

Distant patron: Prince Albert and the Development of the Coburg-Gotha Economy[#]

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Introduction

In January 1840 Prince Albert left his home, the duchy of Coburg-Gotha, to marry Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Ireland, and was to return only rarely. More than just geography separated him from the duchy: political expediency dictated that he maintain a discrete distance from German involvement, or at the very least, draw a clear line between his German interests and his obligations to Britain.¹ For most practical intents and purposes, Albert was an exile. Nevertheless, he retained a strong emotional connection to his homeland, declaring upon his departure in 1840 that he would remain a ‘loyal German, Coburger, Gothaner’.² In other more official ways, too, Albert remained a prince of Saxony. He was next in line to inherit the ducal title after his brother, though agreements had been made that the succession would pass to his second son, and Albert remained a dynastic agnate, whose consent was required by the *Hausgesetz* for important decisions which affected the ducal house as a whole.

Albert’s position and challenges as a foreigner in Britain have long been familiar features of biographies,³ but little has been known about his ongoing relationship with Sachsen-Coburg and Gotha. Recently, however, the Prince Albert Society’s research project to investigate the ‘Common Heritage’ of the archives and collections of the ducal house in Coburg and the British Royal Family in Windsor has yielded a wealth of new insights, not least about Albert and his interests.⁴ In spite of the political and geographical distance,

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- ¹ Paulmann, J. (1996): „Germanismus“ am englischen Hof, oder: warum war Prinz Albert unpopulär? In: Alter, P. - Muhs, R. eds.: *Exilanten und andere Deutsche in Fontanes London*. Stuttgart, 1996, pp.387–415.
- ² Albert to Prince Friedrich von Löwenstein-Wertheim-Freudenberg, cited in Weintraub, Stanley (1997): *Uncrowned King. The Life of Prince Albert*. New York, London, 1997, pp.2–4.
- ³ Ponsonby, A. (1933): *Queen Victoria*. London, 1933; Jagow, K. ed. (1937): *Prinzgemahl Albert: ein Leben am Throne. Eigenhandige Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, 1831-1861*. Berlin, 1937; Eyck, F. (1975): *The Prince Consort. A Political Biography*. Bath, 1975, p.9; Netzer, H.-J. (1988): *Prinz Albert von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha: ein deutscher Prinz in England*. Munich, 1988; Weintraub, S. (2004): *The Wettiner and England*. In: Bosbach, F.-Davis, J. eds.: *Prinz Albert: ein Wettiner in Großbritannien/Prince Albert: a Wettin in Britain*. Munich, 2004, pp.27–36; Feuchtwanger, E. (2006): *Albert and Victoria. The Rise and Fall of the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha*. London and New York, 2006; Ashdown, D. M. (1981): *Victoria and the Coburgs*. London, 1981, ch. 9.
- ⁴ Two conferences have been held to present early results. The proceedings of the 2006 conference of the Prince Albert Society have been published by Bosbach, F.-Davis, J. R. eds. (2007): *Windsor – Coburg. Geteilter Nachlass – Gemeinsames Erbe: Eine Dynastie und ihre Sammlungen/Divided Estate – Common Heritage: the Collections of a Dynasty*. Munich, 2007. The publication of the papers from the conference on *Royal Kinship: Anglo-German Family Networks 1760-1914* held at the German Historical Institute in London in September 2006, is in preparation.

throughout his life Albert maintained, and indeed expanded, his involvement in the economic life of the duchy.

So how could Albert, with finite means, no special responsibility or duty, and at great distance with only second-hand information make a positive contribution to the economic development of the duchy of Coburg-Gotha? And how effective or successful was this ‘distant patron’? A number of underlying factors helped him. He had an effective team of agents on the ground; his wealth, modest by British standards, was rather less so in central Germany; and as a prince of the duchy, even *in absentia*, he was a prominent figure. He maintained no household in Coburg or Gotha, but did make strategic investments to promote economic growth and developed an approach to philanthropy which targeted economic development. These interventions reflected a broad conception of what constituted the economic sphere, encompassing logistics, technology, social welfare and cultural change. In narrow monetary terms the success of his efforts was mixed, but the wider impact upon economy and society was significant and his endeavours were at least as important in their more political effect of reaffirming him as prince and patron of the duchy in the hearts of ‘his’ people.

Underlying Factors

To bridge the distance from which Albert had to operate with regard to the duchy, he made effective use of a number of agents who were able to represent him locally. So prominent in other fields, Baron Stockmar was not of great influence in economic matters, though he was a *de facto* authority on the rare occasions when decisions had to be made quickly.⁵ More important were Florschütz, Eberhard and Stötzer, who were Albert’s face to the needy poor. Albert’s legal representative, Moritz Briegleb, oversaw the agricultural projects in between his other, more political, responsibilities.

The most influential figure was Albert’s financial administrator, Geheimrat Eduard Fischer. He was the ‘man on the spot’, who kept the accounts and looked after a great deal of the correspondence. It was he who kept Albert in touch with local developments with his own reports and by forwarding monthly bundles of newspapers. Moreover he was a thoughtful and observant man of liberal and progressive inclinations, and thus largely in tune with the thinking of his employer. A great many of the measures adopted by Albert came from suggestions made by Fischer, while many others were shaped in the light of his advice. He was also politically astute, advocating that Albert should not hide his activities from the people of Coburg; that the role of a prince was a public one, despite Albert’s physical absence.

This advice allowed Albert’s economic initiatives to exploit perhaps their greatest advantage: the prominence of their patron. Albert was a prince of the duchy, and any actions taken by him would require little effort to become well-known. Fischer ensured that Albert was not anonymous in his dealings with the press, charities and organisers of public events. This publicity leverage meant that the significance of his economic endeavours could be more than proportional to the size of the sums involved.

In any case, Albert’s wealth was not insubstantial. Compared with the wealthy British aristocracy it may have seemed modest, but in the context of a small state like the duchy of Coburg-Gotha that money could go a long way. Furthermore, his German wealth was effectively ‘surplus’, since his British income covered his living expenses. Admittedly,

5 Netzer, Cf. (1997): *Albert – ein deutscher Prinz in England*. In: Rogasch, W. ed.: *Victoria and Albert, Vicky and the Kaiser*. Ostfildern-Ruit, 1997, p.69.

