

KILLING KINGS

Patterns of Regicide in Europe, AD 600–1800

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This paper examines the frequency of violent death and regicide amongst 1,513 monarchs in 45 monarchies across Europe between AD 600 and 1800. The analyses reveal that all types of violence combined account for about 22 per cent of all deaths. Murder is by far the most important violent cause of death, accounting for about 15 per cent of all deaths and corresponding to a homicide rate of about 1,000 per 100,000 ruler-years. Analyses of trends over time reveal a significant decline in the frequency of both battle deaths and homicide between the Early Middle Ages and the end of the eighteenth century. A significant part of the drop occurred during the first half of the period, suggesting that the civilizing processes assumed by Norbert Elias started between the seventh and the twelfth centuries. Finally, preliminary analyses suggest that regicide has a significant 'autoregressive' component in that the murder of the predecessor and the pre-predecessor increases the risk of homicide for the current monarch. It is suggested that such bundles of regicide may be interpreted as part of extended periods of civil wars and feuding that accompanied the state-building process. The paper concludes by suggesting several individual and contextual risk factors that may be involved in the risk of regicide.

Keywords: *Regicide, elite homicide, civilizing process, evolutionary theory, history of violence*

Introduction

On 29 March 1792, *Gustav III of Sweden* died from a pistol-shot in his back, fired at him during a masked ball in the Royal Opera House in Stockholm. The perpetrators were nobleman and military officer *Johann Jacob Anckarstroem* and two co-conspirators, backed by a large faction of the Swedish nobility (Bain 1887). Several motives overlapped. But the main components were the implacable opposition of the Swedish nobility to *Gustav's* efforts to reduce their influence, and the fervent antiroyalism—probably associated with personal dissatisfaction—of *Anckarstroem*. The conspirators were caught and *Anckarstroem* was decapitated, after having his right hand cut off, on 27 April 1792.

In 603, a regicide occurred in Toledo, the capital of the Visigothic Kingdom (Collins 2004: 73). The contemporary bishop *Isodore of Sevilla* recounts that a faction of the nobility invaded the palace, deposed the young king *Liuvu II*, cut off his right hand and subsequently assassinated him. The conspiracy was led by count *Witteric*, who commanded the army to repulse the Byzantines and who was a supporter of the Christian strand of Arianism. The murder may have been related to the ideological schism between Arianism and Catholicism, but it may also have been a reaction to the loss of power

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that Witteric and his followers had suffered under Liuva's father, *Reccared*. Witteric usurped the throne, but was assassinated seven years later by a faction of Catholic nobles.

The murders are separated by almost 1,200 years of European history and a distance of 1,500 miles. Also, the outcomes could not have been more different for the assassins: one became king, the other was executed. However, there are also remarkable similarities, besides the removing of the right hand: both originated in a discontented faction of the nobility, in both cases the goal was regime change by murder and in both cases political schism seems to have coalesced with private grievance.

Cases of regicide like these have always fascinated contemporary observers and historians alike. However, probably reflecting the political drama of such events, most academic work on regicide is firmly embedded in the tradition of political and cultural history: it approaches the subject through detailed, historically rich case studies on the events before and after a specific murder and interprets these events within their cultural and legal context (Friedeburg 2004; Hicks 2003; le Roux 2006; Mousnier 1964; Walzer 1992). In contrast, regicide has hardly been touched upon by historians of crime, nor am I aware of any criminological work on the topic. To fill this gap, the current paper presents a first attempt to examine regicide from a quantitative and comparative perspective. By way of a systematic review of all major monarchies on the European continent from AD 600 to 1800, it endeavours to provide initial answers to questions such as: How frequent was regicide? Can we distinguish specific types of regicide? Did its frequency change over time? And is it possible to identify predictors that influence the likelihood of a regicide?

Taking Killed Monarchs Seriously

A statistical approach based on large numbers of 'cases' may be anathema to those historians who value detailed knowledge of primary sources and careful reconstruction of the 'historical truth' more highly than generalizations based on statistical data. However, I believe there are compelling arguments for a theoretically informed quantitative and comparative approach to regicide.

Historical trends of elite violence

First, a quantitative analysis of regicide can shed light on historical trajectories of violence hypothesized by some historians of crime. Thus, many scholars have found Norbert Elias's (1969) *Theory of the Civilizing Process* a valuable framework for understanding historical change in violence (Carter Wood 2004; Rousseaux 1996; Spierenburg 2008; 2008; Wiener 2004). It assumes that the *longue durée* of cultural shifts in Europe from the Early Middle Ages to the twentieth century comprises a growing sensitization to violence, brought about by increasing self-constraint, conscientiousness and courtesy. Elias explained these shifts as the result of two structural dynamics. The first process is the gradual monopolization of power in the emerging nation states, manifest in the transition from medieval warrior elites to early modern courtiers and the elimination of private revenge as a justifiable way of dealing with violent acts (Rousseaux 1999). The second dynamic is what Elias called the 'extension of chains of interdependence'. This refers to the notion that the growth of trade and the increasing complexity of institutions made people, especially the elites, more dependent on sustained cooperation with

others. As a result, the strategic value of brute force declined, while self-control emerged as a cultivated resource for successful action.

Data on historical levels of criminal homicide broadly support the framework developed by Elias, suggesting a long-term decline from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries (Eisner 2003; Spierenburg 2008). However, these data can at best serve as a partial test of Elias's theory. Thus, they are derived from 'large N' sources such as criminal justice records or coroners' reports. These records are about crime by common people recorded by trained personnel within a working criminal justice system. In contrast, Elias's argument refers to change in *elite behaviour* and the very *emergence of the state structures* that support coroners, judges and clerks (also see Cooney 1997). Furthermore, data on conventional murder and robbery start 'only' in the fourteenth century—a period when much of the hypothesized process, namely the monopolization of the means of coercion in the process of state-building—is already in full swing. To put Elias's theory to a more stringent test, information is required on much earlier stages of European state formation and on behavioural change amongst the most powerful echelons of society. Regicide fulfils both requirements: it is almost exclusively a matter of violent conflict among the elites and has been documented since the Early Middle Ages.

Testing evolutionary theories of violence

Regicide has left traces in many different cultures and over long periods of time. For this reason, it can serve as a useful testing ground for general theories of violence. One such area of fruitful theorizing emerges from the confluence of evolutionary theory and rational choice arguments (e.g. Buss and Shackelford 1997; Duntley and Buss 2004; Duntley and Shackelford 2008; Eisner 2009; Frey 2007). Their foundation is the assumption that violence, rather than being inherently dysfunctional and pathological, has emerged during human evolution as a solution to specific adaptive problems. Therefore, any explanation of violence should start by asking: What adaptive problems can aggression solve? And how can variation (across cultures or individuals) in violent action be explained by variation in the situational contexts, in which aggression is an adaptive solution (Buss and Shackelford 1997)?

