

HOHENZOLLERN WIVES AND A DAUGHTER: DEFINITIONS OF FEMININE DYNASTIC IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

The article is concerned with the norms that determine the presentation of dynastic women in the second half of the seventeenth century. It focuses on two wives and a daughter of the electors of Brandenburg, Dorothea (1636–89), second wife of Friedrich Wilhelm, Elisabeth Henriette (1661–83) first wife of Friedrich III, and their daughter Luise Dorothea Sophie (1680–1705). It examines their depiction in occasional writing and seeks to establish whether it is possible to identify a distinctive female Hohenzollern identity and the extent to which conventions, particularly the traditional association of the ‘Landesmutter’ with piety, determine their presentation as feminine ideals. The article concludes with an assessment of the impact of the establishment of the Hohenzollern kingship in Prussia on the presentation of Friedrich’s second wife, Sophie Charlotte (1668–1705).

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Normen, die die Darstellung der fürstlichen Frau in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts bestimmen, indem er sich mit der Darstellung von zwei Ehefrauen und einer Tochter der Kurfürsten von Brandenburg auseinandersetzt: Dorothea (1636–89), der zweiten Frau von Friedrich Wilhelm, Elisabeth Henriette (1661–83), erster Frau von Friedrich III, und ihrer Tochter, Luise Dorothea Sophie (1680–1705). Anhand der Analyse von Gelegenheitsschriften wird vor allem auf zwei Fragen eingegangen: ob es möglich ist, ein spezifisch weibliches Dynastie-Profil zu identifizieren und inwiefern traditionelle Konventionen, besonders die Assoziation der Landesmutter mit der Frömmigkeit, das Image der dynastischen Frau prägen. Abschließend wird die Auswirkung der neu erlangten königlichen Würde auf die Darstellung von Friedrichs zweiter Frau Sophie Charlotte (1668–1705) bewertet.

The re-emergence of Brandenburg as a dynamic force is one of the distinctive developments of the Empire after the Peace of Westphalia. This assertion of the authority of the Calvinist Hohenzollern electors of Brandenburg was the product of the acumen and activity of Elector Friedrich Wilhelm (1620–88), whose experience of Brandenburg’s weakness in the Thirty Years’ War and the limitations of its influence as an auxiliary power, both at the peace negotiations and afterwards, only strengthened his ambition to enhance the position of his territories. Central to the achievement of this aim was the development of his standing army, which he as commander-in-chief oversaw and into which considerable financial resources were poured. This army was used for strategic ends in the power struggles between the Habsburgs and the French, the Polish and

the Swedes. Depending on circumstances, it fought with – and against – each of these powers. Friedrich Wilhelm's approach was entirely pragmatic: alliances and troop deployment were means of advancing Brandenburg's interests.¹ The period from the mid-1650s through to the 1680s saw the gradual rise of Brandenburg as a military power. The record was not one of unalloyed success, but Brandenburg's renewed authority was closely linked to the effectiveness of its military. Through it Friedrich Wilhelm secured both Hohenzollern sovereignty over Prussia and his own reputation as military leader. The most famous victory of all, Fehrbellin, when he inflicted a punishing defeat on a marauding Swedish army on Brandenburg territory in 1675, earned him the sobriquet of the Great Elector.

The centrality of the military is reflected in the depiction of Friedrich Wilhelm as military commander that dominates the art produced at court. One of the best-known portraits of the elector, painted by Jacques Vaillant in the aftermath of Fehrbellin, shows him as a battle-hardened prince dressed in full armour, commander's staff in hand, an image that was widely copied (fig. 1).² Occasional verse likens him to Mars and Achilles, underscores his position as 'Vater der Soldaten', and warns that, in order to protect his subjects, his enemies would be shown no mercy.³ In the same vein, massive wall tapestries capture moments of military triumph. Perhaps the most famous image of all is Andreas Schlüter's equestrian statue, memorialising him as the Great Elector, the glorious ruling prince and victorious commander (fig. 2). This statue, commissioned after Friedrich Wilhelm's death, is indicative of the cultivation of military iconography by his heir, Friedrich III (1657–1713), who, building on his father's achievements, went on to establish the Hohenzollern monarchy in Prussia, becoming Friedrich I, King in Prussia in January 1701. Although at the beginning of his reign he had fought successfully against the French in the Nine Years' War, he was not a military man in the mould of his father. Nonetheless the image of his state that he sought to project, particularly in his efforts to persuade others of the rightfulness of his claim to the kingship, emphasised its military strength. This is evident in the new 'Zeughaus', designed to store equipment for 50,000 soldiers, as it is in official reports of state occasions. These are characterised by descriptions that linger on the

¹ Derek McKay, 'Small-power diplomacy in the age of Louis XIV: the foreign policy of the Great Elector during the 1660s and 1670s', in *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Memory of Ragnhild Hatton*, ed. Robert Oresko, G. C. Gibbs and H. M. Scott, Cambridge 1997, pp. 188–215.