Albert's resources before his father's death in 1844 were very limited. Upon his departure to marry Victoria he had undertaken to allot to his brother some 20,000 florins annually until such time as Ernst came to succeed his father as Duke, when he would have access to a larger pot of cash. This took up almost two thirds of Albert's German income.⁶ Only after 1844, when this situation changed, was he able to contemplate more active engagement with the economy of Coburg-Gotha. From 1845, then, the question facing Albert and Fischer was how best to make use of this free cashflow for the benefit of the Prince and the duchy. In fact, they could contemplate expenditure at levels rivalling the state, which as yet had relatively few ambitions to support directly economic activity. Even Albert's modest efforts were still large enough to be significant.

Direct involvement

Albert had a certain amount of direct and ongoing involvement with the local economy in the duchy of Coburg-Gotha. He had some assets: in 1840 there was a report of the sale of wool from his sheep,⁷ which were kept at the Kammergut Vestungshof, though no recurrence of this has come to light so far in the extensive surviving correspondence. He had also held a share in a mine in the Saalfelder coalfield since 1824, a time when Saalfeld had belonged to Coburg before Albert's father gave it up in exchange for the more prosperous Gotha. Albert neglected this share after marrying Victoria: in the 1856 Fischer began to inquire as to whether Albert was owed any dividends, or indeed, whether he was supposed to have contributed to the support of the enterprise.⁸ For the most part, Albert had very few assets within the duchy. By far the majority of Albert's income was derived from the dynastic estates, which were held in trust and managed somewhat independently. As an agnate, he had some duties of oversight but no great personal involvement.⁹

In his expenditure however, Albert had rather more and closer connections.¹⁰ He paid the salaries of a number of administrative functionaries to look after his business in the duchy. The Coburg office was run by Geheimrat Eduard Fischer, already mentioned in the introduction, who was assisted by a messenger and, from 1847/8, an additional clerk. He also paid Polizei-Commissair Stötzer to be his man in Gotha. He shared with his brother the costs of maintaining a Kunst- und Naturalienkabinet, paying for its director, Dr. von Schauroth, for an assistant and for Fischer to act as bookkeeper. He also paid a number of pensions to people within the duchy, with whom he had some kind of close link. At the top of the list was Dr. Florschütz, his tutor and advisor, who continued to serve Albert in a variety of ways in Coburg; he had known others from the household of his youth, such as Oberstallmeister von Alvensleben, or Wäschenfelder, the cupbearer. Albert obviously saw

6 Walton, O. (2007): "Follow the money": *die finanziellen Beziehungen zwischen dem britischen Königshaus und dem Herzogtum Coburg-Gotha*. In: Bosbach, F.- Davis, J. R. eds.: *Windsor – Coburg. Geteilter Nachlass – Gemeinsames Erbe: Eine Dynastie und ihre Sammlungen/Divided Estate – Common Heritage: the Collections of a Dynasty*. Munich 2007, pp.159, 160.

7 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/23: sale of wool from Albert's sheep kept at the Kammergut Vestungshof.

8 StAC LA A 8381: Share in Saalfelder mine. Certainly payments had begun by Albert's death, though only of 4 florins and 24 kreuzers: RA VIC/Add A 10/83/7/229b, account of planned gifts outstanding after Albert's death.

9 For further discussion of Albert's income from the dynastic estates, see Walton, O. (2007): "Follow the money": *die finanziellen Beziehungen zwischen dem britischen Königshaus und dem Herzogtum Coburg-Gotha*. In: Bosbach, F. - Davis, J. eds.: *Windsor – Coburg. Geteilter Nachlass – Gemeinsames Erbe: Eine Dynastie und ihre Sammlungen/Divided Estate – Common Heritage: the Collections of a Dynasty*. Munich, 2007, pp.156–159.

10 Much of this and the following paragraph is based on the detailed contents of Albert's accounts for the period 1840-1861, in RA VIC Add A/10 83/1–7. For more accessible analysis of the data see Walton, O. (2007): "Follow the money", pp.159–163.

these people as his dependants, since in several cases the pensions were extended to widows after the original recipient had died.

Albert also developed a number of connections to local business people. The construction of a dynastic mausoleum brought Albert into contact with various designers and artisans and entailed some substantial financial contributions.¹¹ He purchased books and journals on a regular basis through the booksellers Riemann in Gotha and Meusel in Coburg. He had boots made for him by Heinrich Beer, the Hofschumacher in Coburg, and guns manufactured by Herr König in Coburg. Some other regular transactions ranged across a wider area: beer was often bought from Kulmbach and Lebkuchen from Nuremberg.

While Albert himself seemed happy to make use of the Coburg connection for German purchases, the correspondence with his agents there shows little effort was made by Albert to advertise Coburg-Gotha in Britain. Albert, or rather his administrators in Coburg, did organise the purchase by the Countess of Gainsborough of some toys from Neustadt in 1861, but that is a rare example.¹² Albert was even reticent when approached by Herr Benda with a proposal for a Coburger beer stand at the 1862 London world exhibition; his response was only to suggest that he put his suggestion to the German committee. No further comment was offered in support of Benda's desire to market Coburger beer to the wider world.¹³

Albert was simply too absent to have a significant impact upon the Coburg economy through what might be termed his 'normal business operations'. His circle of agents, advisors and dependants did not really constitute a court which could exert much 'Einfluß ... als Wirtschaftsfaktor auf mancherlei Gebieten', as did that of the Duke.¹⁴ Albert's expenditure did keep him connected to the local economy, but little more than that. He was probably inhibited from championing the Coburg economy in Britain more actively by political considerations of downplaying his German connections. Yet Albert did want to support his homeland; his efforts were to be more targeted. It is also striking that while he made few efforts to assist in bringing products from Coburg-Gotha to Britain, there seemed to be no such reluctance for transfers in the opposite direction. Albert was interested not in cultivating markets, but in improving the supply-side of the Coburg-Gotha economy.

Support for economic development

Albert has often been seen as a talisman for a modern monarchy, but in certain respects his dealings with the Coburg economy appear to be more those of a prince of the Enlightenment. He sought to support or lead strategic projects and initiatives and associations which would contribute decisively to the progress of the duchy. The

11 RA VIC/I 79/70; RA VIC/I 80/29, 33, 34; RA VIC/I 81/6–13, 34; RA VIC/I 82/8, 11, 61, 62, 108–110; RA VIC/I 84/79, RA VIC/I 86/131.