Several of these hypothesized adaptive strategies seem to be directly relevant to regicide: thus, aggression may be seen as a promising strategy to co-opt the valuable resources of others, including land, weapons, food and sex. To this purpose, men often form coalitions in various guises, such as armies, gangs or conspiracies against monarchs. Therefore, the higher the chances are that a competitor can take control over the territory, and the more coalition partners expect to benefit from an overthrow of the powerholder, the greater the likelihood of regicide occurring. Second, Buss and Shackelford (1997) hypothesize that violence can serve to increase one's position within a status hierarchy, if the use of force seems a promising strategy. Attempts to seize the crown by force will therefore be more likely if access to the throne is based on ambiguous or contradictory rules, or if challengers can develop a plausible claim to legitimate rule. Finally, a third possible function of violence is to provide protection from aggression by others or, as evolutionary psychologists would say, the ability to inflict costs on rivals. Such retaliatory and pre-emptive violence should be expected, for example, if actors fear for life or property unless they strike first. One would hence anticipate that regicide becomes an option when large segments of the nobility believe that a monarch is a significant risk to

their interests or if monarchs cause such injury or offence to individuals that revenge is enacted.

To test such assumptions requires large numbers of cases sampled from different periods of human history and a variety of cultural contexts. Theoretically, they could be examined for any type of violence, were data available. In practice, however, it is difficult to think of manifestations of violence for which information on large numbers of individual cases, as well as potentially relevant predictors, is accessible over long periods of time and for many cultures across the world. Regicide is an exception: relatively reliable dynastic lists exist over long historical periods, and chroniclers across the world have found the violent death of a monarch something worth recording.

Testing hypotheses

This leads to a third point, namely that the quantitative study of murdered monarchs can benefit from a remarkable property of the extant data. Almost all quantitative historical research on violence suffers from a massive methodological problem: however large and detailed the studied sources are, they are limited to information on offenders and/or victims (e.g. Hanawalt 1979; Roth 2009). Those not involved left no traces, which makes it impossible to test even the most basic hypotheses about how those involved in violence differ from those who were not.

With monarchs, the situation is radically different: thanks to well-established lists of rulers through most of European history, the population of monarchs can be relatively easily demarcated. Furthermore, for most monarchs, enough primary and secondary sources are available to enable the researcher to collect data on biographical and contextual criteria including, for example, civil strife, wars lost and won, duration of rule, number of brothers or cousins, etc. To the extent that murdered monarchs can be identified with sufficient validity—and that there are enough cases—it is therefore possible to use statistical techniques to examine theory-driven hypotheses, at the level of individuals, on what causes regicide.

Method

In a nutshell, the present study is based on a dataset that comprises all monarchs who ruled the major states of Europe between AD 600 and 1800, and a detailed coding of all monarchs who died of murder off the battlefield. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to it as the *regicide dataset*.

Table 1 gives an overview of the monarchies and the time periods covered by the study. The table illustrates the huge terrain—historically, geographically and institutionally—covered by the dataset. Historically, the study covers the period from the rudimentary Early Medieval states, ruled by itinerant warrior kings, to the pompous courts of the eighteenth century that attracted thousands of courtiers. Geographically, it comprises all major political powers across Europe from the Byzantine and Russian empires in the East to the Iberian Islamic and Christian monarchies in the West, and from the Kingdom of Naples in the South to the Scandinavian monarchies in the North. Institutionally, it comprises hereditary monarchies (e.g. the British, Swedish and Portuguese monarchies since the High Middle Ages), elective monarchies (e.g. Doges of Venice, Popes, Holy Roman Emperors) and hybrid monarchies that combine merit, hereditary claims and

TABLE 1 *Monarchs coded for the regicide database*

<i>Eastern Europe</i>	Byzantine Emperors (602–1452, 77), Khans of the First Bulgarian Empire (668–1072, 29), Khans of the Second Bulgarian Empire (1186–1422, 22), Sultans of the Ottoman Empire (1444–1789, 22), Grand Princes of Kiev (912–1132, 17), Grand Princes of Vladimir-Susdal (1157–1327, 18), Grand Princes of Moskow (1283–1533, 10), Tsardom of Russia and Russian Empire (1533–1796, 19).
<i>Scandinavia</i>	Kings of Denmark (935–1375, 28), Kings of Sweden (970–1389 and 1523–1809, 48), Kings of Norway (862–1000, 1015–28, 1035–1319), Monarchs of the Kalmar Union (1375–1523, 6), Personal Union Denmark and Norway (1375–1523–1808, 11).
<i>British Isles</i>	Kings of the Mercians (606–918, 31), Kings of Wessex (611–802, 15), Kings of Deira and Northumbria (616–921, 40), High Kings of Ireland (604–1186, 41), Kings of Gwynedd and Wales (825–1283, 25), Kings of the Picts—Kings of the Scots (843–1567, 41), Kings of England and United Kingdom (829–1648 and 1660–1760, 57).
<i>Central and Western Europe</i>	Kings of the Frankish Kingdoms (607–721, 15), Majordomus of the Frankish Kingdoms (603–768, 33), Kings of France (751–1792, 49), German Kings and Holy Roman Empire (843–1792, 64), Dukes and Kings of Poland and Poland-Lithuania (1025–1795, 46), Hungary (997–1342, 39) Kings of Serbia (1050–1371, 17), Monarchs of Croatia (910–1097, 17), Dukes and Kings of Prussia (1525–1786, 9), Bohemia (870–1526, 35).
<i>Italy</i>	Lombard Kingdom (616–774, 22), Popes (604–1799, 186), Doges of Venice (697–1789, 119), Kingdom of Naples (1266–1501, 16), Lords and Dukes of Milan (1197–1524, 27), Rulers of Florence (1434–1790, 20), County and Duchy of Savoy, Kingdom of Sardinia (1003–1796, 35)
<i>Iberian Peninsula</i>	Visigoth Kingdom (601–788, 20), Califate of Cordoba (756–1031, 20), Sultanate of Granada (1238–1492, 22), Kingdoms of Asturias and Leon (718–1555, 47), Aragon (1035–1516, 17), Navarra (824–1572, 35), Portugal (1112–1777, 28), Spanish Kingdom (1516–1788, 10).

Note: Dates in brackets refer to the start of rule of the first coded ruler (i.e. the first ruler whose reign started after 600) to the end of rule of the last coded ruler (i.e. the last ruler whose reign ended before 1800). For example, the list of coded rulers for the Tsardom of Russia and the Russian Empire begins with the accession of Ivan IV ('the Terrible') in 1533 (although he was crowned Tsar in 1547) and ends with the death of Catherine II ('the Great') in 1796. Similarly, the rulers listed under Scotland end with Mary I (1567), as her successor James (who acceded to the Scottish throne in 1567 but became King of England, Scotland and Ireland in 1603) is included in the list of rulers of England and the United Kingdom. The second value refers to the number of coded rulers.

elective elements (e.g. Anglo-Saxon kingdoms). I thus adopted a broad definition of monarchy in the sense of any political system where political power is concentrated in one individual and whose duration of rule is unlimited. However, while coverage of a large proportion of monarchic rulers across the continent was sought, no claims are made that the list is complete.

The first entry point for creating the regicide dataset was the inventory of lists of monarchs available on Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Lists_of_monarchs). This currently includes 237 lists of rulers of historical and contemporary monarchies across the world. These ruler lists provide baseline data on name, birth, start of reign and end of reign. For most listed monarchs, a link then leads to a biographical entry with further information.

Several studies have compared Wikipedia entries to more conventional sources of information (Giles 2005; Hammwöhner 2007; Lorenz 2009; Rosenzweig 2006). They generally conclude that Wikipedia information is as accurate and often more comprehensive than traditional general encyclopaedias, although the quality of the writing is often poorer and entries on contentious contemporary issues can be misleading.

