Studies in Early Modern Cultural, Political and Social History

BRITAIN, HANOVER AND THE PROTESTANT INTEREST, 1688-1756

Andrew C. Thompson

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For my parents

Preface and acknowledgements

A first book naturally relies heavily on the help of others and I take great pleasure in recording that now publicly. This work originates in my doctoral dissertation, approved by the university of Cambridge in February 2003. Over the course of researching and writing this book, I have incurred a number of intellectual debts. Yet thanks to a number of equally generous organisations, my bank balance has remained relatively healthy. The bulk of the research was funded by a postgraduate studentship from the Arts and Humanities Research Board. My research trips to Germany were funded by a short-term research scholarship from the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). There I was a visiting scholar at the now sadly defunct British Centre for Historical Research in Germany, based at the Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte in Göttingen. I had learnt of the Centre's existence at a conference sponsored by the Centre, and funded by the Volkswagen Stiftung, Hanover, for graduate students from Germany, France and the UK in September 1999. I am grateful to Joe Canning and Tony Claydon for their help on that occasion, and to the other participants at the conference for their comments on how I might go about this project. Jürgen Schlumbohm chaired the session at which I spoke and offered advice subsequently. Hartmut Lehmann was helpful on that occasion and was a gracious host when I returned to spend a longer period in Göttingen. My research in Germany was greatly helped by the good advice of Hermann Wellenreuther and he also kindly introduced me to Thomas Müller-Bahlke, whose help in the wonderful archives in Halle was invaluable. The staff of the Hauptstaatsarchiv, Hanover fulfilled my frequent requests for large stacks of dusty files with characteristic good humour.

My other major trip abroad was to the delightful Lewis Walpole Library in Farmington, CT. There I was fortunate enough to benefit from being elected to the George B. Cooper fellowship. Maggie Powell and her staff make this library an ideal location for the scholar of eighteenth-century Britain to work. September 2001 was not the best of months to spend in the USA but Holger Hoock, Arnold Hunt, David Lemmings, Chad Luddington and Alison Shell, my 'fellow fellows', ensured that I remembered the trip for good reasons, as well as terrorist outrages.

In Cambridge I have benefited from several sources of income and countless individuals. At various times my research trips to the British Library and Public Record Office have been funded through the munificence of the Newton Trust, the Lightfoot and Members' funds in the Faculty of History, the Sir John Plumb Charitable Trust, and a Munro Studentship from Queens' College. Queens'

also elected me to a research fellowship, which has allowed me to expand and revise the original thesis for publication. In Queens', I am grateful to successive directors of studies, Brendan Bradshaw, Peter Spufford and Richard Rex for their support and encouragement over many years. My other historical colleagues, Carl Watkins, Craig Muldrew, Martin Ruehl and Hannah Dawson, together with other members of the SCR, have helped the process of writing with advice, humour and good fellowship. Elsewhere in Cambridge Chris Clark and Jo Whaley offered advice at the early stages of the project. Mark Goldie encouraged me to 'Europeanise' myself, after my M.Phil. studies, ably supervised by him, and has shown an interest in my development ever since. Friends and fellow researchers, Rhiannon Thompson, Bridget Heal, Torsten Riotte, Guy Rowlands, Hannah Smith and Grant Tapsell, have also offered support along the way. Christopher and Stephen Thompson have been the most understanding and helpful of siblings, as well as sources of historical advice in their own right. Philip Stickler and his colleagues in the Cartographic Unit of the Cambridge University Geography Department helpfully drew the maps.

Outside Cambridge, Graham Gibbs, W.R. Ward and David Wykes have all answered queries patiently and helpfully. Clyve Jones did sterling service in enabling me to look at a London Ph.D. not held by the IHR on an otherwise wet and frustrating day. The German Historical Institute in London allowed me to talk at its postgraduate conference and organised the invaluable course in palaeography which enabled me to read German documents. Fetchers and librarians in the British Library and the Public Record Office helped the process of research, but the work on this book has also reinforced my view that any researcher in Cambridge benefits hugely from the wealth of materials, and the ease with which they can be accessed, in the Cambridge University Library. Travel broadens the mind but it also underscores the value of treasures closer to home. I am also grateful to the Early Modern and Modern British graduate seminars in Cambridge for the opportunity to present versions of chapters one and six.

The most important debts have to be left until last. Tim Blanning has been an inspirational teacher since he converted me to the works of the *Meister* for my third-year special subject. He was a model supervisor throughout and is now a much valued colleague. My examiners, Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms, provided me with valuable insights and advice on the process of turning the dissertation into a book and have been a source of encouragement and support. I am grateful to my editors at Boydell for accepting this work into their series and for comments on earlier drafts. Stephen Taylor, in particular, has been both an incisive reader and a good friend. Peter Sowden has seen the book through the press with consumate professionalism.

My parents have supported me spiritually and financially over many years. This work would have been simply impossible without them. Finally, my wife, Victoria, has ensured that I have been constantly reminded that there is much, much more to life than the 'protestant interest'. Her help with the genealogical

table was a concrete reminder of her broader interest in this project. Needless to say, what follows is entirely my own work and I am responsible for any remaining errors.

Cambridge, July 2005

Abbreviations

BL	London, British Library
CUL	Cambridge, Cambridge University Library
EHR	*English Historical Review*
HHStA	Hanover, Hauptstaatsarchiv
HJ	*Historical Journal*
LWL	Farmington CT, Lewis Walpole Library
PRO	London, Public Record Office
Parliamentary history	*Parliamentary history of England* ed. William Cobbett (36 vols, London, 1806–20)
PSGB	*Political State of Great Britain*

Note on the text

The vast majority of files in the Hanover archives have now been numbered continuously within each class and I have used the modern system of citation throughout. As the *Findbücher* still contain both old and new references, it is still possible to compare old and new style references easily. All continental dates are 'New Style' and British 'Old Style'. The start of the year has been standardised to 1 January in all cases. I have translated all quotations in French and German in original sources into English myself. 'Empire' and 'Imperial' refer to the Holy Roman Empire and its institutions.

Glossary

casus foederis – an event which, under the terms of an alliance, entitles one of the allies to help from the others.

Corpus Catholicorum – the catholics, when gathered together at the Reichstag; not as organised as the protestants in this period.