12 RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/11, Ruland to Fischer, Windsor Castle, 22 January 1861; RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/33, Fischer to Ruland, Coburg, 9 February 1861; RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/42, Fischer to Ruland, Coburg, 28 February 1861; RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/66, Fischer to Ruland, Coburg, 5 April 1861; RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/66a, Anton Fromann to Countess of Gainsborough, Neustadt, 26 February 1861; RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/70, Ruland to Fischer, Osborne, 13 April 1861.

13 RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/99 Fischer to Ruland, Coburg 20 May 1861; RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/100, Benda to Fischer, Coburg, 13 May 1861; RA VIC Add A/10 83/7/109, Ruland to Fischer, Buckingham Palace, 3 June 1861.

14 Bachmann, Cf. H. (1982): *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Coburger Landes von 1815 bis 1914*. In: Falkenberg, J.–Dlouhy, R. eds.: *Die Wirtschaft im Coburger Grenzland*. Kulmbach, 1982, p.90.

industrialisation of the manufacturing sector was proceeding quite rapidly;¹⁵ Albert's involvement was not to add to this but to complement it.

In some instances, it is difficult to interpret Albert's involvement as more than 'keeping up appearances'. In 1846 and 1847 he allocated 40 florins to buy tickets for the lottery organised by the Coburg trade association.¹⁶ In 1840 he also purchased some 200 tickets for the draw organised for the industrial exhibition in Coburg. This was however the only reference in the correspondence with his German agents to this exhibition: hardly the sign of active support for the nascent industrial sector.¹⁷ On the other hand, the sums were not insignificant when compared with the activities of the state: the Coburg budget only allocated 200 florins per year to the Coburg art and trade association between 1846 and 1852.¹⁸

His largest interventions did not take place until the 1850s, by which time he had accumulated a larger capital fund. The single largest transaction was Albert's purchase of shares in the Werrabahn, which from January 1859 linked Coburg to Eisenach to the North, and Lichtenfels to the South, re-establishing the old trade route via Coburg between northern and southern Germany. A branch also linked Coburg with Sonneberg. Albert invested some 100,000 thalers, over 70% of his own accumulated wealth. This was of course small fry compared with the total capitalization of 8 million thalers, most of which was injected by the three sponsoring Thuringian states, Weimar-Eisenach, Meiningen and Coburg-Gotha. Nevertheless, he owned 1.25% of the company, which represented a very substantial holding for a private individual. Explicit evidence as to why Albert invested so heavily in the Werrabahn has not yet come to light. Doubtless in 1857 it looked to be a promising opportunity. But one wonders why Albert, normally so careful, and having witnessed the bursting of the bubble of the British 'railway mania' in the late 1840s, chose to invest such a large proportion of his capital. Was he truly convinced of the company's future prospects? Or was this a way of acting as a prince of Coburg-Gotha, despite his absence; a way of lending his support in a crucial step in the economic development of the duchy?

The railway was not initially a commercial success. In 1860, its turnover was a 728,356 fl 49 Xr, yielding a healthy profit of 192,959 fl 37l Xr.¹⁹ However, this represented a poor return to shareholders for their investment of 8 million thalers and dividends were only maintained by the guarantee of cash injections by the three Thuringian states which underwrote the enterprise. The looming withdrawal of this guarantee precipitated a slide in the share price to about 40% of the original price.²⁰

Albert and the other investors may not have profited much from their investment, but there is little doubt that Coburg did. The economic impact of the railway was considerable. In 1860 the line carried 361,398 passengers and 117,495 tonnes of goods,²¹ and freight in

15 Reinhart, M. (1997): *Die wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen des Herzogtums. In. Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen: Coburg in Bayern und Europa.* Augsburg, 1997, p.88–89.

16 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/ 143, Eduard Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 9 July 1846; RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/165, Eduard Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 24 November 1847.

17 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/98 Dr. Praetorius to Eduard Fischer, Windsor Castle, 11 November 1844.

18 Mauersberg, Hans (1982): *Die Finanzen des Herzogtums Coburg und ihr Einfluß auf die Industrialisierung des Landes.* In Falkenberg, Jörg and Dlouhy, Richard eds.: *Die Wirtschaft im Coburger Grenzland.* Kulmbach, 1982, p.77.

19 RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/113a, Berechnung der Werrabahn für 1860.

20 RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/138, memorandum by E. Stockmar, Berlin, 27 June 1861; RA VIC RA Add A 10/83/7/183, Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 22 September 1861.

21 Schneier, Walter (1985): *Coburg im Spiegel der Geschichte.* Coburg, 1985, p.233.

particular continued to grow, Fischer reporting 'namhaft günstige Resultate' in 1861.²² It seemed that the railway had stimulated a new burst of economic development,²³ and indeed a transformation of the fabric of the town of Coburg. Just days before Albert died, Fischer wrote him a long and detailed account of the wealth of new construction work going on in the town.²⁴ Along with half a dozen photographs and two plans, he outlined the owners and builders involved and the resulting changes. New houses, schools and bridges were being built, new boulevards laid out and gas lighting installed. As Fischer had expressed it in an earlier letter: „Die Verbindungsstrasse zwischen dem Bahnhof und der Stadt bietet jetzt schon einen köstlichen Anblick dar. Diese Straße verknüpft nach meiner Ansicht nicht nur den Bahnhof mit der Stadt, sondern auch die Gegenwart Coburgs mit dessen Zukunft.“²⁵ Albert could only claim 1.25% of the credit for this – the size of his original shareholding.

Perhaps the clearest example of Albert's efforts to improve the local economy was in agriculture. His farms in Britain had aroused bemusement and suspicion – such technocratic interests were not expected of the British monarchy – but they were also successful, not only in turning around some previously inefficient businesses, but also in winning prizes at agricultural shows. He had been an honorary member of the Highland and Agricultural Society since 1841, and became patron of the Royal Agricultural College in 1848 and president of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1861. These associations brought Albert into contact with the most modern techniques, which had transformed British agricultural productivity since the eighteenth century, and which provided the surpluses necessary for industrial and urban growth. Despite the translation of English books and articles into German since the 1740s, the adoption of British ideas and machines in Germany was somewhat slow, even in Hannover with its British connections.²⁶ By the 1850s, Albert had begun to investigate how he himself might introduce new ideas to Coburg.

