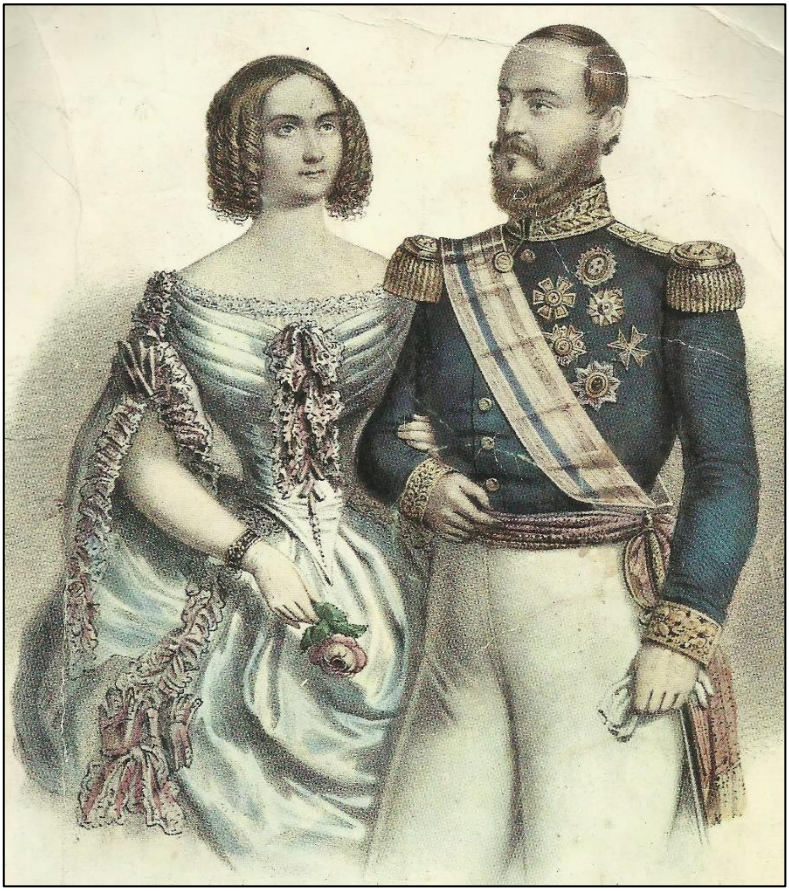
D. Adelaide, the wife of D. Miguel de Bragança
– Adelhaid of Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenburg –

D. Miguel, who was the King from 1828 to 1834, fought against his elder brother D. Pedro IV in the 'Liberal Wars' from 1828 to 1834. D. Adelaide, a daughter of the Prince of Löwenstein, married D. Miguel in 1851, aged 20.

By Ron B. Thomson



D. Adelaide and D. Miguel, shorty after their wedding in 1851

D. Miguel

When the troops of D. Miguel, who had usurped the Portuguese throne in 1828, were finally cornered in Évora in May 1834, D. Miguel was forced by his own generals to abdicate. Under the Concession of Évora Monte, Miguel was allowed to go into exile with his friends, and was offered a generous life pension "as befitted his rank." Miguel did leave Portugal from Sines, on 1 June 1834, sailing first to Genoa, but almost as soon as he had landed he denounced his abdication, and the Concession, and promised that he would someday return to take up his rightful place on the throne. By rejecting the Concession, and its condition of perpetual exile, Miguel forfeited the pension, no part of which was ever paid to him. His banishment was reinforced by a very several law of 19 December 1834.[1]

D. Miguel was 31 at the time. He lived for thirteen years (1834-1847) in Italy, mainly in Rome, surviving off the charity of others, such as the arch-conservative Francesco IV, duke of Moderna (1779-1846), and the Holy See. He then spent four years in England. During this period he and his supporters sought a suitable bride for him, finally settling on Princess Adelhaid of Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg.