Corpus Evangelicorum – the protestant confessional group at the Reichstag; met regularly and decisions were subsequently collected and published. Saxony retained the directorate of the Corpus, even after Augustus II's conversion to catholicism in 1697.

Diet – a representative assembly; more specifically the Imperial Diet in Regensburg.

Deutsche Kanzlei – German chancery, the office in St James's used by the monarch's Hanoverian ministers.

Emperor – the Holy Roman Emperor.

Empire – the Holy Roman Empire.

Geheime Räte – 'privy counsellors'.

Greffier – the notary of the States General in the United Provinces, whose position brought with it considerable political influence, particularly over foreign policy.

Hofdekrete – decrees proposed to the Reichstag by the Imperial Chancellor (the elector of Mainz).

Hoheitsrechte – 'prerogatives' of German princes.

ius emigrandi – 'right to emigrate': right of subjects to emigrate to a territory of their own confession under the Westphalian settlement. Whether it was permitted to take children and/or possessions was disputed.

ius eundi in partes – 'right to go into parties': the right which could be invoked by either confessional grouping at the Reichstag in Regensburg to ensure that any matters relating to religious issues were settled by direct negotiation between the two groups, rather than by majority decisions in the various colleges of the Reichstag. The definition of what constituted 'religious issues' was disputed.

ius reformandi – 'right of reformation': the right of the territorial prince to establish his own confession in his territory. How this related to the territorial position established in 1648 in the case of princely conversions was disputed.

Kanzelist – official working in a chancery.

Kirchenrat – 'church council', responsible for administering churches in areas such as the Palatinate.

Kommission – 'commission', such as that granted by the Emperor to Hanover to intervene in Mecklenburg.

Kommissionsdekrete – decrees proposed to the Reichstag by the Emperor, through the Prinzipalkommissar.

Konkommissar – the Prinzipalkommissar's deputy; responsible for most of the day-to-day running of the chancery in Regensburg.

Normaljahr – 'normal year': the year (1624) used as the benchmark for regulating possession of churches in the Peace of Westphalia. It was chosen as a compromise between the highpoints of protestant (1618) and catholic (1630) gains.

Öffentlichkeit – 'public sphere/space'.

Pensionary – chief magistrate of a city in the United Provinces, specifically the (Grand) Pensionary, chief minister of Holland and Zeeland.

Personal union – the union between the British thrones and the Hanoverian electorate from 1714 to 1837.

Prinzipalkommissar – the Emperor's chief representative at the Reichstag. Responsible for introducing Kommissionsdekrete.

Rat – counsellor or adviser.

Reichsarmee – 'Imperial army', formed by contingents from the various states of the Empire.

Reichshofrat – 'Aulic council': established by Maximilian I; based in Vienna; one of the two most important courts of the Empire.

Reichskammergericht – 'Imperial chamber of justice': the other important Imperial court, based in Wetzlar.

Reichskanzlei – 'Imperial chancery' in Vienna. Run by the Imperial vice-chancellor; centre of the 'Imperial' faction.

Ryswick treaty – peace treaty between the Empire and France (1697). Its Fourth Clause allowed those churches which had become catholic during Louis XIV's occupation of the Palatinate to remain so. Protestants claimed that this went against the Westphalian settlement and sought to have the clause abolished.

Sejm – the Polish estates.

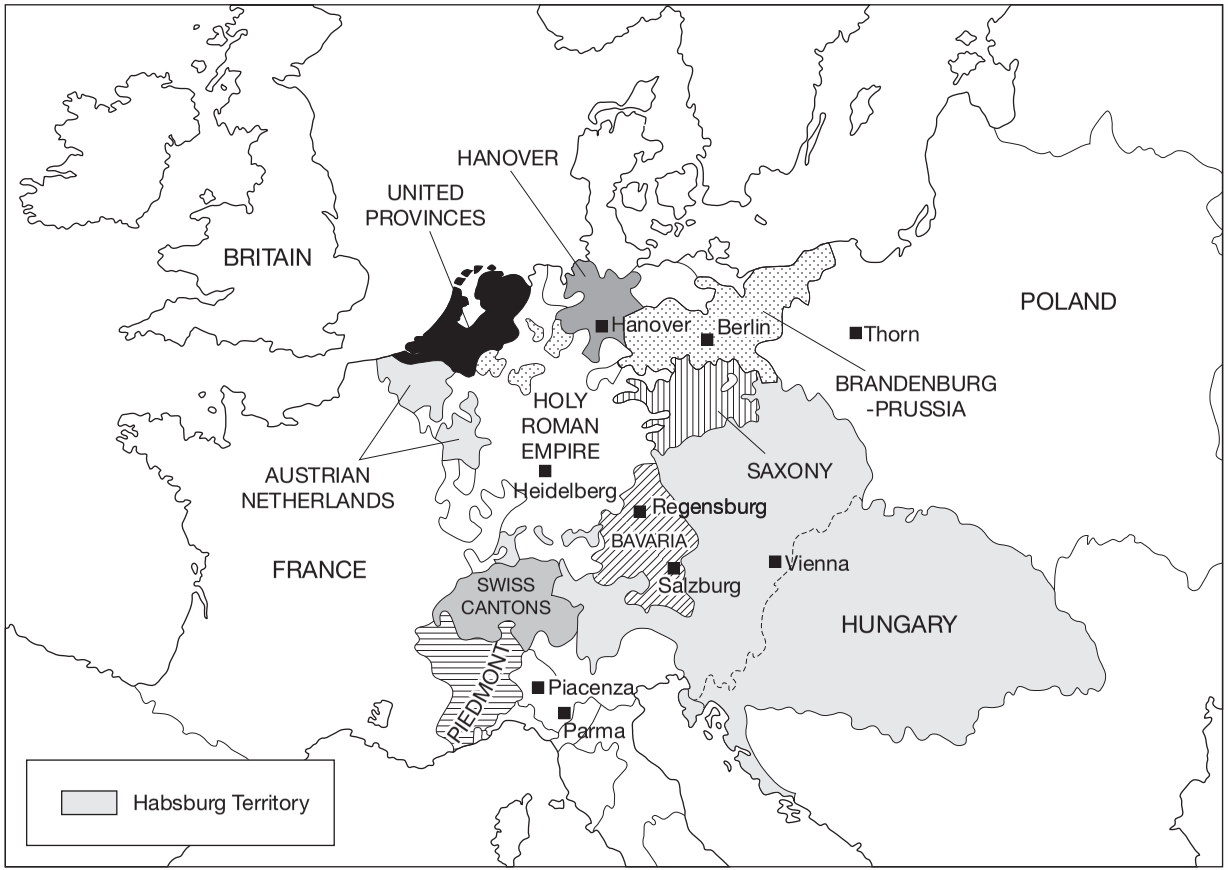
Simultaneum – the use of a church by both confessions. This could involve either the physical separation of parts of the church or a strict timetable regulating use.