His first initiative came in 1853. Having seen the importance of new systems of drainage in improving the land, Albert sent out to Coburg two pieces of high technology, both manufactured by Henry Clayton's Atlas Works in London; there was as yet no manufacturer of agricultural machinery in Germany.²⁷ A tile, pipe and brick machine could be operated by hand to produce mechanically drainpipes which could be used to improve damp soils. This machine could also 'separate the Clay from Stones Roots &c'. A pugging mill, which could be powered by horse or other means, such as water, was 'for the rapid, perfect and economical Preparation of Clay for Brick and Tile Making'.²⁸ All that was needed was a local supply of clay and a kiln.

22 RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/183, Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 22 September 1861.

23 Reinhart, M. (1997): *Die wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen des Herzogtums*. In: *Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen: Coburg in Bayern und Europa*. Augsburg, 1997, p.88, 89. Bachmann, Harald (1982): *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Coburger Landes von 1815 bis 1914*. In: Falkenberg, Jörg and Dlouhy, Richard eds.: *Die Wirtschaft im Coburger Grenzland*. Kulmbach, 1982, p.88. Both mention the importance of the railway, but lack detailed analysis of its immediate impact.

24 RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/223, Eduard Fischer to Albert, 11 December 1861.

25 RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/62, Eduard Fischer to Carl Ruland, Coburg, 2 April 1861.

26 Muhs, R. (1988): *Englische Einflüsse auf die Frühphase der Industrialisierung in Deutschland*. In: Birke, A. M. – Kettenacker, L. – with Hanisch, M. eds.: *Wettlauf in die Moderne: England und Deutschland seit der industriellen Revolution/The Race for Modernity: Britain and Germany since the Industrial Revolution*. Munich, 1988, pp.34–36.

27 Muhs, R. (1988): *Englische Einflüsse auf die Frühphase der Industrialisierung in Deutschland*. In: Birke, A. M. – Kettenacker, L. – Hanisch, M. eds.: *Wettlauf in die Moderne: England und Deutschland seit der industriellen Revolution/The Race for Modernity: Britain and Germany since the Industrial Revolution*. Munich, 1988, pp.35–36.

28 StAC LA A 8406, Eduard Becker to Moritz Briegleb, Buckingham Palace, 16 April 1853; Henry Clayton to Sir Charles Grey, London, 4 May 1853.

Albert's political agent in Coburg, Moritz Briegleb, found a local farmer, Hauptmann Schönberg von Neuhof, to run the machinery on his farm. For Albert, the purpose was not simply to improve the drainage of the farm at Neuhof, though that would serve as a very useful 'demonstration model', but rather 'auch gutgefertigte Drainröhren dem Publicum um einen annehmbaren Preis abzulaßen'.²⁹ Albert was taking aim at the Coburg farming sector as a whole. The Landesregierung was won over, observing the 'großen Vortheile, welche durch Drainage auch für das hiesige Land gewonnen werden können'.³⁰

Despite the relatively low cost of the enterprise there were risks. To operate high technology required training, either acquired by visiting Britain in person, or by hiring a mechanic, at least until local personnel had familiarised themselves with the equipment.³¹ Albert may have been persuaded not to go down either of these routes by the supposed simplicity of the machines and their relatively low cost. In any case, Schönberg only had the instruction manuals to help him. It was not surprising that Schönberg experienced considerable difficulties. Technology transfer was not only a question of culture: the difficult processes of preparing, working and moulding the clay were mechanised, but the operator still had to assess the consistency of the clay himself, and that took practice; Schönberg had built a kiln according to the instructions which had come with the machines, but found that he had to build a new kiln, since British coal gave three times more heat than that available to him locally.³² And presumably, Schönberg had to do this alongside his normal work in running his farm. By September 1855, he had substantially solved the technical challenges, but had to be reminded that he was 'verpflichtet den Zweck im Auge zu behalten, den der Prinz verfolgt', that was the sale of drainage pipes to other local farmers at a modest price.³³ To further this aim of dissemination, the pugging mill and drainpipe machine were given to Herr Geith two years later, who used them for a further six years, when Briegleb took them back with a view to passing them on to another operator. Eckstein suggests that the new drainage system was only taken up slowly because of the small field sizes and slow land redistribution. On the other hand, Geith's reluctance to part with and readiness to contemplate replacing the plant suggests quite clearly that the drainpipe project was ultimately a qualified success.³⁴

A similar project was a new steam plough. In early 1861 Albert began to investigate the possibility of supplying a steam driven plough for use by Coburg farmers. This was very new technology; only in 1858 had John Fowler won a Royal Society prize for his steam-hauled plough. After briefly flirting with the idea of a machine made in Germany in order to keep transport costs down, Smith's System of Steam Cultivation was chosen, manufactured by the Britannia Iron Works in Bedford. A plough was attached by a long cable to the steam engine, which using a system of pulleys and tensioners could draw the plough up and down a complete field.³⁵ It was decided to make use of Dr. Goldstein of the Kölnische-Maschinenbau-Actien-Gesellschaft for technical advice. Goldstein recom-

29 StAC LA A 8406 Moritz Briegleb to Landesregierung Coburg, Coburg, 1 June 1853.

30 StAC LA A 8406 Landesregierung Coburg to Moritz Briegleb, 6 June 1853.

31 Muhs, R. (1988): *Englische Einflüsse auf die Frühphase der Industrialisierung in Deutschland*. In: Birke, A. M. - Kettenacker, L. - Hanisch, M. eds.: *Wettlauf in die Moderne: England und Deutschland seit der industriellen Revolution/The Race for Modernity: Britain and Germany since the Industrial Revolution*. Munich, 1988, pp.38.

32 StAC LA A 8406 Schönberg to Moritz Briegleb, Neuhof, 27 September 1855.

33 StAC LA A 8406 Moritz Briegleb to Schönberg, Coburg, 29 September 1855.

34 Eckstein, M. (2007): *Die Musterfarm Callenberg*. In: Bosbach, F. - Davis, J. R. eds.: *Windsor – Coburg. Geteilter Nachlass – Gemeinsames Erbe: Eine Dynastie und ihre Sammlungen/Divided Estate – Common Heritage: the Collections of a Dynasty*. Munich, 2007, p.209; StAC LA A 8406 f.17ff. correspondence between Moritz Briegleb and Geith.