Near the end of the 18th century, the German lands – the Holy Roman Empire – consisted of almost 300 independent states – large units such as Prussia and Bavaria, down to small prince-bishoprics, imperial abbeys, and free imperial cities. Even the larger units were broken up into collections of scattered territories, also with independent enclaves within their borders. In the first decade of the 19th century, under pressure from Napoleon who wished to annex to France the territories on the left (west) bank of the Rhine, plans were developed to compensate the larger, powerful units for the loss of these territories by

[1] This law also stated that if D. Miguel ever landed on Portuguese soil, a military commission consisting of five officers should be immediately assembled, which, on proof of his identity, would order him to be shot. It was further legislated that the duration of the whole process should not be allowed to exceed twenty-four hours. The same terms applied to members of his family and to his supporters in the rebellion.

granting them control of many of the smaller units. In 1802/3 and 1806 'mediatisation'[2] led to the reduction of the number of German states to 39, the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire,[3] and the creation of the Confederation of the Rhine. The Congress of Vienna (1815) did not reverse these changes but did improve the aristocratic status of those nobles who had lost their land and principalities, and also to deem these nobles as equal to the still-reigning monarchs for marital purposes.[4]

The county of Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenburg was one of these smaller units which disappeared in the 1802-1806 period, first transferred to the Grand Duchy of Baden, then the Grand Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt (1810), and finally to the Kingdom of Bavaria (1811). In 1849 Prince Karl VI of Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenburg succeeded to the title of the extinguished county.[5] His sister was Princess Adelhaid, whom D. Miguel married.

The wedding of D. Miguel and D. Adelaide took place on 24 September 1851 at Kleinheubach palace near Miltenberg (on the left/south bank of the River Main), the home of Prince Karl VI. The coupled lived there for about five years (and where their first three children were born), before moving to Bronnbach, about 13 km further west in Bavaria where their last four children were born.

The 'Palace of Bronnbach' (as it was called) was a former Cistercian monastery, itself secularized in 1803 (part of the first wave of 'mediatisation') and given to the Princes of Lowenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg. It is situated on the Tauber River, 8 km south of Wertheim-

[2] The redistribution of land was to be supervised by 'mediators, consisting of France and later Russia.

[3] The then emperor was Francis II (Emperor Francis I of Austria from 1804) and the imperial title was retained by him and his descendants, as emperors of Austria, down to the end of the First World War.

[4] The custom of most monarchs in Europe was to seek spouses from other 'royal families'. The enhanced marital status of these deposed noble families created a large pool of marriageable princes and princess from which royal families such as those of Britain and Portugal could choose spouses.

[5] Born in 1834, he joined the Dominican order in 1907 and abdicated in 1908 when he was ordained priest. He died in 1921.

am-Main, in the Grand Duchy of Baden (in the mid-nineteenth century) about 5km west of the (then) border with Bavaria. The German description of the site is 'Schloss', which can be translated as 'castle' or 'palace', or even 'chateau', but for more modest buildings as this the English 'mansion' or even 'manor house' might be more appropriate.[6]

D. Miguel was still living at Bronnbach when he died on 14 November 1866, at the age of 64. He actually died in a lodge in the woods near his home while out hunting. His body was buried in the Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg family vault in the Franciscan monastery of Engelberg at Grossheubach, which is north of the River Main just across from Kleinheubach.

D. Adelaide

Princess Adelhaid (born 3 April 1831) was 20 when she married D. Miguel (who was 48). They had seven children, all of whom survived infancy and childhood. The youngest (Maria Antónia) was almost four years old when D. Miguel died in 1866, aged 64. The eldest (Maria das Neves) was fourteen, and Adelhaid (35 at the time) devoted the next twenty-five years or so raising them and arranging advantageous marriages for them all, mainly to European royal families and leading aristocracy.

Adelaide as a recent widow, c. 1866

[6] Members of the Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg family maintained residence in Bronnbach until 1986, when it was sold. It is now a restaurant.