Stände – 'estates'.

Vollmacht – 'full powers' to conclude treaties etc., frequently sought by Emperor from Reichstag for peace settlements.

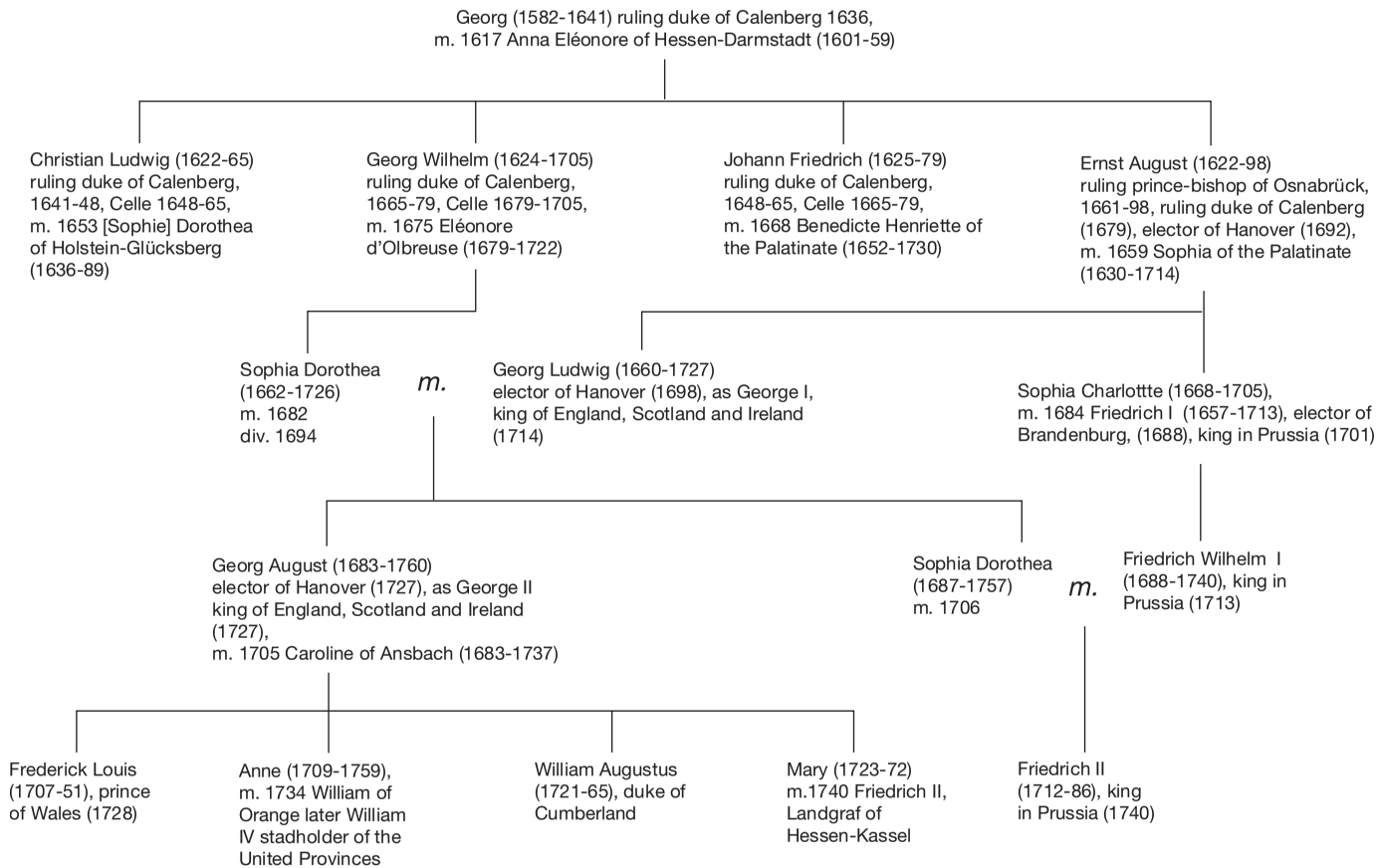
Votum – 'vote': opinion that an ambassador at Regensburg had recorded in the minutes of the Reichstag, in response to a formal proposal.

Wahlkapitulation – 'electoral capitulation': the promises made by the Emperor on his election.



Europe in the early eighteenth century

Hanoverian territorial expansion



Note: This table only shows the principal individuals mentioned in the text and does not include all children.

Introduction

Charles Whitworth had been busy throughout the summer of 1719. As minister plenipotentiary to Berlin, he had been involved in protracted negotiations with Frederick William I, the Prussian monarch. Whitworth had returned to Hanover several times to consult his master, George I, who was visiting his electoral domains. Early in August, Whitworth informed James Craggs, one of the secretaries of state, of the conclusion of a Prussian alliance, remarking that 'the King of Prussia by a little good management and complaisance may be secured in measures more suitable to the state of Religion, and the common tranquillity of Europe'.[1] Six weeks later, writing to undersecretary Delafaye, Whitworth commented 'the good dispositions get ground here every day, and I hope the poor Protestants in Germany will soon feel the effects of our Reunion'.[2]

In September 1719 Abel Boyer, a Huguenot exile and journalist, noted in his periodical *The Political State of Great Britain* that 'the Popish Zealots were busy and industrious in several parts of Germany in raising a Persecution against the Reformed Protestants'.[3] Boyer's account was based on two letters. The first described the fate of the reformed of Frankfurt am Main. The second concerned the reformed of the village of Freimersheim in the bishopric of Speyer.