35 RA VIC/R 21/12, William Smith, 'A Few Words on Smith's System of Steam Cultivation'; RA VIC/R 21/17, Carl Ruland to Moritz Briegleb, Osborne, 18 April 1861; RA VIC/R 21/18, Messrs James and Fred Howard to Andrew Toward, Britannia Iron Works, Bedford, 19 April 1861.

mended a machinist, Herr Brandenburg, who was admittedly expensive, but Briegleb realised that his experience would be valuable given the distance from the factory and consequent difficulties if anything was broken.³⁶ Brandenburg was sent to visit Albert's farms at Osborne and Windsor as well as the Britannia Iron Works, in order to become acquainted with the equipment.³⁷ Trials of the new engine were then carried out at the Landwirtschaftliche Fakultät at the University of Bonn, during which it was found that the 8 horse-power engine was insufficient, although it was newer and more powerful than that used by Brandenburg in England.³⁸ It was never firmly established whether the root of the problem was with the engine, heavier soil, the tensioning of the cable or with the cultivator (plough) itself; in any case the engine was returned and a 12 horsepower engine ordered.³⁹ By this time it was March 1862 and Albert was dead, but the project was continued. Successful completion of the trials with the more powerful machine did not end the difficulties. In Coburg the machinist Brandenburg went on strike, wanting higher pay as compensation for his relative isolation and responsibilities. The soil was heavier and more variable than expected. The finance originally allocated was running low and the local farmers were proving unwilling converts.⁴⁰ By January 1863, however, Briegleb was able to report success with the new machinery and some of the scepticism of the other farmers was beginning to recede. Albert's original plan to bring this new technology to the attention of the Coburg farmers and convince them of its potential had succeeded, but technology transfer was not a straightforward process. Any hopes of making the steam plough widely available or encouraging its use within the duchy were largely defeated, not by the technology itself, nor by cultural resistance, but by economic calculation. The investment and running costs were substantial, and would not be repaid by using the machine to plough the small fields which were characteristic of Coburg farming. Despite its technical success, the steam plough would only be most efficiently used on the larger farms of the dynastic estates.⁴¹

Albert lacked the capital, property and indeed authority to do much more than these projects. He did continue to offer considerable support for the initiatives of his brother. In 1857 the German Land- und Forstwirte, invited by Ernst II, held their annual conference in Coburg, and there was an exhibition of agricultural machinery. Amongst the exhibits was

36 RA VIC/R 21/5, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, 24 February 1861; RA VIC/R 21/6, Herr Dr. Goldstein to Professor Hartstein, Cologne, 20 February 1861; RA VIC/R 21/7, Carl Ruland to Moritz Briegleb, Osborne, 5 March 1861; RA VIC/R 21/8, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Coburg, 9 March 1861; RA VIC/R 21/14 .

37 RA VIC/R 21/22, Herr Goltstein to Carl Ruland, Cologne, 20 April 1861; RA VIC/R 21/26, Andrew Toward to Carl Ruland?, Osborne, 29 April 1861; RA VIC/R 21/28, Mr. A. Hood to Carl Ruland, Cumberland Lodge, 1 May 1861.

38 RA VIC/R 21/23, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Palin near Nagykanisza, 23 April 1861; RA VIC/R 21/30, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Coburg, 17 May 1861; RA VIC/R 21/42, Carl Ruland to Messrs James and Fred Howard, n.d.; RA VIC/R 21/45, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, 13 September [1861]; RA VIC/R 21/46, Herr Frick to Professor Dr. Hartstein, Cologne, 10 August 1861; RA VIC/R 21/48, Andrew Toward to Carl Ruland, Osborne, 19 September 1861; RA VIC/R 21/49, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Coburg, 8 October 1861; RA VIC/R 21/50, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Palin near Nagykanisza, 17 October 1861; RA VIC/R 21/52 herr Goltstein to Moritz Briegleb, Cologne, 12 October 1861.

39 RA VIC/R 21/47, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Wiesbaden, 18 September 1861; RA VIC/R 21/65, Carl Ruland to Herr Goltstein, 11 March 1862; RA VIC/R 21/66, Herr Goltstein to Carl Ruland, Cologne, 20 March 1861.

40 RA VIC/R 21/69, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Coburg, 22 May 1862; RA VIC/R 21/70, Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Coburg, 4 June 1862.

41 RA VIC/R 21/73, memorandum by Moritz Briegleb, Coburg, 14 January 1863; Eckstein, Michael (2007): *Die Musterfarm Callenberg*. In: Bosbach, F. - Davis, J. R. eds.: *Windsor – Coburg. Geteilter Nachlass – Gemeinsames Erbe: Eine Dynastie und ihre Sammlungen/Divided Estate – Common Heritage: the Collections of a Dynasty*. Munich, 2007, p.209.

‘ein großes, von Prinz Albert gesandtes, Sortiment an englischen Maschinen zu bestaunen ... und das mit großem Interesse besucht wurde’.⁴²

This conference probably contributed in no small degree to Ernst’s decision a few years later to construct a model farm on English principles. Albert again offered considerable support, though no evidence has yet come to light of any financial contributions. Certainly he was kept abreast of the financial circumstances and of the development of the plans.⁴³ He also gave the architect Georg Konrad Rothbart and the future farm inspector Julius Meßmer the opportunity to visit his own model farms in England to inform their designs for the new farm on the Callenberg estate, just outside Coburg. There were several innovative features, of which the most striking was the 8 horsepower steam engine used to run a mill, threshing machine, cutters for roots, leaves and feed, and crushers for potatoes and barley. In the stalls, drains facilitated the cleaning and collection of dung. The buildings were made of brick and were single storey in the English style. The farm may have fulfilled Albert’s ambitions of demonstrating some of the benefits of English farming techniques, and there seems to have been at least some initial interest from farmers of the region and beyond. However, effectively transplanting an English farm to the Thuringian countryside was not a formula for economic success. The farm was not able to support itself financially, which must have weakened its impact as a model farm. In any case, many of the innovative features were simply too expensive for the local farmers, whose lands were too small to warrant such investments. Outside the duchy, too, the influence of the farm is doubtful; In spite of a few sources referring to large numbers of interested visitors, the techniques used at Callenberg seem not to have been widely adopted or reported in the contemporary professional agricultural press.⁴⁴

These projects may have only been of limited influence, but their impact should be put in context. State support for agriculture had been only 120 florins per year during the 1830s and 1840s, rising to 540 florins annually from 1854.⁴⁵ And if take-up of their ideas was hindered by the small Coburg fields and farms, they did at least demonstrate some of the possibilities of land reform, which was proceeding slowly.