² Helmut Börsch-Supan, 'Zeitgenössische Bildnisse des Großen Kurfürsten', in *Ein sonderbares Licht in Teutschland. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Großen Kurfürsten von Brandenburg (1640–1688)*, ed. Gert Heinrich, Berlin 1990, pp. 151–66 (p. 162).

³ Johann von Besser, 'An Se. Chur-Fürstl. Durchl. zu Brandenburg Fridrich Wilhelm, über Ihre An. 1686. [...] nach Ungarn geschickte Auxiliar-Völcker', in *Des Herrn von B. Schriften, Beydes in gebundener und ungebundener Rede; So viel man derer, Theils aus ihrem ehemaligen Drucke, theils auch aus guter Freunde schriftlichen Communication, zusammen bringen können*, Leipzig 1720, pp. 111–13 (p. 112). This volume will be referenced as Besser 1720.



Figure 1. Elector Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg. Painting by Jacques Vaillant dated c. 1675. Courtesy of the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, The Hague.

size and splendour of the Hohenzollern regiments and citizens' militias and by the assertion of a military ethos linking the male members of the dynasty with their subjects.⁴

⁴ For an exploration of the portrayal of Friedrich Wilhelm and Friedrich in occasional writing, see Sara Smart, *The Ideal Image: Studies in Writing for the German Court 1616–1706*, Berlin 2005, pp. 248–320.



Figure 2. Andreas Schlüter's equestrian statue of Friedrich Wilhelm. Engraving by Georg Paul Busch dated c. 1721. Courtesy of the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig.

The assertion of a military ethos defining the males of the dynasty is strongly etched, but the image of Hohenzollern wives and daughters is much less clear cut. The aim of this contribution is therefore to shift the focus to the females of the dynasty, specifically to two wives and a daughter: the second wife of Friedrich Wilhelm, Dorothea of Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg (1636–89); Friedrich's first wife Elisabeth

Henriette (1661–83), originally from Hessen-Kassel, and her daughter, Luise Dorothea Sophie, known as Luise (1680–1705). Some attention is also paid to possibly the best-known of all Hohenzollern wives of the period, Sophie Charlotte of Hanover (1668–1705), Friedrich's second wife and the first queen in Prussia. This article, one of the preparatory steps working towards a general survey of female Hohenzollern identity between 1650 and 1713, engages with the stylisation of these women in occasional verse and 'Festbeschreibungen' for what this reveals about their official dynastic profile and constructions of femininity. It examines conventional gender identities and the roles ascribed to the women and their associated virtues and activities. The aim is to establish whether it is possible to identify a distinctive female Hohenzollern identity and the extent to which this may modify the conventional depiction of the 'Landesmutter' or 'Landestochter'.

In June 1667 Friedrich Wilhelm's first wife, Luise Henriette of Orange, died. Of her six children, three sons had survived infancy. In his concern to provide them with a mother, the elector married Dorothea only one year later in June 1668. Aged 32, Dorothea (fig. 3) was the widow of Duke Christian Ludwig of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1622–65), to whom she had been married at the age of 17 in 1653. Theirs had been a childless marriage. In contrast, between 1669 and 1677 Dorothea produced seven children, six of whom reached adulthood. For Dorothea there was therefore a happy and apparently easy coincidence between her fertility and the conventional stylisation of the wife of the ruling prince as mother. This had not been the case for Luise Henriette. The occasional verse of Simon Dach, mourning the death of her first son Wilhelm Heinrich, aged seventeen months, in October 1649, and of Johann Rist, celebrating the birth of her next son Karl Emil (1655–74) six years later, suggests the crucial significance of the birth of an heir to assure the succession and to confirm the order and security of the state. They hint, too, at the public burden borne by the consort who has yet to produce a healthy son. In Dach's poem, 'Ein hertzlich-darauff folgendes Klag- und Trauer-Lied', the death of the heir represents a blow to dynastic strength and the poet calls for the birth of new princes, 'neue Seulen', to mitigate the resulting instability.⁵ The phrasing of Rist's *Unterthänigste Glückwünschung*, although couched in the conventional hyperbolic language of the genre, gives some impression of the immense concern surrounding the childbearing capacity of the 'Landesmutter'. The

⁵ Simon Dach, 'Ein hertzlich-darauff folgendes Klag- und Trauer-Lied über höchstbetrübten den 24. WeinM. 1649. Hintrit [...] des weyland Durchl. Fürsten und Herren/Herrn Wilhelm Heinrich/[...]' in *Chur-Brandenburgische Rose/Adler/Löw und Scepter/von Simon Dachen / Weyland Prof. Poëses auff Chur-Brandenburgischer Preußischer Academie Königsberg Poëtisch besungen. Mit sonderbahr ertheiletem hoch und gnädigstem Churfürstl. Privilegio*, Königsberg 1690: <http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/xb-3236/start.htm?image=00134>.