These two contrasting perspectives not only show that both diplomats and journalists were concerned about the persecution of protestants in the Holy Roman Empire in 1719. They also aptly illustrate the purpose of this study. Such figures as Charles Whitworth and Abel Boyer have rarely been considered together.[4] Indeed, for some, diplomatic history has little to learn from the latter and everything to learn from the former. For historians of periodicals and popular politics, by contrast, the opinions of such an 'establishment' figure as Charles Whitworth have little to do with their non-elite narratives. Yet considering religious concerns, common currency in eighteenth-century debate at both an elite and popular level, indicates how

[1] Whitworth to Craggs, Berlin, 14/8/1719, London, Public Record Office [hereafter PRO], State Papers [hereafter SP] 90/8.
[2] Whitworth to Delafaye, Berlin, 30/9/1719, PRO, SP 90/8.
[3] *Political State of Great Britain*, xviii, Sept. 1719, p. 196.
[4] However Heinz Duchhardt, *Balance of Power und Pentarchie* (Paderborn, 1997), pp. 1–4, has a much broader conception of the materials needed for a history of eighteenth-century international relations.

the accounts of Whitworth and Boyer interact in ways that have been previously ignored.

Much valuable work has appeared on the history of British diplomacy in the eighteenth century. The present work's aim is different. Instead of concentrating on establishing the course of particular negotiations, it asks a broader question: what motivated policy-makers? Some of the most commonly held and widely disseminated assumptions about how both foreign policy and government were conceptualised and conducted in the early eighteenth century need to be reconsidered. Foreign policy was not simply determined either by the desire for profit or territorial gain. It was part of a complex web of ideas that were intimately related to a broader political culture. Religion has reappeared as central to British political culture in the early modern period in recent work. The history of foreign policy needs to be connected back to these debates and the present work is an attempt to do so. By showing the importance of confession for the whig oligarchy's foreign policy, this book offers a radical reappraisal of the nature of whiggery from 1688 to 1756.

The book's chronological scope is determined by political events – the Glorious Revolution marked an important caesura in foreign policy and the start of the Seven Years War ushered in a period of further change. In between, it is argued, foreign policy-makers were driven by the need to defend the protestant interest. This need arose from two sources. First, with the exception of Anne's short reign (1701–1714), British monarchs held territory in continental Europe throughout this period. Britain consequently became more involved in European politics and diplomacy. The language of the protestant interest was an important means of justifying this involvement. Moreover Britain's position as one part of a 'multiple monarchy' meant that a balance had to be struck between the needs and interests of Britain and a continental partner, be it Holland under William III or Hanover under George I and II. Common confession provided a means to bring together seemingly disparate interests and concerns. Secondly, and relatedly, defending the protestant interest had popular resonance. The growth of the public sphere made discussion of foreign policy more common and consequently the presentation of policy more important. Foreign policy lay at the heart of eighteenth-century governmental activity. Demonstrating the centrality of confession for diplomacy is therefore a means of showing confession's broader importance. Both the beginning and end of the period were characterised by war against France (and this continued well beyond 1756). France represented the catholic 'other' but studying the structure of diplomacy in peacetime and efforts to maintain an international system also illustrate the importance of confessional thinking. The book argues for a significant reappraisal of three related areas: the foreign policy of George I and George II and its roots in the legacy of William III and the Glorious Revolution; the role of foreign policy in public discussion in Britain; and the importance of protestantism to Britain and Hanover.

Central to the analysis is the idea of the 'protestant interest', linking confessional ideas and practical politics. It is appropriate to begin by explaining

why the 'protestant interest' has been overlooked previously. Three contexts, all involving methodological and historiographical issues, are relevant. The first is the general position of the discipline of international relations and the study of diplomacy. The second considers the eighteenth century and the third looks specifically at the two monarchs central to the study – George I and II.

The history of international relations has usually adopted a 'realist' view of politics.[5] In contrast to 'idealistic' disciplines, like peace studies, historians and practitioners of diplomacy have concerned themselves with the realities and limits of power. Notions of an 'ethical' or ideologically motivated foreign policy have been treated with a healthy scepticism. The naked ambition of the 'great powers' dominates accounts of international relations. Even if it is allowed that historical actors believed what they said, it is more evident to the historian retrospectively than to the individual actor why they acted as they did.

Behind such views lie two explanations of motivation. The first might be called, for simplicity's sake, the 'Machiavellian' tradition. Here primacy is given to the supremacy and independence of politics. Often described as *raison d'état*, and classically expounded by Friedrich Meinecke, it will be necessary to investigate this further. The second strand of explanation is economic and mercantilist.[6] International relations can be explained as the interaction of trade, competition and war. The explanatory force of trade will also be explored further below.

Neither approach allows space for the causal power of religion. This study places more emphasis on how actors on the diplomatic stage explained and justified their actions to each other and less on imposing a theory of human motivation upon them. It is an attempt to reconstruct the political culture of diplomacy.[7] Political culture, I argue, shaped political action. Ideas about, for example, the nature of catholic regimes coloured the ways in which Britain and Hanover responded to them.

It has been especially difficult to take belief seriously in the eighteenth century. The century has been portrayed as one of 'enlightenment', when prejudice and superstition, particularly of a religious variety, disappeared in the glaring light of rationality. Analogously Ragnhild Hatton argued that the early eighteenth century was a non-ideological period of history when a practical approach to international relations, through the vehicle of collective

[5] This is often linked to an emphasis on the 'primacy of foreign policy'. The theoretical basis of the 'primacy of foreign policy' approach is cogently elucidated in Brendan Simms, *The struggle for mastery in Germany* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 1–7.

[6] Cicero's comment in the *Orationes Philippicae* that 'the sinews of war are infinite money', the first quotation on the frontispiece of John Brewer's *The sinews of power* (London, 1989), deftly encapsulates this view.

[7] Classically defined by Lynn Hunt (*Politics, culture, and class in the French revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1984), p. 10) as 'the values, expectations and implicit rules that expressed and shaped collective intentions and actions'.

security, first emerged.[8] The willingness of monarchs, such as George I, to enter agreements based on equivalent exchange of territory is evidence of this practicality.[9]

The end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 is often portrayed as marking the birth of 'modern' international relations and the end of wars of religion.[10] Thus, in a recent account of Huguenot exiles' propagandistic efforts during the War of the Spanish succession, the author argues that the Huguenots failed to realise how unimportant their concerns were.[11] They had not appreciated that the legitimacy of confessional intervention in the newly rationalised and modernised system of state sovereignty had disappeared. Yet the book's final sentence acknowledges that this 'historical watershed was largely imperceptible'.[12] Earlier generations of historians were also quick to condemn those poor unfortunates who failed to realise that Europe's future lay in the sovereignty of the nation-state.[13] More particularly, it is often argued that Britain was the first European state to develop such modern politics, ahead of its absolutist continental neighbours.[14] Ironically, the whiggish emphasis on progress has distorted accounts of the period when the whig ascendancy was first established.