Philanthropic activities

Albert may have been only partially successful in his efforts to support directly economic enterprise in the duchy of Coburg-Gotha, but these projects were not his only points of engagement. Albert decided from quite early on to make a number of long term contributions to socio-economic life. Albert offered a not insignificant quantity of what might be described as welfare support, in ways which reinforced his position as a prince of

42 Eckstein, M. (2007): *Die Musterfarm Callenberg*. In: Bosbach, F. - Davis, J. R., eds.: *Windsor – Coburg. Geteilter Nachlass – Gemeinsames Erbe: Eine Dynastie und ihre Sammlungen/Divided Estate – Common Heritage: the Collections of a Dynasty*. Munich, 2007, pp.207–208.

43 RA VIC/R 21/38 Moritz Briegleb to Carl Ruland, Coburg, 10 June 1861; RA VIC/R 21/43 Carl Ruland to [Eduard Fischer], Osborne, 5 July 1861; RA VIC I 85/35, Herr Francke to Moritz Briegleb, Staatsministerium Coburg, 2 July 1861; RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/223 Eduard Fischer to Albert, 11 December 1861; RA VIC I 85/36: ‘Tilgungsplan für Verzinsung und Heimzahlung eines mit 4% verzinslichen Vorschusses von 60,000 f. zum Bau eines neuen Oekonomiehofes auf Callenberg’.

44 Eckstein, M. (2007): *Die Musterfarm Callenberg*. In: Bosbach, F. - Davis, J. R., eds.: *Windsor – Coburg. Geteilter Nachlass – Gemeinsames Erbe: Eine Dynastie und ihre Sammlungen/Divided Estate – Common Heritage: the Collections of a Dynasty*. Munich, 2007, pp.209, 216–8; Reinhart, M. (1997): *Die wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen des Herzogtums*. In: *Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen: Coburg in Bayern und Europa*. Augsburg, 1997, p.88.

45 Mauersberg, H. (1982): *Die Finanzen des Herzogtums Coburg und ihr Einfluß auf die Industrialisierung des Landes*. In: Falkenberg, J. - Dlouhy, R., eds.: *Die Wirtschaft im Coburger Grenzland*. Kulmbach, 1982, p.77.

Coburg-Gotha. He continued to see himself as at least partly responsible for the welfare of 'his' people. While much of Albert's philanthropic spending followed a pattern of traditional patriarchal responsibility for dependants, allowing him to fulfil any obligations as a prince of the duchy, a second progressive strand of thinking is clearly discernable: Albert was keen to see changes in the social and moral economy of Coburg-Gotha and some of his giving was structured to reflect this.

His traditional patriarchal giving was the least complex. It comprised contributions in time of emergency. During the downturn in the textile market in 1847–48, Albert paid 500 florins to the magistrate in Coburg as 'Unterstützung für die hiesigen ärmeren Gewerbstreibenden, ins besondere für die arbeitlosen Weber'.⁴⁶ When in 1861 a fire destroyed a large portion of the town of Rodach, Albert and other members of the dynasty offered donations. Fischer's letter to Ruland, Albert's secretary, is instructive of the political thinking: observing that contributions of 250 florins each by King Leopold of the Belgians and the Duchess of Coburg-Gotha had been made public in the *Regierungsblatt*, Fischer consulted with Baron Stockmar and made a payment of the same amount, which would be made public in the next issue of the newspaper. This was intentionally conspicuous giving: a way of demonstrating commitment to the duchy.⁴⁷

Albert also offered poor relief. In 1844 this was characterised by large donations to civic authorities. Albert gave 600 thalers to the Gotha Armen-Commission, 500 florins to the Stadtrat of Neustadt, and 1,200 florins to the Coburg Armen-Commission 'zur Unterstützung und Linderung der Armuth'. The use of these donations was left up to the corporations in question. In the case of Neustadt this gave rise to a problem when the Stadtrat seemed to lose the money, and an investigation had to be launched.⁴⁸ This may have dissuaded Albert from pursuing this course more often, though large one-off donations did not cease. He gave 300 florins to the Coburg Landesregierung in 1858, he and Victoria gave another 800 florins in 1860 and she made further large gifts after Albert's death.⁴⁹

Albert also gave directly to the poor. In the years from 1840 to 1844 the sums involved were approximately 1,200 florins annually, half in Coburg and half in Gotha. These monies were distributed to needy applicants by Albert's representatives. In Coburg this responsibility fell to Dr. Christian Florschütz, Albert's former tutor, while in Gotha the job was given to a police commissioner. Initially this was Herr Eberhard, but from 1845 Herr Stötzer took over. These representatives seem to have had considerable autonomy in distribution of monies. Stötzer only passed one query on to Fischer, in which he recommended that the application made by the family of the tax controller Popp did not warrant special consideration.⁵⁰

The death of Albert's father and consequent change in Albert's own financial circumstances also gave opportunity for a reassessment of his philanthropic activities. Fischer put together a detailed report on the giving by other members of the dynasty and recommendations for how Albert might best make his own contributions.⁵¹ The other

46 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/188 Florschütz and Albert, audit of Albert's accounts, 3 April 1848; Krauss, Georg (1981): *Die Oberfränkische Geschichte*. Hof, 1981, p.168.

47 RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/149, Eduard Fischer to Carl Ruland, Coburg, 11 July 1861.

48 RA VIC ADD A 10/83/1/87, Dr. Praetorius to the Armencommission in Coburg, Coburg, 9 April 1844; RA VIC ADD A 10/83/1/88, Dr. Praetorius to the Armencommission in Gotha, 9 April 1844; StAC L Reg 4478: correspondence relating to the gift of 500 florins to the town of Neustadt.