Figure 3. Electress Dorothea of Brandenburg. Engraving by Samuel Blesendorf. Courtesy of the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig.

years of Luise's childlessness are referred to as a period of 'lange Furcht' brought to an end only by the 'Wunderwechsel' of the birth.⁶

In February 1669 one of the first poems to engage with Dorothea's childbearing was written when she was expecting her first child, Philipp,

⁶ Johann Rist, *Unterthänigste Glückwünschung und Lob-Rede / An Den Durchläuchtigsten Fürsten und Herrn / Herrn Friderich Wilhelm / Marggraffen zu Brandenburg / [...]* Als auch / an Die Durchläuchtigste Fürstinn und Frau / Frau Louysa / Geborne Printzeßin von Uranien / [...] Als Ihre Churfürstl. Durchläuchtigkeiten / Beiderseits / [...] von dem Allerhöchsten Gott / mit einem Jungen / gesunden und wolgestalten Chur-Printzen und Landes-Herrn / allergnädigst wurden angesehen/ beseligt und verehret, Berlin 1655, A2r. HAB Signatur: H: N 8.2° Helmst. (13).

born three months later. 'Unterthänigste Pflicht' was dedicated to the couple early in February 1669 by the Königsberg poet and member of the 'Pegnesischer Blumenorden', Gertrud Möller (1641–1705).⁷ A striking feature is that Möller alludes not so much to the electress's capacity to bear a child as to the strength of Friedrich Wilhelm's seed and the growth of his fruit. Allusive parallels to two birds, the Prussian eagle and the Phoenix, acknowledge his sovereignty in Prussia and celebrate his potency:

Wie der Phönix sich vernewet /
 So auch deine Frucht gedeyet /
 So wird stets dein Saame seyn /
 Und man wird zu allen Zeiten /
 Unsers Adlers Macht außbreiten.

While dynastic fertility is typically associated with security and an extension of Hohenzollern power, in this instance it is a male prerogative. Perhaps it was deemed inappropriate to celebrate the electress's fecundity before the child had been safely delivered. This is the first of a series of poems by Möller dedicated to Friedrich Wilhelm and Dorothea, whose respective birthday and nameday fell on the same date, which routinely reflects on the strength of the electoral family, projecting an image of the couple as patriarch and matriarch of a flourishing dynasty. Equally typical is the blurring of the boundary between the physical and political roles of mother and mother of the state. The electress is routinely addressed as 'Landesmutter', yet her role within the electoral family and the wider family of the state remains largely undefined and does not appear to interest the poet. The main focus of attention is Friedrich Wilhelm, hailed as a successful commander and caring 'Landesvater', whose success on the battlefield ensures the protection of the state.

Another Königsberg poet, Johann Röling (1634–79), who succeeded Simon Dach as professor of poetry at the university there, established a correspondence between the military identity of Friedrich Wilhelm and Dorothea's childbearing. Röling exploits the coincidence that in the same month that Friedrich Wilhelm achieved his success at Fehrbellin the electress gave birth to her sixth child, Dorothea, so as to suggest the ideal fulfilment of their respective dynastic gender roles. His poem,

⁷ The substantial published work of Gertrud Möller, daughter of Michael Eiffler, professor of philosophy at the university of Königsberg, and the wife of Peter Möller, professor of medicine, comprises occasional and religious verse: see Jean Woods and Maria Fürstenwald, *Schriftstellerinnen, Künstlerinnen und gelehrte Frauen des deutschen Barock*, Stuttgart 1984, pp. 70–1. The example of Möller's work consulted in the preparation of this article is held at the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, in a bound collection of separate prints dating from 1669 to 1704, which includes poems dedicated to various members of the Hohenzollern dynasty and senior Prussian officials: *Der berühmten Preußischen Poetin, Frauen Gertrud Möllerin; bey verschiedener Gelegenheit verfertigte Gedichte; gesammelt von I.I.S.*, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Signatur: 1 an: 4" Yi 7100. This volume is not paginated, but the poems have been numbered. 'Unterthänigste Pflicht Dem Drey Mahl Glückbringenden / Höchst-erfreulichen Geburts-und Nahmenstage Derer Chur-Fürstlichen Durchläuchtigkeiten [...]' is listed as 2,1.