There are particular problems in studying religious ideas in the reigns of George I and II. The Hanoverian monarchs have received an indifferent press amongst British historians, although this is slowly changing.[15] Many have emphasised the personal morality and piety of George III.[16] George III's

[8] Ragnhild M. Hatton, *War and peace, 1680–1720* (London, 1969), pp. 5–11 and pp. 18–23.

[9] Hatton, *George I* (London, 1978), p. 81, 233, 303. See also Paul W. Schroeder, *The transformation of European politics* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 1–19. Hatton's interest in collective security, in the light of her experiences of the turmoils of the twentieth century is highlighted in Andrew Lossky, 'Ragnhild Marie Hatton: a personal appreciation', in Robert Oresko, G.C. Gibbs, and H.M. Scott, eds, *Royal and republican sovereignty in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 642–3.

[10] This is the view frequently found in textbooks. It finds support in Derek McKay and H.M. Scott, *The rise of the great powers* (London, 1983), p. 3.

[11] Laurence Huey Boles jr, *The Huguenots, the protestant interest, and the War of the Spanish succession, 1702–1714* (New York, 1997), p. 209.

[12] Ibid., p. 256.

[13] See, for example, C. Grant Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians* (London, 1911), pp. 1–14.

[14] Thus Gottfried Niedhart, *Handel und Krieg in der britischen Weltpolitik, 1738–1763* (Munich, 1979), p. 47. Whiggish histories, such as G.M. Trevelyan's *History of England* (London, 1926), emphasised the superiority of English constitutional development.

[15] See R. Hatton, 'New light on George I of Great Britain', in Stephen B. Baxter, ed., *England's rise to greatness, 1660–1763* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 213–55 and J.B. Owen, 'George II reconsidered', in A. Whiteman, J.S. Bromley, and P.G.M. Dickson, eds, *Statesmen, scholars, and merchants* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 113–34. Jeremy Black, *The Hanoverians* (London, 2004) is a recent reassessment of the dynasty as a whole.

[16] Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians*, p. 217 is typical.

morality contrasts sharply with that of his grandfather and great-grandfather. While George III remained faithful to his wife, the gifts showered upon their mistresses by George I and II were notorious. Hence, it is often believed that neither George I nor George II was personally particularly religious.[17] By limiting 'religion' to personal morality, it has been assumed that, even if a 'religious foreign policy' could exist, this period would not be the place to search for it. However, A.W. Ward, in his Ford Lectures,[18] noted, very much in passing, that 'as a rallying cry "the Protestant cause" had a considerable vitality left in it even after the Peace of Utrecht [1713]'. It was a type of 'final appeal' even for such cosmopolitan diplomats as Carteret.[19]

This book explains why the protestant interest was so important for both foreign and domestic audiences and explains its strength and longevity. The frequency with which references to religious matters appear in diplomatic dispatches is assumed to reflect contemporary interest and concern. However, it is important not to overemphasise the 'sins of commission' of other historians of the personal union and eighteenth-century diplomacy who had different concerns. Thus, before exploring the protestant interest further, it is necessary to consider the current state of the historiography of the personal union itself.

The personal union

The history of the personal union has received relatively little attention in either British or German historiography. There is still no general survey of the importance of the Hanoverian connection.[20] For many British historians, the future of these islands lay in the expanding colonies and the first British empire and not in commitments to a 'small' German electorate.[21] The existence of the personal union went largely unremarked in both *groß* or *kleindeutsch* accounts, with their emphasis on the importance of Austria and Prussia respectively for German historical development. Furthermore, for the

[17] Although Black describes George I and George II (more accurately) as 'strong Lutherans' (Black, *The Hanoverians*, p. 52).

[18] A.W. Ward, *Great Britain and Hanover* (Oxford, 1899). Although composed without consulting the Hanoverian archives, these lectures remain valuable.

[19] Ibid., p. 42, fn. 3.

[20] This gap should be partially filled by Brendan Simms and Torsten Riotte, eds, *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History, 1714–1837* (Cambridge, forthcoming). Unless otherwise indicated, references to the 'personal union' should be taken to refer to the union between the British crowns and the Hanoverian electorate from 1714 to 1837.

[21] Contrast Jeremy Black, *Parliament and foreign policy in the eighteenth century* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 86: 'For George [II], Carteret and, to a far lesser extent, Newcastle, the Empire meant the Holy Roman Empire and the Imperial Election to its headship, but, in other circles, the empire was British and spanned the Atlantic, while imperial election was a providential call of Britain to greatness.'

nationalist German historians of the nineteenth century, the domination of German territory by a 'foreign' royal house until 1837 was highly anachronistic. The decline of nationally orientated German history and the rise of regional studies – the *Landesgeschichte* approach – has also left little space for exploration of the links between Germany and other countries.

Existing work has had to cope with two languages and disparate sources.[22] The description of the union as 'personal' indicates its salient characteristics. There was no merging of governmental and political structures.[23] The king of England was simultaneously elector, and after 1815 king, of Hanover. The government of Hanover was regulated, in the ruler's absence, by a Regierungsreglement.[24] This Reglement remained essentially unchanged until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The king was able to use the Deutsche Kanzlei (German Chancery) in St James's to deal with his German affairs.

Work has been done on the 'informal' relationships between Britain and Hanover, such as the promotion of new agricultural ideas, the economic and trade relations and artistic connections, as embodied by Kapellmeister George Frederick Handel.[25] Most work, however, has concentrated on diplomacy because of the important role still played by the monarch. Although royal freedom of action was partially constrained, most notably by the necessity of securing supply for the provision of troops in the House of Commons, foreign policy remained within the sovereign's prerogatives.