However, several strategies were adopted to verify data and to increase the validity of the collected information. Thus, the lists of rulers and the duration of reigns were compared with scholarly dynastic tables such as Morby (2002) or Vauchez *et al.* (2000). Also, Wikipedia entries were examined in French, German, Italian and Spanish, and

information was generally retrieved from the entries in those languages that provided the best documentation. Finally, scholarly biographical compendia and pertinent historical work were consulted. Biographical encyclopaedias include, for example, the *Deutsche Biographie* (Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 2007–09), the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Goldman 2010), the *Biographical Dictionary of Dark-Age Britain* (William *et al.* 1991), *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia* (Pulsiano and Wolf 1993), the *Biographisches Lexikon zur Geschichte Suedosteuropas* (Bernath *et al.* 1974–81) or the online encyclopaedia *De Imperatoribus Romanis*, a website edited by a team of reputed historians whose entries are thoroughly peer-reviewed.

Data collection was carried out in three stages. First, base information about all monarchs was gathered. This includes the name of the monarch, dynasty, sex, year of birth, start and end of any periods of rule, cause of end of rule (resignation, deposition or death), year of death and the succession relationship of the ruler to the predecessor. In a second step, the biographic information about each ruler was read in detail. Whenever the Wikipedia entry suggested a violent death, the information was provisionally coded into four categories, namely *accident*, *battle death*, *execution after a judicial trial* and *murder*. Accidents include drowning, falling from a horse, hunting accidents and accidental injuries during tournaments. Battle deaths are all deaths during an organized conflict between armies, whether in the context of a civil war or against foreign armies. Execution refers to cases in which the monarch was sentenced to death in a formal judicial procedure and subsequently publicly executed. Murder was defined as the intentional killing of a monarch off the battlefield and not as part of judicial process, whether he/she was still in power or deposed. Whenever possible, initial information was then compared with scholarly publications. In the case of divergences, the coded information was based on the published academic work.

For murder, a distinction was made between ‘certain’ and ‘doubtful’ cases. Cases were coded as ‘certain’ if the available secondary sources raised no doubts about the presumed violent cause of death. Cases were coded as ‘doubtful’ if the biographical entry expressed doubts about the historical cogency of the supposed murder or if information about the cause of death differed among the secondary sources. Also, all cases of poisoning and most cases of alleged murder in prison were considered ‘doubtful’, as it was either impossible for a pre-modern observer to identify the true cause of death or no observers could verify the cause of death.

In a third step, additional information was collected for all cases of murder or legal execution. These data include the circumstances of the murder (e.g. *modus operandi*, location, deposition before the murder, trial before the murder, etc.), characteristics of the victim and the alleged perpetrators (e.g. single/multiple perpetrators, class background of perpetrators), manifest descriptions of the motives and the consequences for the alleged perpetrators (e.g. execution, usurpation of throne).

A few methodological points need mentioning. First, throughout the data collection, every effort was made to avoid double counts of monarchs who ruled over several territories simultaneously or sequentially. Second, if a monarch’s period of reign differed between various political units, the maximum total period ‘at risk’ was entered in the dataset. For example, James of the House of Stuart, who was King of Scots from 1567 to 1625 (as *James VI*) and King of England and Ireland from 1603 until 1625 (as *James I*) is represented in the dataset as one observation whose ‘period at risk’ (i.e. rule as

a monarch) was 1567–1625. Third, the dataset contains only individuals designated as legitimate monarchs in conventional ruler lists, while ignoring claimants, counter-monarchs and regents. Finally, kingdoms sometimes experienced phases when they were effectively under the overlordship of another ruler. In such cases, the general strategy was to prioritize continuity. For example, the list of *Grand Princes of Valdimir Suzdal* is continued during the period of domination by the *Golden Horde*, a vast Mongolian Empire in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Similarly, the list of Byzantine rulers was continued during the period of the control of Constantinople by the Latin Empire with the list of *Emperors of Nicea*, who re-conquered Constantinople in 1261.

As is the case with analyses of more conventional historical crime data, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether or not a monarch was murdered. Contrary to conventional crime data, however, researchers can easily re-examine each case and determine whether any errors would make a difference to the conclusions. To facilitate this task, the Appendix lists all cases coded as ‘murdered monarchs’ in the present study.

Descriptive data

The regicide dataset comprises 1,513 monarchs (1,473 male and 40 female) who ruled major political units of Europe at some time between AD 600 and 1800. The mean number of monarchs per century is 127, with a maximum of 175 in the eleventh century and a minimum of 77 in the eighteenth century (when there were fewer states and rulers ruled for longer periods).

The average length of reign was 14.5 years (SD = 13.2), with a minimum of a few days and a maximum of 73 years. The average length of rule increased considerably between the seventh and the twelfth centuries (from M = 8.2 years to M = 16.7 years), remained rather stable from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries and reached a maximum of 20.5 years in the eighteenth century.

Over the whole period, the year of birth of the monarch was known in 65.9 per cent of the cases. The proportion of monarchs with a known year of birth was 16.5 per cent in the seventh century, increasing to 95.9 per cent in the fifteenth century and 100 per cent thereafter. The average age at the start of rule was 33.1 (SD = 19.3) and 51.4 (SD = 18.1) at the end of rule. These averages mask large differences between monarchies and over time. Thus, the average age at the start of the reign increased over the 12 centuries from 25.1 years in the seventh century to 39.1 years in the eighteenth century. Also, the average entry age was much higher in the two gerontocratic monarchies, namely *Venice* (mean age at start of reign = 68.3) and the *Papacy* (M = 59.0).

Results

The following analyses are meant to give initial insight into whether the empirical data of this study can help to answer some of the theoretical questions raised above. They focus on five issues:

- How frequent was the violent death of monarchs?
- Can different types of regicides be distinguished and what were the most conspicuous constellations leading to the murder of a monarch?

- What were the ‘costs’ of violent death for the monarch in terms of potential years of life and reign lost?
- How did the frequency of regicide change between the Early Middle Ages and the eighteenth century, and do trends support the notion of a civilizing process?
- Can individual instances of regicide be predicted?

The frequency and rate of violent deaths

Table 2 displays the frequency of violent and natural deaths in the full sample. The data show that slightly more than one out of five monarchs died from a violent event ($N = 338$, 22.4 per cent). Accidents were rare and account for 1.4 per cent of all deaths ($N = 21$). This may be an underestimate, as accidental deaths may sometimes have gone unrecorded, especially in early chronicles. Ninety monarchs died in battle, representing approximately 6 per cent of the causes of death. However, by far the most important cause of violent death is intentional killing off the battlefield, namely homicide. Thus, 219 monarchs, corresponding to almost 15 per cent of the total, were coded as murdered. Of these, 159 were coded as ‘certain’ and 60 cases were coded as ‘doubtful’ either because information about the cause of death is contradictory or because the circumstances (e.g. poisoning, death in prison) make it impossible to assess, with any degree of certainty, whether the death was the result of intentional homicide.

The frequency of violent deaths can also be calculated as rates per year at risk. As contemporary homicide and crime statistics generally use 100,000 person-years as the dominator (i.e. homicide or crime rates), the same approach was chosen for monarchs. For the full dataset, it corresponds to the total sum of years during which the monarchs were active as rulers, namely 21,843 years. The results show that the annual risk of dying from any violent cause was 1,547.4 per 100,000 ruler-years (i.e. Violent Death Rate = $338 \times 100,000/21,843$). Considering murder, the estimated rate is 1,002.6 per 100,000 for all cases, and 727.9 per 100,000 if we include only the ‘certain’ cases.

