



*The Hanoverian Succession:
Dynastic Politics and Monarchical
Culture*

Andreas Gestrich and
Michael Schaich (eds.)

Farham: Ashgate, 2015

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The Hanoverian Succession: Dynastic Politics and Monarchical Culture. Edited by Andreas Gestrich and Michael Schaich. Farnham: Ashgate. 2015. xv + 288 pp. £75.00.

With its beginnings in Hanover, the shared history of the personal union of Great Britain and Hanover offers common ground in official statements and plans for future political and academic co-operation in a post-Brexit Europe. The present volume, *The Hanoverian Succession*, edited by Andreas Gestrich and Michael Schaich, analyses the influence of that personal union on dynastic politics and monarchical culture, especially regarding Great Britain and the Guelphs' adaptation to British political culture.

The Hanoverian succession and the reigns of the Guelphs as kings of Great Britain from 1714 to 1837 were for a long time lacunae of historical research, only gaining a larger readership in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with publications in English by Brendan Simms, Torsten Rott, and Andrew Thompson, to name a few. The three-hundredth anniversary of the personal union's establishment was then shaped by a large exhibition in Hanover and Celle in 2014, which was supported by public money and resulted in substantial catalogues displaying the history, culture, political and satirical representation, and effects of the personal union. Likewise, Great Britain–Hanover and its history were discussed at several academic conferences some years before the jubilee.

Closely connected conventions in London and Osnabrück resulted in two edited volumes, one in German, the other in English (reviewed here), with chapters by specialists of British–Hanoverian relations. Many contributions to the volumes are the result of decades of research, and therefore should be seen as a synthesis of dozens of publications rather than of new, original research. Other chapters were translated to fit into both volumes and to offer new perspectives for readers in both languages. The focus of the Anglophonic volume is British, but it does not lose sight of the perspectives of the German or continental territories of the Hanoverian kings.

As the subtitle suggests, the volume is mostly concerned with dynastic politics and representation, and the dynasty's efforts to differentiate between, or to adapt to, the different monarchical cultures in the Holy Roman Empire, Hanover, Great Britain, and its (American) colonies. The volume aims to understand the consequences of ruling over diverse and heterogeneous territories (6), a phenomenon identified in many personal unions. Composite monarchies consisted (and consist) of territories with different histories, political cultures, religions, and other traditions, which need to be connected for a composite monarchy to function properly. In this volume, the editors focused on religious affiliations, royal representation, and political discourse.

Like all territories united under one ruler and/or dynasty, events, developments, and discussions in the aforementioned context can only be understood when looking at the entirety of the personal union—a stated aim of the book (5). Regarding the British–Hanoverian personal union, balanced historical research is hindered by sources and historiography favouring the British perspective, due to the size of the British Empire, compared to the Electorate of Brunswick-Lüneburg. Consequently, even though the

editors and authors clearly tried to equally consider both the British and the German sides of things, the book centres on the British. The chapters are proof, however, that dynastic policies within personal unions reflected the various roles of the monarch and were neither unambiguous nor limited to a certain set of activities. For example, concerning religion and the monarch's role in religious activities, the monarch could simultaneously act as Supreme Governor of the (Anglican) Church of England, and as the Landesbischof—supreme governor—of the Lutheran church in Hanover, while also facilitating puritan or Catholic toleration in the American colonies (8–10).

The chapters are structured by four topics. In “Dynastic Legacies,” Ronald G. Asch and Martin Wrede trace the traditions and backgrounds of the Stuarts and Hanoverians within the Empire respectively. Three chapters make up “Representing Protestantism”: Andrew C. Thompson rightly characterises the European Protestant policies of George I and George II as “smart interventions” designed to avoid armed conflict by insisting on legal arguments (106); David Wykes looks at George I's stance towards dissenters, and Jeremy Gregory at the colonial churches. The latter shows that the relations of the Hanoverian monarchs with churches in the North American colonies were “multilateral and polyvalent” (124). This argument of multilateral religious policies connects with a chapter in the section “Image Policies” by Brendan McConville. Looking beyond American Independence, McConville analyses the remarkable memory of the first two Georges as “just rulers” who were remembered with “devotion” in the colonies (172). Overviews of representational strategies are offered in chapters by Tim Blanning and G.M. Ditchfield. Very convincingly, Robert Bucholz argues that the images of George I and George II as fat, stupid, and “every inch not a king”—present to this day in historiography (161) and popular movie blockbusters like *Pirates of the Caribbean* (167)—relates not to the body natural of the kings, but to the contemporary idea of German kings taking advantage of Great Britain.

The last part of the volume is dedicated to “Contested Loyalties,” ranging from Hannah Smith's analysis of the British army and its relation to the Hanoverian succession, to chapters on the Stuart question and Jacobitism by Gabriel Glickman and Edward Corp, concluding with a chapter on the contemporary British reactions during the French Revolution by Amanda Goodrich.

Together, the thirteen chapters present a fitting study of dynastic policies and monarchical culture. Literature is given in the footnotes, though a bibliography for each chapter or the entire book might have been helpful in the long run. A very welcome inclusion is the index of topics, persons, and places. This volume, with its collection of synthesis chapters and new pieces, is a central addition to existing literature on the Hanoverian Succession in Great Britain and the personal union of Great Britain and Hanover.

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