49 StAC Min D 2017.

50 StAC LA A 8388, A. Stötzer to Eduard Fischer, Gotha, 28 June 1861.

51 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/102, Eduard Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 10 November 1844.

family members gave in total 2,837 florins per year, of which 1,827 florins came from King Leopold of the Belgians alone. Albert's contribution of 1,200 florins constituted thus 30% of the total. Fischer's recommendations were however that Albert shift his focus away from the 'nothwendigen Uebeln' of the Armen-Commissionen and Armenkassen, and instead focus upon 'einer Aufhülfe der Anstalten, welche eine Verhinderung der Armuth bezwecken'. There were already sufficient sources of poor relief: Albert's best contribution could be best made in poverty prevention. This meant working to try to change society, despite his modest financial resources.

Fischer's strategy was adopted by Albert with only minor changes and brought with it a focus upon the bringing up and education of children, inculcation of diligence and modesty, the avoidance of unnecessary over-consumption, the promotion of arts and crafts, love of domesticity and thrift. In short, the aim was to encourage a change in the moral economy, which could underpin improvements in welfare and productivity. By 1861 only 100 florins went annually to the Coburg *Armen-Commission*, but the Frauenverein received 75 florins, the Marienschule 60 florins, the Sunday school 25 florins, the Spar-und Hilfsverein 50 florins, the Spitalkasse für Gesellen 75 florins and the teaching institute for the deaf and dumb 50 florins. In Gotha the pattern was similar: 100 thalers went to the Armencasse, but just as much went to the Gustav-Adolf-Stiftung, while the art association, Landarmenhaus in Langenheim and the Marienpflege hospital for children each received 50 thalers. The institute for the care of orphans received 45 thalers, the Taglöhneverein 30 thalers, and the institute for the bringing up of well-behaved children 25 thalers. This change in system of giving brought Albert into regular contact with these charitable foundations, and annual reports and accounts were scrutinised to ensure that they continued to be efficient channels for Albert to achieve his objectives.

The discretionary funds administered by Florschütz and Stötzer were reduced in the light of these changes but they also acquired a new priority: the support of education. This was not the objective of the public Armencassen and was a deliberate step outside the mainstream of philanthropy in the duchy. A means of poverty prevention, as well as improving individual productivity and fulfilment, this was something of a fusion between Albert's role as a traditional prince and patron, and his modern concern for progress and self-improvement.

This focus upon education can most clearly be seen in the accounts of Albert's own direct giving. Here the circle of dependants was unsurprisingly drawn rather smaller than for the discretionary funds. The request by Steuerrath Othberg for support for his son's studies of mining science was accepted only very reluctantly, 'obgleich die Beziehungen Sr. K.H. zu dem Steuerrath Othberg doch eigentlich nur sehr entfernter Natur sind'. It is quite possible that the decisive factor for Albert was that 'die Zeugnisse des jungen Mannes ... lauten sehr zu seinem Gunsten'.⁵² Albert's accounts recorded an annual average of 1,747 florins' expenditure under the heading of 'Unterstützungen und Gnadengeschenke', but the majority of these monies were paid to support parents in bringing up and educating their children. Some were supported in paying school fees, some in pursuing apprenticeships, and others in attending university for, in some cases, prolonged and expensive study which would otherwise have been out of reach. The recipients ranged from Hugo von Coburg,⁵³ Albert's second cousin, via the sons of various professionals, to Augustus Klett, an

52 RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/165, Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 13 August 1861; RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/167, Johannes Andreas Othberg to Albert, Coburg, 1 August 1861; RA VIC Add A 10/83/7/178, Carl Ruland to Eduard Fischer, Balmoral, 16 September 1861.

53 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/98, Dr. Praetorius to Eduard Fischer, Windsor Castle, 11 November 1844.

apprentice woodturner.⁵⁴ The greatest expenditure on one individual was 3542 fl 32 Xr which paid for the son of a former gardener at the Rosenau to study painting over eight years in Coburg, Munich, Antwerp and Paris.⁵⁵

Albert also endowed the Albert-Prämien – the Albert Prizes – to encourage teachers within the duchy in 1847. The interest from 1,000 thalers was to be given annually to ‘einen Stadt- oder Landschullehrer, welcher sich durch Geschicklichkeit, treuen Fleiß im Berufe und sittliches Verhalten in seiner Amtsführung auszeichnet [hat]’. Significantly this was aimed at mainstream public education: teachers at grammar schools, Sunday schools or trade schools were excluded.⁵⁶ This might have yielded a prize of some 30 thalers per year, which was a useful reward for inspiring teaching, but from Albert’s perspective this looks like a carefully calculated measure to gain socio-economic leverage from a relatively small investment. Firstly, a publicised prize could influence and encourage all teachers, even if only one received the prize. Secondly, good teachers were amongst those who could most influence the development of society.

Analogous thinking seems to have underlain Fischer’s suggestion in 1844 to encourage socio-economic development through Albert’s philanthropic giving. Albert adopted the scheme, which was intended to promote the ‘Belebung des Fleißes, der guten Sitten und der weiteren Ausbildung der gewerbstreibenden Klasse überhaupt’.⁵⁷ Two prizes of 50 florins were for married tradesmen of modest means but promising talent, diligence, orderliness and good morals. Two poor young men who had completed their apprenticeships, demonstrating ‘Fleiß und gute Sitten’ during their schooling and training, would receive 25 florins each. Furthermore, two poor young girls of good morals were to be given prizes of 25 florins each as a present at their weddings. These were the prizes awarded in Coburg, with the another parallel set for Gotha. The total prize fund was 515 florins, rising to 565 florins by 1856. The prizes certainly achieved the kind of prominence needed to influence wider society. In fact Fischer became concerned that the extent of press coverage was giving a misleading impression of the objectives, as attention came to focus upon the public competition. He feared that ‘das wahre Verdienst sich mehr verbirgt und aufgesucht werden will’, such that public competition would be more likely to bring mediocre candidates to the fore. ‘[Wo] bleibt dann die moralische Rückwirkung auf das Allgemeine’, which was after all the priority? Real care was needed with the selection of winners.⁵⁸ Firmly stressed in the criteria were the moral characteristics expected of the winners: good morals, diligence and modesty. The aim reflected the view that economic development started with moral self-improvement; Albert’s modest resources might not be able to transform society on their own, but could offer incentives to shape the moral economy.