Some comparative data may help to place these figures in context: the contemporary homicide rate in Western Europe ranges around 0.6–1.5 per 100,000 person-years (Aebi *et al.* 2006). In the early 1990s, the homicide victimization rate for young black men—the

TABLE 2 *Number and rate of violent deaths amongst monarchs, AD 600–1800*

Cause of death	(1) Number of monarchs	(2) Percentage of deaths	(3) Rate per 100,000 ruler-years
Accident	21	1.4	96.1
Battle-death	90	5.9	412.0
Executed following trial	8	0.5	36.6
Murdered	219	14.6	1,002.6
Of which: <i>Certain</i>	159	10.6	727.9
<i>Doubtful</i>	60	4.0	274.7
Any violent death	338	22.4	1,547.4
Natural death	1,175	77.7	–
Total	1,513	100.0	

Note: The basis for the computation of regicide rates are 21,843 ruler-years.

highest risk group in the United States by a long distance—was around 120 per 100,000 (Blumstein 2000). In *Ciudad Juarez* in Mexico, amongst the most murderous cities in the contemporary world, the figure for homicide victimization among the general population is about 130 per 100,000. Also, these figures are significantly higher than any historical estimates of homicide in Europe's general population, which typically ranged between 20 and 50 per 100,000 in the High Middle Ages and declined to a range of 1 to 10 per 100,000 in the eighteenth century (Eisner 2003).

European kingship before the Industrial Revolution was—it emerges from these data—amongst the most dangerous occupations found anywhere in the world. In the contemporary world, the only group to match such rates are soldiers at war. The *Biostatistics Unit of the University of Cambridge*, for example, defines 'major combat' as a confrontation with a fatality rate of six deaths per 1,000 personnel-years (Bird and Fairweather 2008). For the sample of monarchs, the corresponding rate was 14.51 per 1,000 ruler-years if all types of violent deaths inflicted by enemies (i.e. excluding accidents) are included, and 7.28 per 1,000 ruler-years if only cases of 'certain' murder are considered. By these standards, monarchs in Europe experienced an average threat to their lives that is at least equal to the on-going involvement of soldiers in a contemporary war.

A tentative typology of regicide

Where did this threat stem from? There are several ways to approach this question, none of which can be fully explored in this paper. However, a first step towards an answer can consist in distinguishing four main types of regicide, namely *succession by murder*, *war by murder*, *private grievances and revenge* and *murder by outsiders*. Because this distinction partly relies on notoriously controversial accounts on motives and suspected perpetrators, and because different motives often overlap, I report the number of cases falling into each category as an estimated range rather than as precise numbers.

The first, which comprises the vast majority of regicides, falls under the category of *succession by murder*. This means that the murder is committed by members of the political elite to remove the current monarch from power or by the new ruler to exclude the possibility that a deposed monarch might return to power. In these cases, regicide is a strategic choice in the context of power politics. An impression of the importance of this category can be gained by noting that, in over 40 per cent of all regicide cases, one of the alleged participants in the assassination plot later becomes the monarch. Another significant group of cases—about 10–20 per cent of the total—comprises situations in which the new monarch usurps the throne while the predecessor is still alive, but subsequently organizes the removal of a potential source of opposition. Successions by murder can come in different shapes. Sometimes, they take the form of palace conspiracies such as the case of *Nikephoros II Phokas*, an Emperor of the Byzantine Empire who was killed in his palace in 976 by a group of conspirators who included his second wife and his nephew, General *John Tzimiskes*, who would then become the next emperor. Sometimes, they are part of civil unrest—perhaps stirred up by the opposing nobility—that reflects broader underlying conflict.

If an external power is involved in the killing, the equivalent basic type could be called *war by murder*. Thus, a group of some 20–30 cases entails the murder of the monarch as part of a conflict with outside powers. *Cadwallon ap Ieuaf*, for example, was a little-known

ruler of the kingdom of Gwynedd in North Wales. After just one year of rule, he was killed in 986 by *Maredudd ab Owain* from the Southern rival state Deheubarth as part of an annexation policy (Thornton 2004). Similarly, the Sultan of Granada *Muhammed VI*, having been invited to attend peace talks with the King of Castilia, was murdered treacherously near Seville in 1362 on the orders of *Peter I of Castile* (Harvey 1991). Sometimes, such regicides by external powers were opportunistic measures after the battle had been won and the public display of the killed ruler could serve to seal the victory. *Peter II Delyan*, for example, Bulgarian Tsar and leader of an uprising against Byzantium was captured during a battle in 1041 against the Byzantine emperor *Michael IV* and probably executed in Constantinople. Also, conflicts with external powers lent themselves to treason. Thus, a handful of cases involve military commanders who decided to change sides as they assessed the chances of winning as higher if they killed their warlord. In a few cases, finally, the murder of a monarch could be a cunning assassination to change the course of events against the odds of military strength. In a famous case, *Sancho II of Castile and Leon* was killed by the nobleman *Vellido Dolfos* in 1072 when he laid siege to Zamorra, one of the last towns to hold out against Sancho's campaign to bring Leon under his control.

The third group are some 35–40 cases in which *private grievances and revenge* rather than political ambitions probably were the major trigger. These cases start with an altercation between the monarch and a member of the nobility that involves an initial insult or violent act, which is perceived as a violation of honour that requires redress. From a theoretical perspective, these are instances of private self-help and revenge in contexts in which law is not available (Black 1983; Boehm 1984). For example, dishonourable treatment was the dominating motive in the murder of *Childeric*, a Merovingian king killed in 675 after he had severely insulted a nobleman called *Bodilo* by having him beaten publicly. *Bodilo* reacted by conspiring with a certain *Amabert* and revenging the insult by killing *Childeric* and his wife while the latter were hunting. Also, several monarchs allegedly died because they had raped or seduced wives or daughters of other members of the nobility. *Pope John XII* (955–966), occasionally acclaimed as the most immoral pope of all time, had a reputation for murder, adultery, fornication and sacrilege. It is not clear exactly how he died: the contemporary bishop of Cremona *Liutprand* reports that the devil dealt John a stroke on the temple when he was having sex with his mistress, but more earthly rumours held that he had been slain in bed by the cuckolded husband. The murder of *Albert I of Germany* in 1308, finally, reveals tensions associated with the disregard for inheritance rights. He was assassinated by his nephew *Johann of Swabia* and several other conspirators while riding home from a banquet where he had apparently publicly insulted *Johann*. The main driving factor appeared to be that *Albert I* had promised *Johann's* father *Rudolf* significant territorial compensation for giving up claims to Austria, which he unlawfully refused to hand over to the young and ambitious *Johann*.