- The eldest child was Maria das Neves (1852-1941) who married (in 1871) Alfonso Carlos (1849-1936), Prince of Bourbon, Duke of San Jaime, and a Carlist pretender to the Spanish throne from1931to 1936. Their only son died in childbirth (1874).
- The second child was Miguel, Duque de Bragança (1853-1927), a Miguelist pretender to the Portuguese throne from 1866 to 1920. He married twice and had 11 children. The present line of Miguelist pretenders descend from his tenth son, D. Duarte Nuno (1907-1976).
- The third child was Maria Teresa (1855-1944) who married in 1873 (as his third wife) Archduke Karl Ludwig (1833-1896), the brother of Emperor Franz Josef I of Austria-Hungary. They had two daughters, the second of whom married the Prince of Liechtenstein.
- The next child (the first born at Bronnbach) was Maria José (1857-1943) who married in 1874 (as his second wife), Karl Theodor, Duke of Bavaria (1839-1909). They had two sons and three daughters; the second daughter married the King of Belgium.
- The fifth child was Adelgundes, Duquesa de Guimarães (1858-1946) who married (in 1876) Enrico, Prince of Bourbon-Parma and Count of Bardi (1851-1905) as his second wife. They had no children.
- The sixth child was Marie Ana (1861-1942) who married in 1893 Guillaume IV Alexandre, the Grand Duke of Luxemburg (1852-1912). They had six daughters, two of whom later became Grand Duchesses of Luxemburg.
- The last child was Maria Antónia (1862-1959) who married Robert, Duke of Bourbon-Parma (1847-1907) as his second wife in 1884, the brother of Maria's brother-in-law, Enrico. They had six sons and six daughters, one of whom married the last Emperor of Austria, Karl Franz Joseph (1887-1922), who abdicated in 1919.

In 1895, two years after the last marriage of her children, Adelhaid, a devout Catholic, retired to the Benedictine abbey of Sainte-Cécile de Solesmes in north-western France (just to the west of Le Mans). She professed as a nun on 12 June 1897.

However, the abbey (founded in 1866) ran into problems with the rise of anti-clericalism in France in the late 19th century. The 'Law of Associations' (1 July 1901) placed special restrictions on religious associations (monasteries, abbeys, convents), requiring them to seek government authorization in order to continue. But the governments of 1902 and 1903 refused most petitions of authorization and these communities were ordered to be expelled from France as of April 1903. Sainte-Cécile was one of the communities so affected.

The community as a whole moved from Solesmes to England in 1901 to the Isle of Wight, first of all to Northwood House in Cowes, and then in the spring of 1906 to Ryde, where it occupied the former boys' school, Appley House, which was renamed St Cecilia's Abbey. It was here that Adelhaid died on 16 December 1909, at the age of 76. She was interred at St Cecilia's in the abbey's small cemetery. When the community was allowed to return to France in 1921[7] they left behind the graves of 24 nuns (including Adelhaid), who had died in England.

The building in Ryde was taken over by another group of Benedictine nuns[8] who had come to the Isle of Wight in 1882 from Liège and who had founded their priory at Ventnor, along the south shore of the Isle. The nuns of Pax Cordis Iesu continue to reside in Ryde and their house continues to be commonly known by its former name of St. Cecilia's Abbey.

[7] The move appears to actually have occurred in the autumn of 1922.

[8] There were close relations between the nuns and monks from Solesmes and the nuns at Ventnor from the beginning. The Ventnor community was instrumental in helping the French nuns lease their first premises in Cowes, as well as in settling the male community from Solesmes first near Ventnor and then at Quarr Abbey. Most of the chaplains at Ventnor in this period were from the male community.

There are reports of various members of Adelhaid's family visiting her in Ryde over the six or seven years that she lived there, as well as members of other royal families because of her ties to D. Miguel.[9] Interestingly as well, three of her grand-daughters, offspring of her last daughter Maria António (who married Robert, Duke of Bourbon-Parma), also became nuns at St. Cecilia's, joining the community while it was still in exile on the Isle of Wight.[10] Another grand-daughter – sister of the three new nuns – Zita of Bourbon-Parma who had married the last Emperor of Austria, Karl Franz Joseph in 1911, visited as well. A niece of Adelhaid, a daughter of her brother Prince Karl VI (Princess Agnes of Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg), was also a member of the community.

