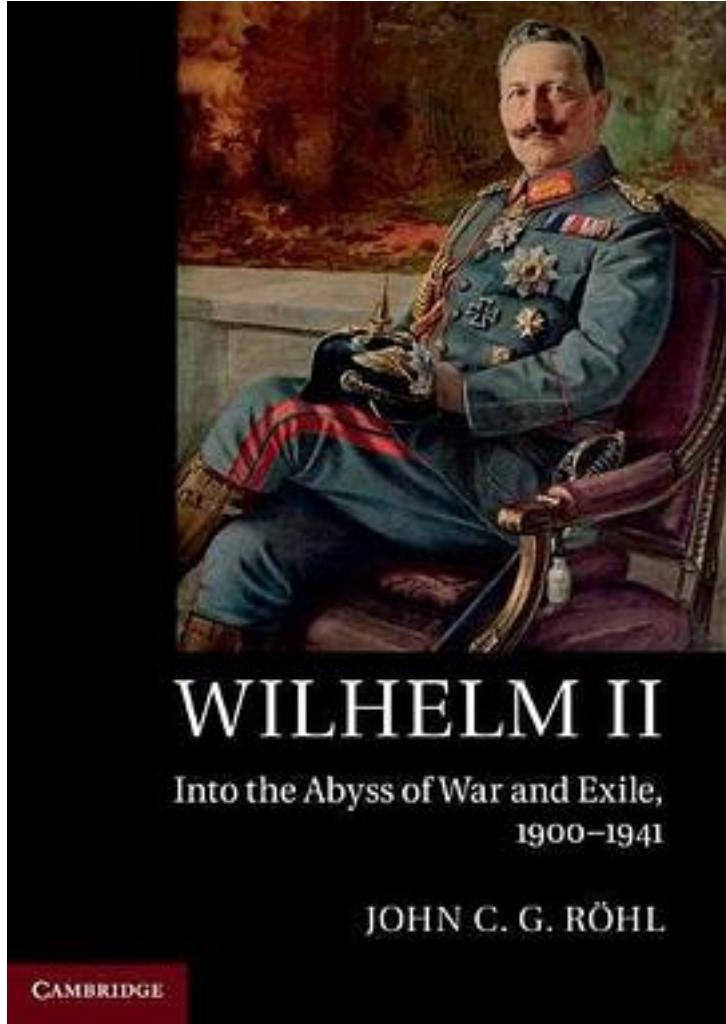


# Wilhelm II



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Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941) ruled Imperial Germany from his accession in 1888 to his

enforced abdication in 1918 at the end of the First World War. This book, based on a wealth of previously unpublished archival material, provides the most detailed account ever written of the first half of his reign. Following on from John Rohl's definitive and highly acclaimed *Young Wilhelm: The Kaiser's Early Life, 1859-1888* (1998), the volume demonstrates the monarch's dynastic arrogance and the wounding abuse he showered on his own people as, step by step, he built up his personal power. His thirst for glory, his overweening nationalism and militarism and his passion for the navy provided the impetus for a breathtaking long-term goal: the transformation of the German Reich into the foremost power in the world. Urgent warnings from all sides, both against the revival of a semi-absolute Personal Monarchy on the threshold to the twentieth century and against the challenge his goal of 'world power' implied for the existing World Powers Great Britain, France and Russia were brushed aside by the impetuous young ruler with his faithful military retinue and blindly devoted court favourites. Soon the predicted consequences - constitutional crisis at home and diplomatic isolation abroad - began to make their alarming appearance.

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