Many assassinations of twentieth-century political leaders including, for example, *John F. Kennedy* (1993), *Yizhak Rabin* (1995) or *Olof Palme* (1986) were committed by people far removed from the political power centres, sometimes for ideological motives and sometimes in connection with serious signs of mental instability. In contrast, outsiders account for a surprisingly small proportion of regicides. Over a period of 1,200 years, only 10–15 cases can be attributed to a heterogeneous group of outsiders; and amongst several of them, some link to inner circles of the power elite is not unlikely. The only two

unambiguous cases of ‘common’ murder against ruling kings were the murder of *Yusuf I of Granada*, who was stabbed in 1354 by a maniac whilst he was praying the Mosque of Granada, and *Edmund I of England*, whom the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* reports to have been murdered by an outlawed thief on 26 May 946. Additionally, several monarchs were killed by common soldiers or an angry mob, typically after they had lost power or tried to escape (e.g. *Boris II of Bulgaria* in 971 or the Venetian Doge *Vital II Michele* in 1172). Finally, only two cases fit the pattern of murders by politically radicalized outsiders: the assassinations of *Henry III* (1583) and *Henry IV* (1610) of France, both in connection with the violent conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in France. Henry III was killed by the Dominican Friar *Jacques Clement* in his army lodge in Saint Cloud, while Henry IV was stabbed by the Catholic fanatic *Francois Ravaillac* while stuck in a traffic jam in Paris.

Life expectancy and length of rule

One defining feature of monarchies is that the length of reigns is limited only by death, deposition or abdication. The violent death of a monarch therefore not only cuts life expectancy, but also reduces the time during which a ruler can affect the course of events. As the present dataset comprises data on the length of rule of virtually all included monarchs, and data on the year of birth and death of a significant proportion of rulers, it is possible to derive estimates of the loss in life expectancy and ruler-years that killed monarchs incurred. Understanding these losses is important, because they are associated with wider costs in respect of the opportunities to have offspring and the risk of family members and allies to lose life, property and access to power.

To explore these issues, estimates were derived on the extent to which monarchs who died a violent death differed from their colleagues as regards the *average age at the start of their reign*, the mean *length of rule* and the *age at death*. For each equation, the four types of violent death were dummy coded (1/0) and the category ‘natural death’ was used as the reference category. To derive unbiased estimates, it was important to take into consideration that for all monarchs, the length of rule and the life expectancy increased over the centuries, and that different monarchies differed as regards the age at which monarchs would start their reigns. Therefore, hierarchical linear models (HLM) were conducted with the cause of death as a fixed effect, and time and territorial units as random effects. The effects of time and territorial unit are not of substantive interest, and are therefore not shown in Table 3.

These analyses first suggest that murdered monarchs began their reigns considerably earlier than monarchs who died of a natural death. Monarchs who eventually died of natural causes began their rule, on average, at the age of 31.4, CI₉₅ [29.7, 33.1]. The average age at the start of reign was 4.7 years lower for certain cases of regicide, and 6.5 years for the dubious cases. Why did monarchs who acceded to the throne at a younger age have a higher risk of being murdered? I suggest two possibilities: thus, the pattern may reflect the instability and potential for violent overthrow when monarchs were enthroned during minority and initially controlled by a regent. Alternatively, it might mirror the more general age curve of homicide, which suggests that people at ages 20–35 are at a significantly increased risk of being both perpetrators and victims of lethal violence.

TABLE 3 *Differences in age at start of reign length of rule and age at death, by cause of death, in years*

Cause of death	(1) Age at start of reign		(2) Length of rule		(3) Age at death	
	Mean	CI ₉₅	Mean	CI ₉₅	Mean	CI ₉₅
Natural death (reference category)	31.4	[29.7, 33.1]	17.3	[16.3, 18.3]	53.3	[51.1, 55.4]
Accident	-3.7	[-10.6, 3.1]	+1.2	[-3.9, 6.4]	-3.4	[-11.0, 4.1]
Battle death	-2.1	[-6.2, 2.6]	-5.1**	[-2.1, -7.5]	-9.5**	[-14.3, -4.7]
Murder—certain	-4.7**	[-7.9, -1.5]	-6.1**	[-8.2, -4.1]	-13.9**	[-17.4, -10.4]
Murder—doubtful	-6.5**	[-10.9, -2.1]	-4.1*	[-7.3, -1.0]	-11.3**	[-16.1, -6.5]
N =	1,000		1,509		1,000	

** $p < 0.01$.

Note: Results of mixed effects model with cause of death a fixed effect and time (century) and territorial unit (monarchy) as random effects. Random effects of time and territorial unit are not shown. Each type of violent death was entered as a dummy variable. Note that the estimated differences at the start of reign and of length of rule do not add up to the differences in the age of death. Besides differences in sample size the main explanation is that rulers sometimes had their reigns interrupted or died several years after they had abdicated or been deposed.

Considering the length of rule, the results show that a monarch who died of a natural death could expect to rule, on average, about 17.3 years, CI₉₅ [16.3, 18.3]. Interestingly, accidents do not seem to have had an impact on the length of rule. In contrast, monarchs who were killed in a battle lost about five years of their potential reign, while murdered monarchs lost about six years.

The differences in the age at death are even greater. Monarchs who died a natural death lived to an average age of 53.3 years. This is much higher than the general life expectancy in pre-industrial Europe. However, one needs to bear in mind not only that the elites were generally more protected, but that the sample comprises only people who survived long enough to become rulers. All three types of violent death reduced the overall life expectancy, although the effect for accidents was not significant. Monarchs who died on the battlefield lost an average of 9.5 years, CI₉₅ [-14.3, -4.7]; murdered kings and queens coded as certain cases lost an average of 13.9 years, CI₉₅ [-17.4, -10.4]; and cases of doubtful regicide lost an average of 11.3 years, CI₉₅ [-16.1, -6.5] in comparison to those monarchs who died a natural death.

Finally, one may note that the effects of murder on total length of reign and life expectancy are quite similar for 'certain' and 'dubious' cases of regicide, probably suggesting that a fair proportion of the less certain cases effectively were cases of murder.

Long-term trends in violent deaths

So far, the analyses have collapsed data over a period of 1,200 years. As a next step, I examine change over time with a view to putting two core assumptions of Elias's Theory of the Civilizing Process to a first test, namely that monarchs gradually lost their role as fierce warriors and warlords during the Middle Ages (although they cultivated the image for much longer) and that their lives became increasingly protected as the states became more stable and more towering sources of coercive force. Of course, for any single monarchy, violent deaths are very rare and brought about by a complex interplay of

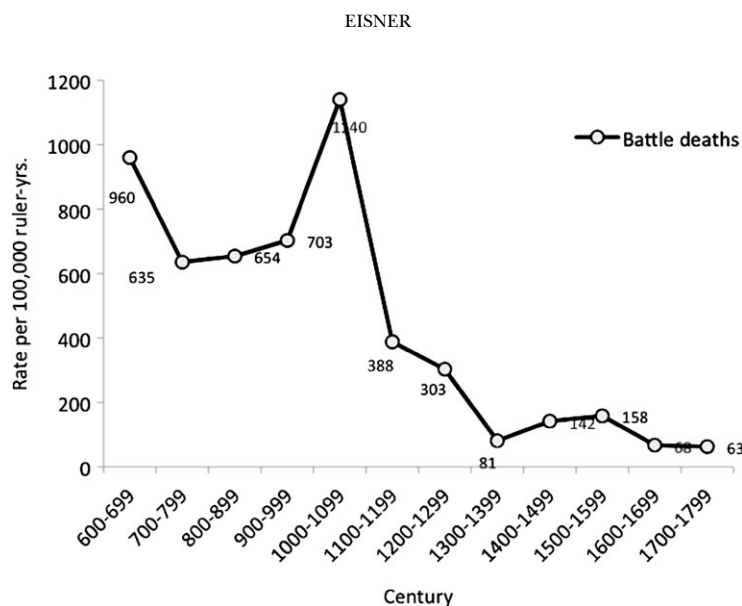


FIG. 1 Rates of battle deaths (per 100,000 ruler-years) per century.

contingent factors. However, the question is whether general patterns can be observed if one capitalizes on the considerable number of monarchs across the whole of Europe in each century.