Sister Adelaide as a Benedictine nun

In 1950 the government of Portugal under Salazar decided to readmit the descendants of both branches of the Portuguese monarchy. Law 2040 of 27 May 1950 repealed the law of 15 October 1910 which banished of the legitimate Bragança-Saxe-Coburg line (although there were no longer any surviving members of the family), as well as the law of 19 December 1834 which banished D. Miguel and his descendants. Many of D. Miguel's descendants have returned either to visit or to live, including the line of pretenders to the throne.

[9] For example, Queen Alexandra visited Adelhaid on 29 July 1902, while she and her husband Edward VII were staying in Cowes. Both returned in Augus the same year.
[10] Maria della Neve Adelaide (1885-1959), Francesca (1890-1978), and Maria Antonia (1895-1977).

As a further step, the government arranged in 1967 for the transfer of the bodies of both D. Miguel (from Bavaria) and Adelhaid (from the Isle of Wight) so that they could be interred with the rest of the Bragancian family in their pantheon in São Vincente de Fora in Lisbon.[11] In April of that year the body of Adelhaid was exhumed from her grave at St Cecilia's, in the presence of Canon P. J. O'Connell (the representative of the Roman Catholic bishop of Portsmouth), the abbess of St Cecilia, and Sr. Martins de Almeida (the Portuguese consul in Southampton). Adelaide's professional ring was also recovered at the same time. The next day a solemn requiem mass was celebrated at the abbey, joined by His Excellency Sr. Manuel Farrajota Rocheta, the Portuguese ambassador to the United Kingdom and his wife.

On the third day, Adelhaid's body was then flown from Bournemouth airport to Lisbon by military aircraft, the arrival being timed to coincide with that of the body of D. Miguel from Bavaria. The two were given a state funeral and then interred in their own tombs at São Vicente de Fora. The re-interment was carried out in the presence of the Prime Minister Salazar, D. Duarte Nuno, Duque de Bragança,[12] and his children, and a 'vast throng" of interested well-wishers. They now lie there at rest to this day.

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[11] The mausoleum was created by D. Fernando II after the death of his wife, D. Maria II in 1853. All the Bragancian monarchs are interred there (along with their consorts and some members of their families), except for D. Maria I, whose body, upon its return from Rio de Janeiro in 1821, was interred in the Basilica de Estrela in Lisbon; and D. Pedro IV, whose body was transferred in 1972 from São Vicente de Fora to the Imperial Chapel under the Monument to Independence in Iparanga, São Paulo, Brazil alongside the bodies of both his wives. D. Pedro's heart, however, rests in an urn housed in the chancel of the Igreja da Lapa in Porto. The transfer was part of Salazar's programme to return all members of the royal family who had died abroad to Lisbon. Some think that Salazar was planning a re-establishment of the monarchy in Portugal, but gave up on the plan because he was not very impressed by the intellectual capacity of the then pretender (who also had a drinking problem).

[12] Duarte Nuno, 1907-1976, a Miguelist pretender 1920-1976.

Ron B. Thomson *is Canadian and studied history at the Universities of Toronto and of Oxford. He is a retired fellow from the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies and lectured at York University, both in Toronto. He first visited Portugal in 1971 and has a holiday home in the Algarve. While most of his work has been in the history of science (specifically medieval mathematical astronomy), he later branched out into Portuguese studies. He has written articles for the Society's Annual Report, one based on a book he wrote entitled 'The Concession of Évora Monte - The Failure of Portuguese Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century' (https://rowman.com/ISBN/9780739193327).*[13] *He has also written a new historical guide to the Church of São Roque in Lisbon.*

[13] AR 2014: The Failure of Portuguese Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/the-failure-of-liberalism-in-portugal;
AR 2019: The Bragancians in Brazil and Portugal, the reign of D. Maria II, and the War of the Two Brothers (1831-1834) https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/the-bragancians-in-brazil-and-portugal