[22] Ward, *Great Britain and Hanover*, T.C.W. Blanning, '"That horrid electorate" or "ma patrie germanique"? George III, Hanover, and the *Fürstenbund* of 1785', *HJ*, 20 (1977), pp. 311–44, Adolf M. Birke and Kurt Kluxen, eds, *England und Hannover* (Munich, 1986), Black, *British foreign policy in the age of Walpole* (Edinburgh, 1985), Heide N. Rohloff, ed., *Großbritannien und Hannover: Die Zeit der Personalunion, 1714–1837* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), Uriel Dann, *Hanover and Great Britain, 1740–1760* (Leicester, 1991), Uta Richter-Uhlig, *Hof und Politik unter den Bedingungen der Personalunion zwischen Hannover und England* (Hanover, 1992). A renewed interest in the links between Britain and Hanover can be seen in the following examples of recently, or soon to be, published work: Torsten Riotte, *Hannover in der britischen Politik (1792–1815): Dynastische Verbindung als Element außenpolitischer Entscheidungsfindung* (Münster, 2004), Nicholas B. Harding, *Europeanizing the Empire: Britain and Hanover, 1700–1837* (forthcoming) and Brendan Simms, *At the heart of Europe: Britain–Hanover and the world, 1714–1783* (forthcoming).

[23] See, however, the cautions against overemphasis on a purely personal union in Nicholas B. Harding, 'North African piracy, the Hanoverian carrying trade, and the British state, 1728–1828', *HJ*, 43 (2000), pp. 25–47. Harding's preferred term is 'composite state'.

[24] For governmental structure, see Dann, *Hanover and Great Britain*, pp. 1–6.

[25] See Ulrike Begemann, 'Die wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen der Personalunion für Hannover', in Rohloff, ed., *Großbritannien und Hannover*, pp. 367–89, U. Gerold, 'G.L.F. Laves: der "hannoversche Klassizismus" und seine Anregungen aus der englischen Repräsentations- und Industriearchitektur', in ibid., pp. 553–70 and Ruth Smith, *Handel's oratorios and eighteenth-century thought* (Cambridge, 1995).

Diplomatic cost/benefit analyses of the personal union exhibit a distinct historiographical divergence along national lines. For Reinhard Oberschelp, 1714 marked the end of Hanoverian independence and, throughout the eighteenth century, British interests were placed above those of Hanover. The Prussian occupation of Hanover in 1803 was the logical outcome of previous neglect. The king/elector could pursue an 'absolutist' foreign policy, at odds with the interests of his subjects.[26] Jeremy Black, on the other hand, is convinced that British ministers had to adapt British interests to suit the prejudices of their German sovereign. Tory propagandists' complaints that British interests were being sacrificed to German projects were therefore justified.[27] Brendan Simms suggests that Hanover was both an objective and subjective asset to Britain in the eighteenth century, but his is very much a lone voice.[28] The close links between debate about Hanover in eighteenth-century Britain and partisan politics are often overlooked. Attitudes towards European protestantism also differed within tory and whig argument.

Debate has also focused on questions of identity. While George III is usually regarded as being 'British' or 'English', his two immediate predecessors are usually viewed as 'German'.[29] Far more space is devoted to the reign of the 'more' British king in older accounts of the period.[30] Given that George III never visited his electorate (again, in contrast to his predecessors, who were frequent visitors to their German lands), it is easy to see how this impression might have arisen. Yet its validity can be questioned. George III's desire to educate his sons in Göttingen suggests an interest in his German roots. Furthermore, Tim Blanning has demonstrated that George III was deeply interested in the fate of Hanover.[31] However, the neglect of George I and II in favour of their more British descendant is also related to the balance of surviving evidence. While George III's correspondence runs to several volumes in the printed edition, only a handful of letters survive from his predecessors.[32] Recent work indicates that national identity was complex in eighteenth-

[26] Reinhard Oberschelp, *Politische Geschichte Niedersachsens, 1714–1803* (Hildesheim, 1983), pp. 1–7, 123–30.

[27] Black, *British foreign policy in the age of Walpole*, p. 29.

[28] Brendan Simms, 'Hanover in British policy, 1714–1783: interests and aims of the protagonists', in Rex Rexheuser, ed., *Die Personalunionen von Sachsen-Polen und Hannover-England: ein Vergleich* (Wiesbaden, 2005), pp. 311–34.

[29] Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians*, p. 217, and, more recently, Linda Colley, *Britons* (New Haven and London, 1992), p. 229.

[30] W.E.H. Lecky, *History of England in the eighteenth century* (New edn, 5 vols, London, 1901), Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians* or J.H. Plumb, *The first four Georges* (Harmondsworth, 1956).

[31] Blanning, 'That horrid electorate', passim.

[32] See Ragnhild M. Hatton, 'In search of an elusive ruler: source material for a biography of George I as elector and king', in F. Engel-Janosi, G. Klingenstein, and H. Lutz, eds, *Fürst, Bürger, Mensch* (Vienna, 1975), pp. 11–41.

century Britain.[33] This area is explored at greater length in subsequent chapters but the debate has rendered the binary opposition of the early Hanoverians as 'German' and the later as 'British' as problematic.

It was particularly important for whig historians to emphasise the indifference of George I and II to British politics and concerns. Without this, it becomes far more difficult to tell a tale of monarchical neglect leading to the growth of cabinet government and ministerial responsibility. In this story, Sir Robert Walpole, our 'first prime minister', has a particularly heroic role. Whig historians believed that in the field of foreign affairs, Walpole was the pacific foil to the continentalist ambitions of his German masters.[34]

Walpole's pacific convictions were not as important in the 1730s as was once thought.[35] Amongst the Walpole papers is the draft, dated *c*.1734–5, entitled 'The interest of Great Britain's going to war at the present time considered'. In it, the anonymous author pointed to the frail nature of the balance of power and how the death of one prince could upset it. He argued that the only reason for Britain entering an alliance was 'for the Defence and Protection of some of the Protestant States, that is, for the mutual Defence and Support of the Protestant Cause'. Hence, the conflict between the Habsburgs and the French over the Polish succession was to be welcomed, as it prevented the catholic powers uniting against the protestants. Neutrality made strategic sense.[36] Preserving the protestant interest was clearly important. Prior to considering this concept in greater detail, it is necessary to return briefly to trade.