To compare the risk of violent death over the whole period, rates per 100,000 ruler-years were computed as before. Analyses were limited to battle deaths and murder, as the absolute numbers for all other categories are too small to allow any meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

Figure 1 shows the rate of *battle deaths* by century between AD 600 and 1800. Figure 2 shows the rates of *regicide*, with separate graphs for the trend exclusively based on ‘certain’ cases and the trend that emerges when all cases of presumed murder are included.

Figure 1 suggests that battle deaths remained at a more or less constant level of 600–1,000 deaths per 100,000 ruler-years between the seventh and the tenth centuries. Subsequently, one can observe a significant drop over the following 300 years. As a result, the risk of dying in the stereotypical heroic fight on the battlefield is less than 100 per 100,000 ruler-years in the thirteenth century, and continues to fluctuate around this level until the end of the eighteenth century. After 1600, only two kings in the sample died in battles, both Swedish—*Gustavus Adolphus* (1632) and *Charles XII* (1718)—although, in the latter case, some historians believe that he may have been assassinated by one of his own soldiers.

Figure 2 displays the trend in regicide. Several aspects are worth noting here: first, if we aggregate data on an event as rare as regicide over a large geographical area and a long period of time, a comparatively ‘smooth’ picture emerges. Essentially, it suggests a long downward trend in the frequency of regicide across the European continent over a period of 1,200 years. It starts with about 2,500 murders per 100,000 years in office in the seventh century—a fatality rate that equals about four times the cut-off for contemporary ‘major combat’ as defined by the *Biostatistics Unit of the University of Cambridge* (Bird and Fairweather 2008). It gradually declines to about 200 per 100,000 years in

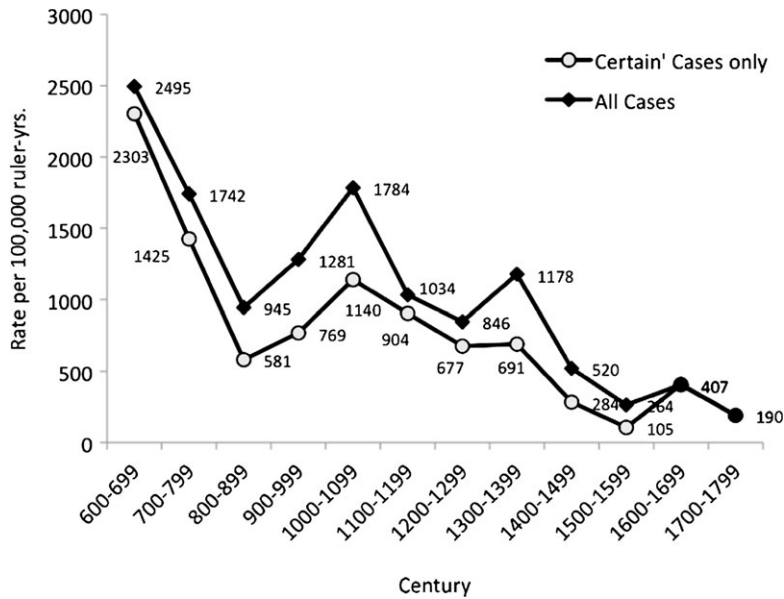


FIG. 2 Rates of regicide (per 100,000 ruler-years) per century, certain cases only and all cases.

office in the eighteenth century. Second, the data show that a significant proportion of the regicide decline occurred between the Early and the Late Middle Ages. This observation is relevant within the broader debate about historical trends in interpersonal violence. It supports the notion of a substantial movement towards more pacified and courteous behaviour amongst the highest political elites long before the first English Eyre court records of around 1200 give the earliest glimpse into the crimes of the masses. Third, one may note that the inclusion or exclusion of the 'dubious' cases has no major impact on the substantive conclusions. This is important in as far as we can be more confident that the wider trend is robust even against quite substantial potential bias in the data.

Regicide epidemics

The macro-level trend described above is the result of aggregating many different monarchies across a vast space into an average. However, this gives no indication of the factors that may be involved in the causation of individual cases of regicide. In the final exploratory analysis of this paper, I present a first step in this direction. I examine the (at least superficially) most straightforward statistical model of any time series, namely that the present value is simply the result of the impact of past values of the same series. In respect to regicide, I therefore examined the extent to which the probability of a regicide depends on whether the predecessor or the pre-predecessor within the same geographic unit was killed. Both 'certain' and 'dubious' cases were included in the analysis, the series for all monarchies were pooled and simple odds ratios were computed between a dichotomized variable for regicide and the respective lagged values.

Results suggest that the murder of the predecessor is associated with an increased risk for the current monarch. The odds ratio is $OR_{(lag1)} = 2.98$ ($df = 1$; $\chi^2 = 41.3$; $p < 0.01$), meaning that if the predecessor was murdered, the risk for the current monarch to suffer the same fate is about three times higher. Furthermore, the risk of being murdered was also higher if the pre-predecessor (in the same list of rulers) was murdered. The odds ratio for this is $OR_{(lag2)} = 2.4$ ($df = 1$; $\chi^2 = 23.6$; $p < 0.01$).

In a final step, I examined whether both preceding values have independent effects, namely whether two generations of predecessors jointly influence the risk of suffering a regicide. A logistic regression was computed with the current murder as the dependent variable (0/1 dummy coding) and the murder of the predecessor and the pre-predecessor as predictors. Both variables have independent and highly significant effects in the multivariate model with effect sizes expressed in odds ratios of $OR_{(lag1)} = 2.6$ ($p < 0.01$) and $OR_{(lag2)} = 2.1$ ($p < 0.01$).

At the most basic level, these findings suggest that within each polity regicide tends to come in 'bundles'. In fact, closer inspection of the ruler lists reveals several 'hot' periods during which violent death was the rule rather than the exception, interrupted by periods of relative calm. Here are some examples: in Scotland, 15 of 17 monarchs recorded between 889 and 1094 died in battle or were victims of regicide; in Norway, all seven kings between 1103 and 1162 were murdered or killed in battle; in Northumbria, 14 of 15 eighth-century kings were killed, expelled, forced into abdication or deposed (Kleinschmidt 1996); in England, five of the nine monarchs who ruled between 1307 and 1485 were murdered or killed in battle (Edward II, Richard II, Henry VI, Richard III and Edward V).

Such concentrations are not limited to the North of Europe. In Granada, seven of the nine Sultans between 1273 and 1362 are assumed to have been killed, while the Second Bulgarian Empire was characterized by an almost unbroken series of regicide from the beginning in 1185 until its fall in 1396, with 13 of its 23 rulers alleged to have been murdered. In the Byzantine Empire, finally, one can distinguish at least three distinct waves of regicide, namely between 641 and 715 (six of eight rulers killed), 945 to 976 (four subsequent emperors murdered) and 1180 to 1205 (six of eight rulers murdered or killed on the battlefield).

