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Paulina Kewes and Andrew McRae (eds). **Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations**. Pp. xv + 371. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Cloth, £60.

Succession literature, this collection argues, is not so much a genre but a category of early modern writing. Beyond what we might consider as the more obvious manifestations, such as panegyric verse or accession day sermons, succession literature stretched across forms and modes, e.g. poetry, drama, prose, sermons, speeches, pageants, pamphlets. It also proliferated across media, particularly print, and material culture such as medals, engravings, coins, or the decking out of Westminster Abbey. Succession literature also deals with a great deal more than advice to the monarch. It addressed virtually every aspect of the cultural, historical, and political events surrounding succession: the death of a monarch; their reputation; deposition and/or abdication; accession of the heir(s); coronation; and in particular during the Protectorate and following the Glorious Revolution, constitutional debate around questions of effective government. Rhetorically, succession literature functioned often to legitimize a successor to the throne in the long line of Stuart rulers, although some monarchs, like Queen Anne, sought to downplay that heritage. It catered both for the domestic market, or as several chapters in this book argue, for international audiences such as the Dutch or French, who read their succession literature as news, documents of diplomacy, indications of allegiance in ongoing cross-border conflicts, or as work either supporting or criticizing the public image of the Stuart monarchy in the face of European political and religious upheaval.

This book's first part of seven synchronous chapters, or 'Moments', approximates a full chronology of all Stuart successions following the Union of Crowns (1603-1714), but views these from a variety of perspectives. The first two chapters, by Richard McCabe and

Alastair Bellany, deal respectively with the accession and death of James VI/I, though the latter only glances at the accession of Charles I (this may have something to do with the relatively sparsity of literature around Charles's succession). The third by Steven N. Zwicker moves straight to the demise of Oliver Cromwell and the succession of his son Richard (1658/9), as reflected in the verse of Marvell, Dryden, and others. Christopher Highley examines the interpretation of the long exile of Charles II (1660). The succession of James II (1685) is viewed by Helmer Helmers in transnational terms, through Dutch pro-Stuart eyes. John West considers the succession of William and Mary (1689) in generic terms, focusing on 'the challenge of reforming the panegyric mode' (p.121) that had become tainted by the Catholicism of the recently fled James II. Each 'moment' looks at different aspects of succession: for instance, Bellany analyses the symbolism of the dead body of James I laid out in state alongside a sermon and the king's autopsy reports; Helmers illuminates the 1685 succession by reading Dutch newspapers; and in this section's final chapter, Joseph Hone provides the book's 'only extended analysis of a single coronation' (p.133), that of Queen Anne.

Readers looking for even-handed treatment of the issues that attended each succession should thus look elsewhere, but those seeking confirmation, first, of the very existence of 'succession literature', and second, looking to appreciate its manifold forms, are richly rewarded by this collection. Nine further chapters in the second part, 'Transformations', present diachronic readings of succession texts. Some have extraordinarily long lives, not least the Jesuit Robert Persons's *Conference about the Next Succession* (1595), a radical treatise in defence of elective kingship, which as Paulina Kewes argues, shaped constitutional debate for a century, rendering Persons the second author after Shakespeare in terms of post-1603 engagement with an Elizabethan work. Andrew

McRae considers the distinct pliability of panegyric verse as it was put to use to welcome home from foreign climes James I, Charles II, and William and Mary. A few chapters focus on distinct genres, themes, or objects. David Colclough writes on sermons preached at the accessions of James I and Charles I, and stresses the absolute centrality of sermon culture to understand succession. Henry Power considers university collections at Oxford and Cambridge, largely filled with Latin verse; Ian Archer a slew of royal entries and their associated pageantry; Malcolm Smuts the literary representation of queen consorts from Anne of Denmark to Mary of Modena; and B.J. Cook the minting of coinage. Mark Knights draws attention to an innovative type of panegyric in prose with its own particular history and formal requirement: the 'loyal address'. This overview demonstrates the collection's extensive reach and broad conceptualisation in many respects. Perhaps it is only in geographical terms that the engagement with succession literature by non-English Brits emerges somewhat unevenly. There are just two mentions in the index concerning Wales, and seven for Ireland, despite what Richard McCabe in the first chapter terms the 'inescapably Celtic associations' (p.32) of the Stuart monarchy. Yet Britishness and succession were distinct problems for the early-moderns as well, as Jane Rickard's sole chapter dedicated to Scotland underlines. The literature of Charles I's 1633 Scottish coronation worried about the king's allegiances to his ancestral heritage. A report of the coronation of Charles II in 1651, dominated by the Scottish kirk, and taking place while England was still under Cromwell's rule, starkly reveals how succession literature did not always further constitutional unity, but revealed the fractures and divisions of the emergent polity of seventeenth-century Britain.

Stuart Succession Literature is the crowning output of a four-year AHRC-funded project which already produced a database (<http://stuartsexeter.ac.uk>); a related

educational resource (<http://www.stuarts-online.com>); two PhD theses; and a teaching edition of texts and extracts (*Literature of the Stuart Successions: An Anthology*, Manchester UP, 2017). Using the database alongside this essay collection puts some pressure on the definitions of succession literature; or at least on the respective coverage in all project resources. Given the database only covers imprints from the year of succession and the one following, some texts are out of its remit. This means that an author search on Andrew Marvell yields no results, yet, he features prominently in Steven N. Zwicker's chapter on the Cromwellian rule. The *Anthology* includes his *First Anniversary*, printed anonymously in 1655 and in 1681 – one and twenty-eight years too late to qualify for inclusion among the 3,214 database entries. Another example concerns the project remit: this largely excludes early-modern drama, though Paul Hammond's afterword touching on Shakespeare makes some important connections. There has also been no sustained attention to manuscripts, primarily for practical reasons, but also because, as the editors observe, print seems the pre-eminent mode of dissemination for succession literature. And yet, the *Anthology* includes extracts from the manuscript diaries of John Rous, Samuel Pepys, and John Evelyn, suggesting that some manuscript materials, such as diaries and correspondence, would yield rich evidence. These discrepancies suggest two things: first, that users of the various project outputs should exercise some circumspection, but second and more overwhelmingly, that succession literature is a capacious category of writing, fundamentally embedded in seventeenth-century culture. This collection features some outstanding contributions, and a particular strength is the sustained attention in many chapters to the use and re-use of texts over time, not infrequently for partisan ends. *Stuart Succession Literature* makes visible once more just how prevalent were the concerns of early modern kingship and succession in the literary imagination.

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