BOOK REVIEWS

VERWANDTSCHAFT - ERBRECHT - KÖNIGSWAHLEN[1]

by Armin Wolf

Published by Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2013; paperback,
1184 pages in 2 volumes, 192 charts, maps, etc., ISBN 978-3-465-04180-1

Reviewed for FMG by Charles Cawley[2]

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This book, written in German, is constructed around the author's basic theory that descent from earlier emperors/kings of Germany (through the male or female line) was a condition for candidacy in all German royal elections and also for eligibility of individuals as electors. The work represents the results of Dr Wolf's long-time study of the German election process since publishing his commentary on the 1356 Golden Bull in 1968. The author tests his theory against the ancestry of candidates and electors in various elections, with particular emphasis on those which resulted in the appointments of Heinrich II in 1002 and Philipp in 1198.

Most of the ancestry lines can be reconstructed from commonly available primary sources, such as the *Annalista Saxo* and Thietmar, and appear to confirm the theory. However, several important cases remain where primary sources hint at family connections but do not provide details (including Rudolf von Rheinfelden and the Thuringian ruling family). In other cases, surviving primary source material is insufficient to reconstruct any lengthy ancestry at all (for example the Grafen von Northeim). In relation to all of these, Dr Wolf espouses novel possibilities of descent which would support his basic theory, although many will consider these speculative. These include:

- suggesting two separate royal descents of Rudolf von Rheinfelden: from Richlind, daughter or granddaughter of Emperor Otto I, and from Gerberga, daughter of King Heinrich I.
- identifying Ludwig "cum Barba", ancestor of the Landgrafen of Thuringia, as Louis, son of Louis Comte de Mousson (whose wife descended from Emperor Charlemagne), in an attempt to explain the Thuringian family´s alleged imperial Frankish ancestry which is referred to in general terms in the dubious *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*.
- linking the shadowy figure of Siegfried, son of Siegfried Comte de Luxembourg (whose mother was of Carolingian descent), with Siegfried Graf von Northeim, based on suggested connections between the Lotharingian Luxembourg family and the province of Saxony.

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1 Relationship – Hereditary Right – Royal Elections

2 The reviewer is the author of *Medieval Lands*, a prosopography of medieval European noble and royal families, hosted on the FMG website.

In addition to dealing with the election theory, a large part of Dr Wolf´s book consists of extensive commentaries on twelve related academic articles published in Germany, as well as re-publication of various short works which the author himself has published elsewhere.

This book includes a remarkable amount of data, but it is not easy to use. The chapter structure results in duplication of information (for example, lengthy discussion of the parentage of Richlind, referred to above, is repeated in three places). Navigation within the book is hindered by the absence of an index. It is also difficult to trace footnote citations because there is no alphabetical bibliography against which shortened references, particularly to secondary sources (like "Hlawitschka 1991"), can be deciphered.

The book is lengthy (nearly 1200 pages, divided into two volumes) and rather expensive (€189). A copy has been placed in the FMG library.

MEDIEVAL WALKERN AND MAGNA CARTA

by Peter Sinclair

Published by Walkern History Society, 2013; 134 pages, paperback, ISBN 978-0-957-62860-1.

Reviewed for FMG by Chris Phillips[1]

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This short book presents a detailed account of those who held the Hertfordshire manor of Walkern in the 12th and 13th centuries, beginning with Eudo de Ryes (Dapifer) and continuing with the Saint Clair and Lanvallay families, with special emphasis on William III de Lanvallay, who was a surety of Magna Carta. The author does a good job of putting these families' roles as local landholders into the broader context of the national events of the time. There are also an in-depth discussion of a 13th-century effigy of a knight in armour in Walkern church, tentatively identified as a monument to William III de Lanvallay, and a brief account of the later history of the manor, including some interesting extracts from 14th-century manorial records. The book is written in a readable style and is attractively illustrated with reproductions of documents, maps and modern photographs of associated buildings and locations. The text is fully indexed and referenced, and the author helpfully explains many medieval terms in footnotes.

Most of the genealogy is based on the conclusions of recent scholarship, such as the work of Dr Keats-Rohan, and is generally reliable (though occasionally the errors of the recent scholars are reproduced).

The most significant new genealogical suggestion is that Clemence, the wife of Hubert de Saint Clair (d.1155), was a daughter of Gilbert fitz Gilbert de Clare, earl of Pembroke (d.*c*.1148) [called Gilbert FitzRichard de Clare by the author]. The

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argument for this identification, given on pp.35-37, is that in 1185 Clemence was living as a widow at the manor of Newberry (in Weston), which was her *maritagium* (marriage portion). Furthermore, Newberry was [later, by Clemence's descendants] held of the lords of the manor of Weston, and the lord of Weston at the likely time of Clemence's marriage was earl Gilbert [he held the manor between *c.*1138 and *c.*1148], which suggests that he was her father and gave the manor as her *maritagium*.

On the face of it this argument seems reasonable. The 1185 record, from the *Rotuli de Dominabus*, neither names Clemence's land in Weston nor describes it as her *maritagium*, but the author cites J H Round's edition of the *Rotuli* (p.66), where further evidence is given which confirms the identification with the manor of Newberry and shows that Clemence had land in Weston of her marriage. The *Rotuli* make conflicting statements about Clemence's age in 1185 - one entry says she was 60, another 80. But other evidence suggests that 60 is likely to be nearer the mark, and that she would probably have married in or around the 1140s. It's not impossible that the daughter of a 12th-century earl might have gone otherwise unrecorded. On the other hand, the size of the *maritagium* - a small manor worth only £4 a year - does seem very inadequate for a daughter, particularly as earl Gilbert is known to have given the much larger manor of Barrow in Suffolk to the husband of a kinswoman of his named Maud, and later confirmed it to her son.[2] Perhaps Newberry too could have been a gift to a kinswoman of the earl, rather than to a daughter?

2 *CP* 10: 352, note b.