Although each of these periods has its historically and regionally specific causes, turns and twists, they generally share important characteristics including deep and long-lasting cleavages amongst the elites, multiple power centres that can back their claims to the throne with military power, extended episodes of internal and external war, and sequences of revenge and counter-revenge that sometimes result in the elimination of considerable fractions of the ruling classes. This was the case, for example, in the Caliphate of Cordoba during the collapse of centralized political structures in the early eleventh century (Kennedy 1996), during the *Civil War Era* in Norway between 1130 and 1240 (Danielsen 1995), the succession conflicts that started with the overthrow of Richard II (1399) and culminated in the *Wars of the Roses* (1455–85) in England (Evans 2007), or the *Time of Troubles* in Russia at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Conclusions

This paper is the first systematic and quantitative study of regicide in Europe between AD 600 and 1800. It has shown that monarchs were, on average, exposed to a very high risk

of being murdered. In fact, the data presented here suggest that their risk was much higher than the homicide risk of any other known major social group in either contemporary or historical Western societies. If they were murdered, the most likely group of perpetrators were other members of the nobility, who acted as competitors for the throne or who sought vengeance for wrongs inflicted on them by their kings. Overwhelmingly, thus, the murder of monarchs was an affair amongst the political elites, whilst the mentally disturbed or ideologically radicalized outsider, who features prominently in twentieth-century political assassinations, was numerically rather unimportant.

Rather than analysing regicide as a historically confined and culturally specific phenomenon, this paper has argued for a generalizing and comparative perspective on the murder of political rulers. In particular, I believe that the wealth of data available on regicide provides a unique window into the motivations and dynamics associated with interpersonal elite violence in human societies. In particular, the initial analyses presented in this paper appear to support the view, derived from evolutionary and rational choice theories, that violence has a strategic and purposive core. In this vein, a first step was made to examine predictors of individual cases of regicide by demonstrating that monarchs were at a significantly increased risk of being murdered, if their predecessor or their pre-predecessor had been killed. I speculated that the underlying process may reflect a universal aggression-retaliation mechanism, which, in the case of monarchs, often involves large segments of the nobility and results in protracted feuds and civil wars. However, further research should make attempts to empirically examine the impact of other predictors that would test a strategic interpretation of regicide. Data on, for example, the number of potentially legitimate claimants (e.g. brothers, uncles or cousins), levels of civil strife during a reign or the loss of major wars (which may underline a ruler's political legitimacy) could serve to put theories on the use of violence for strategic purposes to a test.

Such analyses could be fruitfully combined with further exploration of one of the most conspicuous results of this study, namely the long-term decline of murderous attacks on monarchs over a period of almost 1,200 years. Thus, at least in Western Europe, it had become very uncommon by the fifteenth century to organize power transfer through murder. If it did occur, it required extensive legal justification, such as in the criminal trials of *Charles I* of England (1649) or *Louis XVI* in France (1793). However, more work is needed to understand the reasons for this decline. While Norbert Elias has provided a useful interpretive framework, the theory of the civilizing process was never designed to elucidate the more specific mechanisms associated with violence against monarchs.

Several avenues are worth exploring. At the cultural level, historians have noted important changes in how monarchs and their role were perceived during the High Middle Ages (Kantorowicz 1957). In particular, kings were increasingly vested with an aura of *sacral authority* and divine rights—evidenced, for example, in the unction and coronation ceremonies—while the elective component, present across most Early Medieval monarchies, disappeared. This sacralization of monarchy served many different purposes, but it may well have operated as a symbolic ‘spell’ against potential assassins. Similarly, some of the decline in the High Middle Ages may have been associated with the *code of chivalry* that spread amongst the elites in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Amongst others, this new cultural model was associated with growing inhibitions about

mutilating enemies or murdering captives, and it might well have had an impact on how deposed kings were treated (Gillingham 1999: 119).

Second, it would be important to examine the relationship between the development of succession laws and the decline of regicide. Throughout the Early Middle Ages, succession to the throne was a complex matter that included elective components, meritocratic ideas and inheritance principles that sometimes mixed agnatic (i.e. the throne is passed to the oldest brother of a deceased monarch) and cognatic (the throne is passed to the oldest child, usually the son) principles. Unsurprisingly, such systems invited competing claims with the result of often violent conflicts. However, between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, one can see a trend towards increasingly codified succession rules based on male primogeniture. Sometimes, as in the case of the Norwegian law of succession of 1163, these changes were directly inspired by the devastating effects of long, violent power struggles between large numbers of competing claimants (Jochens 1987).

Third, it would be worth acquiring a better understanding of how much of the decline in the victimization risk was related to changes in the violent and criminal behaviour of the monarchs themselves. There is no doubt that monarchs across Europe were frequently involved in maiming and murdering enemies, pillaging possessions of wealthy subjects and seducing or raping the daughters and wives of noblemen. It would certainly seem plausible to hypothesize—and possible to examine with the available data—that regicide declined to the extent that royal behaviours themselves became more civilized.

Fourth, variation in the frequency of regicide should also be examined from the perspective of effective prevention strategies. For example, it seems plausible to assume that over the centuries, monarchies increasingly developed measures of situational crime prevention and target hardening specifically designed to prevent regicide. The establishment of personal imperial or palace guards often arose from previous conflicts and served to protect the monarch from new attacks. The English *Yeomen of the Guard*, for example, were created in 1485 to protect the new Tudor king *Henry VII* after the Battle of Bosworth. Significantly, Henry had hardly any hereditary claim to the throne and effectively based his rule on the normative power of *de facto* rule.

Finally, of course, it would be important to examine trends in regicide as part of a broader decline in elite violence generally, which I would expect to be related, albeit indirectly, to criminal violence in a conventional sense. Establishing such trends amongst a wider elite population would be another project, but is probably feasible. For the British Isles, for example, there are no insurmountable obstacles to examining all notable people listed in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* to determine who was involved in acts of lethal interpersonal violence over the past 1,400 years.

Appendix

Note: the following list comprises all monarchs coded as murdered in the regicide dataset. A ^D after the year of death denotes monarchs whose death by murder was coded as 'dubious'.

Bulgaria (First Empire) (7): Vinekh (762), Telets (765), Toktu (767) Pagan (768), Boris II (977), Gavril Radomir (1015), Peter II Delyan (1041)^D

Bulgaria (Second Empire) (11): Peter IV (1197), Ivan Asen I (1196), Kaloyan (1207), Kaliman Asen I (1246), Michael Asen II (1256), Kaliman Asen II (1256)^D, Constantine I (1277), Ivaylo (1281), Smilets (1298)^D, Chaka (1300), Ivan Shishman (1395)^D, Ivan Sratsimir (1397)

Byzantine Empire (20): Phocas (610), Constans II (668), Mezezius (669), Justinian II (711), Leontios (705), Tiberios III (705), Anastasios II (718), Constantine VI (797), Leo V the Armenian (820), Michael III the Drunkard (867), Constantine VII (959)^D, Romanos II (963)^D, Nikephoros II Phokas (969), John I Tzimiskes (976)^D, Romanos III Argyros (1034)^D, Romanos IV Diogenes (1072), Alexios II Komnenos (1183), Andronikos I Komnenos (1185), Alexios IV Angelos (1204), Nikolaos Kanabos (1204)