For D.B. Horn, trade was the predominant force behind eighteenth-century British foreign policy, related to the drive for markets and empire. However, Horn acknowledged that some sense of a British duty 'to defend the Protestant interest in Europe' also survived.[37] Horn is far from unique in identifying the growth of the first British empire as the most salient factor in eighteenth-century British diplomacy, although his field of vision was broader than many.[38] A crude economic determinism is evident even in non-Marxisant accounts.

[33] Contrast Colley, *Britons* with the responses in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, eds, *Protestantism and national identity* (Cambridge, 1998) and J.C.D. Clark, 'Protestantism, nationalism, and national identity, 1660–1832', *HJ*, 43 (2000), pp. 249–76. See also now Krishan Kumar, *The making of English identity* (Cambridge, 2003), ch. 6.

[34] Lecky, *History of England*, i, p. 405. Trevelyan, *History of England*, p. 535 has a similar emphasis.

[35] For a critique of Walpole's centrality to British neutrality in the War of the Polish succession, see ch. 6.

[36] Cambridge, Cambridge University Library (hereafter CUL), Cholmondley Houghton Manuscripts (hereafter Ch (H)), 73/30.

[37] D.B. Horn, *The British diplomatic service, 1689–1789* (Oxford, 1961), p. 14. For a more recent discussion of the British diplomatic service, see Jeremy Black, *British diplomats and diplomacy, 1688–1800* (Exeter, 2001).

[38] Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians*, p. 2 and Geoffrey Holmes and Daniel Szechi, *The age of oligarchy* (London, 1993), p. 63.

It might seem that a foreign policy orientated towards imperial goals must necessarily ignore Europe. The 'imperialist' or 'continentalist' options are often portrayed as mutually exclusive.[39] Just as Britain's political destiny could only be fulfilled by turning away from the 'crazy' continental fantasies of 'foreign' monarchs, so economic wealth lay in a transoceanic empire, not Europe. Euro-scepticism is not new. It was characteristic of eighteenth-century advocates of a 'blue water' foreign policy.

Protests from the South Sea Company or individual mariners about supposed infringements of their rights, be it in the West Indies or the Baltic, surface in British archives. Instructions from the secretaries of state to diplomats frequently urged them to pursue these matters and seek recompense for the sailors. Yet, it remains unclear how far 'trade' was the telos of British policy. In a famous defence of ministerial policy published in 1727, Benjamin Hoadly argued trade was not an end in itself but the means by which Britain had the resources to defend the balance of power. The prosperity provided by trade enabled Britain to preserve protestantism.[40] Not all eighteenth-century policy-makers thought in such terms. There were particular reasons why Hoadly used such language in 1727, as chapter four shows. However, it is necessary to offer a 'joined-up' analysis of what drove diplomacy. Contemporary whigs frequently referred to the need to defend 'liberty, property and religion'. Histories of whiggery concentrate almost exclusively on the first two elements of this trinity.[41] The history of the defence of the protestant interest indicates the shortcomings of such accounts.

The protestant interest

Despite references to the 'protestant interest' mentioned already, some historians insinuate the protestant interest was mere rhetoric. One argument often used to dismiss a 'protestant foreign policy' highlights the fact that, at various points in the eighteenth century, Britain was in alliance with catholic powers.[42] Jeremy Black extends this argument when he claims that there was no 'natural' reason why the Anglo-French alliance of 1716 to 1731 should not have continued.[43] As Black assumes that all historical relations are contingent,

[39] Such as in the suggestively titled Jeremy Black, *America or Europe? British foreign policy, 1739–63* (London, 1998). Wolfgang Michael thought there was an inherent tension between British global ambitions and Hanover's essentially local interests. See Michael, *Englische Geschichte im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (5 vols, Hamburg and Leipzig, 1896–1955), i, p. 709 or idem, *England under George I* (2 vols, London, 1936–9), i, p. 284.

[40] Benjamin Hoadly, *An enquiry into the reasons of the conduct of Great Britain, with relation to the present state of Affairs in Europe* (London, 1727), pp. 78–80.

[41] See (the suggestively titled) H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and property* (London, 1977).

[42] Clark, 'Protestantism, nationalism, and national identity', p. 261.

[43] Jeremy Black, *Natural and necessary enemies: Anglo-French relations in the eighteenth century*

there are no good grounds for arguing that Anglo-French animosity was 'unnatural'. Indeed, the argument could be inverted. It was the minority caused by Louis XV's accession at the age of 5 in 1715 which led to a contingent alliance between the two powers.

Dynastic marriages were frequently used to cement diplomatic alliances in this period. In 1725 the French proposed a marriage between Louis XV and one of the daughters of the prince of Wales (the future George II). George I was unenthusiastic, as Newcastle reported to Horace Walpole, a British diplomat in Paris. The king 'who upon all occasions prefers the Religion and Interests of his people to all other Considerations' had told Broglie, the French ambassador, that 'the Objection of Religion was such, that he could by no means entertain any Thought' of agreeing to the marriage.[44]

The event made a considerable impression on Newcastle. A week later he noted 'it is wonderful, that any person who knows the King's Goodness for his people and zeal for the Protestant Religion and Interest, should ever have imagined it possible for His Majesty to have been in any other way of thinking'.[45] The proposal attracted considerable comment in European courts. The Prussians had heard rumours that an engagement announcement was imminent. In response to an enquiry by Du Bourgay, the British extraordinary envoy in Berlin, as to whether there was any truth in the rumours, Townshend responded that George was surprised that anyone could believe that he would 'sacrifice his Religion for any worldly Interest or procure the advancement of his family at the expense of his conscience'.[46]

Did alliances with non-protestant powers reflect indifference to confessional matters or were they temporary expedients to secure desired aims? Stating that a balance of power was the aim of British policy is insufficient. It is necessary to ask what the European balance of power looked like in practice and how it was thought to function. It is consequently impossible to divorce a narrow study of the mechanics of diplomacy from a broader consideration of Britain's relationship to Europe and attitudes towards national and confessional identity.

The 'protestant interest' was naturally opposed to the 'popish interest'. The use of language is important because, as Reed Browning points out, it was possible for Newcastle to believe in the 1750s that Austria had done more to protect the protestant succession than Prussia.[47] At one level, this might indicate indifference to the issue of whether a power was protestant or not.