Conclusion

We are now in a position to assess Prince Albert’s involvement with the economy of the duchy of Coburg-Gotha. Over and above his personal incomes from the dynastic estates and expenditure on salaries and goods, he actively sought ways in which he could contribute to the economic life and development of the duchy, overcoming the obstacles of

54 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/139, Eduard Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 1 March 1846; RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/187. Full details can be found in Albert’s accounts in RA VIC Add A 10/83/1–7.

55 RA VIC Add A 10/83/2/34, accounts dated 30 June 1851.

56 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/147, Gothaische Schulstiftung to Albert, 4 January 1847; RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/152, rules for the Albert Prizes for school teachers in the Duchy of Gotha.

57 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/102 Eduard Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 10 November 1844.

58 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/163 Eduard Fischer to Albert, Coburg, 8 November 1847.

distance and limited financial means. These contributions took place at a variety of levels, reflecting a broad conception of what constituted and underpinned the economic sphere: his agricultural projects addressed the central issues of technology and the means of production; investment in the Werrabahn contributed to the improvement of communication links, the arteries of economic life; his philanthropy was increasingly directed to encourage social and moral changes to underpin economic development.

The real key to Albert's activities was that they were increasingly targeted with considerable thought to address underlying 'strategic' issues. In more modern economic parlance, Albert was concerned with the supply side of the economy. Furthermore, he looked for opportunities to obtain maximum leverage from his efforts. The agricultural projects were conceived as models, designed to influence others. The changes in Albert's philanthropic spending were calculated not to duplicate the efforts of others. Funding was instead directed to institutions judged to be able to make the best use of it, while the various prize schemes relied upon their public profile to influence wider society.

Assessing the effectiveness of Albert's contributions is, however, a rather more difficult task than describing how they worked. One conclusion can be stated firmly: Coburg was the prime beneficiary. Gotha was not neglected. It received a larger amount of philanthropic spending, in broad proportion to its larger population, but the major investments in the railway and agriculture were in Coburg territory. This imbalance may have been justified by Gotha's relative prosperity. It had flourished over the preceding century or so, was close to other major Thuringian towns, and was connected to the railway network in 1847 on the mainline between Leipzig and Frankfurt am Main. Coburg may have seemed in greater need for assistance, but Albert's greater focus upon Coburg does look like favouritism resulting from the fact that he was born and grew up mainly in its environs.

The transformative effect of the Werrabahn is beyond doubt, even if it was not a stockmarket success. The influence of the agricultural projects was equivocal. The promotion of drainage was a qualified success, but the steam plough and the techniques adopted in the model farm seem to have been less applicable for most Coburg farmers, whose businesses and fields were predominantly small. Nor do they seem to have served as an influential model outside the duchy. The importance of Albert's philanthropy cannot be thoroughly evaluated without a detailed examination of the welfare provision within the duchy. Lacking this, circumstantial evidence does imply that it was far from insignificant. Fischer's report of the media misrepresentation of the prizes makes clear that the scheme had made a certain impact. The Albert-Prämien prizes for teachers were continued long after the death of the endower.⁵⁹ Indeed the prominence which Albert's projects had, simply by virtue of association with him, meant that, regardless of their individual success, they contributed powerfully to the development of a culture which could embrace and carry forward economic development.

Albert's economic endeavours also had one other effect. Albert's projects demonstrated his 'fortdauerndern Huld gegen das hiesigen Land und höchst Dero treuer Kürsorge für dessen Wohlfahrt'.⁶⁰ On Fischer's advice his actions were made public and prominent to show that, despite his absence, he did not forget the people of his homeland. Success was not wishful thinking on the part of Albert or Fischer. The letters of gratitude Albert received might be expected to flatter, but his statue was placed in the centre of the market square in Coburg, closer to the people than that of his brother, which overlooks the town from the Hofgarten. The *Gothaische Zeitung* observed that the money of the

59 StAC LR Amt 4938–4941 contain relevant correspondence from the period 1883–1909.

60 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/147 Gothaische Schulstiftung to Albert, Gotha, 4 January 1847.

“Allgeliebten Prinzen” zu mannichfachen Unterstützungen fast nur in unserm Lande verwendet worden waren’.⁶¹ He was after all a prince of the duchy; they were his people and he was ‘ihr Prinz Albert’.⁶² In many respects the influence of his efforts was less important than the fact that he made and was seen to make a wide and committed contribution to the economic development of the duchy.

Distant Patron: Prince Albert and the Development of the Coburg-Gotha Economy

Oliver Walton

Abstract

When Prince Albert of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha married Queen Victoria of Great Britain, he was separated from the place of his birth by geography and British political expediency. Hitherto neglected by historians, Albert’s surprisingly close and ongoing connections with the duchy have recently been uncovered. This article focuses upon his efforts to support and promote the economic development of the Coburg-Gotha. It shows how he was able to bridge the distance by employing local representatives, and outlines his investments in logistics and new technology, and his efforts to change society and culture in order to further economic development. It places these efforts in the context of his position as a prince of Coburg-Gotha, and his desire to reaffirm himself as a ‘distant patron’.

Key words: Prince Albert; Coburg, Gotha; economy; society.

Vzdálený patron: princ Albert a rozvoj kobursko-gothského hospodářství

Abstrakt

Když se princ Albert Sasko-kobursko-gothský oženil s britskou královnou Viktorií, odloučil se od místa svého narození geograficky, ale také z důvodů britských politických zájmů. Ačkoli historici přehlíželi Albertův vztah k rodnému území, byly nedávno odhaleny princovy překvapivě úzké a pokračující vztahy s vévodstvím. Tato studie se zaměřuje na jeho úsilí podporovat hospodářský vývoj Coburgu-Gotha. Článek demonstruje, jakým způsobem byl schopen přemostit vzdálenost zaměstnáváním místních představitelů a nastiňuje jeho investice do logistiky a nových technologií, jeho úsilí změnit společnost a kulturu, tak aby podporovala hospodářský rozvoj. Nahlíží tyto snahy v kontextu jeho postavení prince kobursko-gothského a jeho touhy projevovat se jako „vzdálený patron“.

Klíčová slova: Německo; svobodný obchod; Čechy; Velká Británie.

61 VIC/F 22/24, *Gothaische Zeitung*, 17 March 1851.

62 RA VIC Add A 10/83/1/102, Eduard Fischer, memorandum, 10 November 1844.