Croatia: Miroslav of Croatia (949), Gojoslav of Croatia (1020), Dmitar Zvonimir (1089)^D

British Isles (Mercia) (4): Paeda of Mercia (656)^D, Aethelbald of Mercia (757), Cynehelm of Mercia (812)^D, Wigstan of Mercia (849)

British Isles (Northumbria) (6): Oswine of Deira (651), Osred I of Northumbria (716)^D, Oswulf of Northumbria (759), Aelfwald I of Northumbria (788), Aethelred I of Northumbria (796), Aethelred II of Northumbria (862)

British Isles (Wessex) (2): Sigebert of Wessex (757), Cynewulf of Wessex (786)

British Isles (High Kings of Ireland) (7): Suibne Menn (628), Conall Cúel (654), Sechnassach (671), Cenn Fáelad mac Bláimaic (675), Fínsnechtae Fledach mac Dúnchada (695), Feidlimid mac Crimthainn (841)^D, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn (1166)

British Isles (Kings of Scotland) (7): Áed (878), Dub (966), Cuilén (971), Amlaíb (977)^D, Kenneth II (995), Lulach (1058), Duncan II (1094), James I (1437)

British Isles (Kings of Gwynedd) (7): Rhodri Mawr ap Merfyn (878)^D, Hywel ab Ieuaf (985), Cadwallon ab Ieuaf (986), Iago ab Idwal ap Meurig (1039), Gruffydd ap Llywelyn (1063), Bleddyn ap Cynfyn (1075), Llywelyn ap Gruffydd (1282)

British Isles (England) (6): Edmund I (946), St Edward the Martyr (978), Edward II (1327)^D, Richard II (1400)^D, Henry VI (1471)^D, Edward V (1483)^D

France—Austrasia (3): Otto (642), Grimoald the Elder (715), Theudoald (708)^D

France—Neustria (4): Ebroin (673), Leudesius (676), Berchar (689), Grimoald the Younger (714)^D

France—Burgundy (2): Protadius (606), Godinus (626)

France (Kingdom of France) (3): John I (1316)^D, Henry III (1575), Henry IV (1610)

Germany (Holy Empire) (3): Philip of Swabia (1209), William of Holland (1256), Albert I of Germany (1308)

Hungary (Kingdom of) (6): Samuel Aba of Hungary (1044), Peter Orseolo of Hungary (1046), Ladislaus II (1163), Stephen IV of Hungary (1165), Ladislaus IV of Hungary (1290)

Bohemia (6): Václav I. Svatý (935), Boleslav III. Ryšavý (Boleslaus III the Red-Haired) (1037)^D, Jaromír (1035), Oldřich (1034)^D, Břetislav II (1100), Svatopluk Olomoucký (1109)

Italy (Lombard Kingdom) (4): Rodoald (653), Godepert (662), Hildebrand (744), Liutpert (702)

Italy (Kingdom of Naples) (2): Charles III of Naples (1386), Joan I of Naples (1382), Ladislaus I the Magnanimous (1414)

Italy (Popes) (12): John VIII (882)^D, Stephen VI (896), Leo V (903)^D, John X (928), Stephen VII (931)^D, John XII (965)^D, Benedict VI (974), John XIV (984)^D, Gregory V (999)^D, Sergius IV (1012)^D, Clement II (1047)^D, Boniface VIII (1303)^D

Italy (Doges of the Republic of Venice) (5): Orso Ipato (742), Obelorio Antoreo (809), Pietro Tradonico (864), Pietro IV Candiano (976), Vitale II Michele (1172)

Italy (Milan) (6): Luchino Visconti (1349)^D, Barnabò Visconti (1385)^D, Matteo II Visconti (1355)^D, Gian Maria Visconti (1412), Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1476), Gian Galeazzo Sforza (1494)^D

Italy (Florence) (3): Giuliano de' Medici (1478), Alessandro de' Medici (1537), Francesco I (1587)^D

Ottoman Empire (2): Osman II (1622), Ibrahim (1648)

Poland (7): Bezprym (1032), Miesko II Lambert (1034)^D, Boleslaw II the Bold (1082)^D, Kazmierz II the Just (1194)^D, Lezek I the White (1227), Henry IV Probus (1290)^D, Wenceslaus III of Bohemia (1306)

Russia (Grand Princes of Kiev) (3): Igor of Kiev (945), Sviatoslav of Kiev (972), Yaropolk I (980)

Russia (Grand Princes of Vladimir-Suzdal) (5): Andrei I Bogolyubsky (1174), Yaroslav II of Vladimir (1246), Mikhail Yaroslavich (1318), Dmitri of Tver (1326), Aleksandr Mikhailovich of Tver (1339)

Russia (Grand Princes of Moscow) (1): Yury of Moscow (1325)

Russia (Nation): Ivan IV of Russia (1584)^D, False Dmitriy I (1606), Feodor II of Russia (1606), False Dmitriy II (1610), Ivan VI of Russia (1764), Peter III of Russia (1762)

Scandinavia (Denmark) (8): Harald I (885)^D, Canute IV of Denmark (1086), Olaf I (1095), Eric II (1137), Sweyn III (1157), Eric IV (1250), Abel (1252), Christopher I (1259)

Scandinavia (Norway) (6): Harald II (976), Magnus II (1069), Harald IV (1136), Sigurd II (1155), Eystein II (1157), Haakon II (1162)

Scandinavia (Sweden) (9): Blot-Sweyn (1087), Inge II the Younger (1125)^D, Ragnvald Knaphövde (1126), Sverker I the Elder (1156), Eric IX the Saint (1160), Charles VII (Karl Sverkersson) (1161), Charles VII (1167), Eric XIV (1577)^D, Gustav III (1792)

Kingdom of Serbia (1): Stefan Dečanski (1331)

Croatia (2): Gojislav of Croatia (1020), Demetrius Zvonimir of Croatia (1089)^D

Iberic Peninsula (Aragon): None

Iberic Peninsula (Asturias & Leon) (4): Fruela I of Asturias (768), Sancho I the Fat (966)^D, Sancho II of Leon and Castile (1072), Peter the Cruel of Castile (1369)

Iberic Peninsula (Navarra) (2): Sancho IV Garcés (1076), Charles IV (1461)

Iberic Peninsula (Portugal) (1): John II (1495)^D

Iberic Peninsula (Spanish Kingdom): None

Iberic Peninsula (Emirate of Granada) (10): Muhammed II al-Faqih (1303), Muhammed III (1310), Ismail I (1325), Muhammed IV (1333), Yusuf I (1354), Ismail II (1360), Muhammed VI (1362), Jusuf II (1392), Yusuf IV (1432), Muhammed XI (1454)

Iberic Peninsula (Califate of Cordoba) (10): al-Mundhir (888), Hisham II (1012), Muhammad II (1009), Sulayman II (1016), Ali ibn Hammud al-Nasir (1018), Abd ar-Rahman IV (1017), Al-Qasim ibn Hammud al-Ma'mu (1023), Abd-ar-Rahman V (1024), Muhammad III (1025), Yahya ibn Ali ibn Hammud al-Mu'tali (1026)

Cases coded as Legally Executed:

Alexios V Doukas (1205), Dafydd ap Gruffydd (1283), Marino Flaiero (1355), Lady Jane Grey (1554), Mary I (1587), Charles I (1649), Louis XVI (1793)

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