(Athens, GA, 1986). But contrast H.M. Scott, 'The second "Hundred Years War", 1689–1815', *HJ*, 35 (1992), pp. 446–7.

[44] Newcastle to H. Walpole, Whitehall, 1/3/1725, British Library (hereafter BL), Additional Manuscripts (hereafter Add. MSS) 32742, fol. 308r.

[45] Newcastle to H. Walpole, Whitehall, 11/3/1725, ibid., fol. 429r.

[46] Townshend to Du Bourgay, 30/3/1725, Whitehall, PRO, SP 90/18.

[47] Reed Browning, *The duke of Newcastle* (New Haven and London, 1975), p. 161. For how Newcastle came to this view, see ch. 7.

However, exploring how Newcastle might have understood 'protestant' and 'popish' powers suggests a different conclusion.

'Popish' powers were not necessarily catholic. Indeed, Steve Pincus has shown how flexibly this language could be applied in his study of Anglo-Dutch relations in the mid-seventeenth century. He draws attention to how the Orangist Dutch were described as 'popish' by their Cromwellian opponents because of their desire to restore the Stuarts to the British thrones.[48] Pincus concludes that by the Restoration, the idea of an international protestant community had been subsumed within the national interest (which seems to mean a national identity).[49] Pincus shows that 'popish' states had come to embody a certain set of political characteristics, such as their unwillingness to countenance freedom of conscience and arbitrary forms of government. That said, in practice most powers viewed by the British as 'popish' were ruled by catholics.

Pincus correctly identifies a tension between 'national' and 'international' versions of protestantism. Too little attention has been paid to issues of diversity.[50] If it is acknowledged that both protestantism and popery were diverse, some have assumed that the antithesis between the two is an unhelpful analytical tool.[51] This is, however, to throw the baby out with the bath water. The frequency with which the language of protestant interest was invoked indicates that explanation is still necessary. Claiming that such language is 'meaningless' avoids the issue. Debate about the 'foreignness' of the Hanoverians indicates how pertinent the issue of international protestant solidarity was. In 1721 Charles Owen, a dissenting minister, claimed that all monarchs were 'foreign'. Yet English liberties had been secured by foreign and protestant monarchs such as William III and George I and not by the Stuarts.[52]

The basic antipathy of protestant and popish interest still permitted diversity. The two views were at either end of a spectrum of opinion; they were not binary opposites. There were two main versions of the protestant interest. For members of the established church, the protestant interest was virtually synonymous with Anglicanism. Anglicans still sometimes regarded dissenters as crypto-catholics. For dissenters, the protestant interest entailed protestant unity and broadly whig principles. Some low churchmen held similar views. The state of Irish protestantism ensured that there was a 'domestic' as well

[48] Steven C.A. Pincus, *Protestantism and patriotism: ideologies of the making of English foreign policy, 1650–1668* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 100.
[49] Ibid., p. 447.
[50] Clark, 'Protestantism, nationalism, and national identity', p. 262 reproves Colley on these grounds.
[51] See Jeremy Black, 'Confessional state or elect nation? Religion and identity in eighteenth-century England', in Claydon and McBride, eds, *Protestantism and national identity*, pp. 62–4.
[52] Charles Owen, *The Danger of the Church and Kingdom from Foreigners consider'd; in several articles of the highest importance* (London, 1721).

as a 'foreign' dimension to the discussion. Dissenters and whigs were more favourably predisposed towards European protestants. Yet even high churchmen were willing to contemplate closer ties with European protestants, provided an acceptable minimum of Anglican standards was adopted.[53] Attitudes changed over time. A sense of protestant solidarity was more common in the period of the wars against Louis XIV. By the 1740s a strong strand of English exceptionalism and superiority had appeared – the modern English, like the ancient Hebrews, enjoyed a special relationship with the Almighty.

What did monarchs themselves, crucial to putting ideas of protestant interest into practice, think about such ideas? Were either George I or George II 'confessional' monarchs? Confession was crucially important for British monarchs.[54] The Act of Settlement (1701) had made it a legal requirement that the monarch must be protestant and married to a protestant. Catholics were excluded from the succession. Whig historians emphasised how the act indicated the power of parliament. The Lords and Commons of England had determined the succession, rather than God through Stuart divine right.[55] Yet the act was also the third occasion when the English political nation had placed religion over country of birth when it came to choosing monarchs, following 1603 and 1688. The act provided that the monarch should be a communicant member of the Church of England and George I's Lutheranism sparked some public discussion in 1714.[56]

While George's religious credentials were contested in various ways, many sought his support as a defender of the protestant faith. George used the title 'defender of the faith'.[57] German officials added 'Schützer des Glaubens' to his other titles in correspondence. In 1714 George's Hanoverian advisers were convinced that the accession to the British crown would enable George to

[53] See R. Barry Leavis, 'The failure of the Anglo-Prussian ecumenical effort of 1710–1714', *Church History*, 47 (1978), pp. 381–99. High churchmen viewed acceptance of the Book of Common Prayer as the basis for unity.

[54] See also Hannah E. Smith, 'The idea of a protestant monarchy in Britain, 1714–1760', *Past and Present*, 185 (2004), pp. 91–118.

[55] Trevelyan associated the act with modern ideas: *History of England*, p. 502.

[56] See Thomas Brett, *A review of Lutheran Principles* (London, 1714), *A Letter to the author of the History of the Lutheran Church, from a Country School-Boy* (n.p., n.d. [1714]), *The Lutheran Liturgy: now us'd by the Protestants in the Reformed Churches of Germany, prov'd to agree with the Rites and Ceremonies in the several Offices of the Book of Common Prayer* (2nd edn, London, 1715), *Two Letters to the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Townshend: shewing the seditious Tendency of several late pamphlets; more particularly of, A Review of the Lutheran Principles, by Thomas Brett; and of, A Letter to the Author of the Lutheran Church, from a Country School-Boy. By a Presbyter of the Church of England* (London, 1714). The publication of Balthasar Mentzer's *A vindication of the Lutheran Religion, from the charge of popery* (London, 1720) suggests debate continued beyond 1714. Mentzer was a Hanoverian cleric.

[57] The title was originally granted by the pope to Henry VIII in 1521 for his attack on Lutheran heresy. The faith to be defended was no longer catholicism but protestantism.