‘Unterthänigster Zuruff’, written in the immediate euphoria following the victory, depicts Friedrich Wilhelm as the quintessential *pater patriae*.⁸ The details of the battle are used to underline the protection of his subjects, his personal involvement in the fighting underscoring his dedication to the security of his people. Dorothea is drawn according to the conventions that traditionally structured the image of the ideal ‘Landesmutter’. After contributing to the health of the dynasty by producing her child, she is portrayed in the standard stance of the consort – at prayer, thanking God for the birth. The poem ends with the image of electress finding ‘ihr Heimkunfft bald / In deinen [the elector’s] Sieges-Armen’, the suggestion of the soundness of the electoral marriage serving as a traditional statement of the health of the dynasty. Be it on the battlefield or in prayerful childbirth, the ‘unsterblichs Paar’, united in mutual affection, secure the benefit of the state.

One of the most powerful depictions of Dorothea as mother is conveyed in an early poem dedicated to Friedrich Wilhelm by Johann von Besser, who, in a career spanning three decades, became the official apologist of the dynasty. Written in 1681, the poem ‘Glückseeligkeit der Brandenburgischen Unterthanen’ is composed in the voice of subjects who address the elector and comment on the benefits associated with his rule.⁹ Dorothea is among these. In the verses dedicated to the electoral family, Besser places her at the elector’s side, and surrounds the couple with numerous children ‘die Engel-Printz- und Printzeßinnen’. This image of the harmony and strength of the ruling family is blended with that of the wider family of the state, with Besser focusing on Dorothea’s relations with her ‘Landeskinder’. She defends their interests by serving as their advocate:

Sie nimmt sich unser mit Dir an,
Und hilfft oft unsern Fall verhütten:
Man weiß, was eine Judith kan,
Was ein’ Abigail bey David kan verbitten.

The implicit suggestion that Friedrich Wilhelm and Dorothea are the second David and Abigail endorses the traditional division of dynastic gender roles – the ‘Landesmutter’ as supplicant prompting the

⁸ Johann Röling, ‘Unterthänigster Zuruff Dem Durchläuchtigsten Großmächtigsten Fürsten und Herrn / H. Friedrich Wilhelm / Margrafen zu Brandenburg / [...] Als Sr. Churfürstl. Durchläuchtigkeit Hochgeliebte Gemahlinn / [...] Frau Dorothea [...] einer Princessin / [...] glücklichst genesen’, in *Johann Roelings der Dicht-Kunst ordentlichen Lehrers zu Königsberg Glückwünschungs-Hochzeits-und Begräbniß-Gedichte, gesammelt von I.I.S.*, Königsberg, date of publication unknown. Signatur: 4° Yi 7100. The collection of poems, held at the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, is not paginated, but the poems have been numbered; this poem is listed as no. 4.

⁹ Johann von Besser, ‘Glückseeligkeit der Brandenburgischen Unterthanen. Bey der Magdeburgischen Erb-Huldigung, welche Sr. Churfürstl. Durchl. Friedrich Wilhelm dem Großen den 4. Junii 1681. in Halle geleistet ward’, in Besser 1720, pp. 3–6. For quotations, see p. 4.

‘Landesvater’ to display the princely virtue of clemency. The parallel between Dorothea and Judith references a quite different aspect of the electoral marriage.

Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly has explored the responses in early modern art and literature to the complexity of the Judith-figure and its associations with gender inversion, sexuality and extreme violence.¹⁰ These negative connotations are necessarily absent in the association of Dorothea with Judith. Besser is tapping into a tradition of writing that ‘cleansed’ the figure of the sword-wielding woman of its subversive qualities. In her analysis of the funerary works of Aemilia Antonia (1614–70) and Aemilia Juliana (1637–1706), Countesses of Rudolstadt, Judith Aikin demonstrates that by the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century the Judith-figure was integrated into court panegyric. The figure symbolised ‘pious female patriotism in times of warfare’, which in the case of the countesses comprised using not the sword but the pen to appeal for imperial or divine protection of their territory.¹¹ For Besser therefore the choice of the Judith-figure was an uncontroversial means of referencing the electress’s habit of accompanying Friedrich Wilhelm on campaigns. The suggestions of female strength and of patriotism in conflict lent themselves to the depiction of Dorothea as robust companion, determined not to leave her husband’s side in his fight to secure his territory. Seen from this perspective, the figure of the erotic seductress is transformed into an embodiment of conjugal loyalty. In a later poem dedicated to the elector in 1684, Besser echoes the ideas of courage and loyalty. In this instance the elector is styled a lion, while the electress is endowed with a lion’s heart to imply that she is the kindred spirit of her husband, able to support him in his military activities:

Sie ist ein Hertz mit Dir, in allen deinem Thun.
Das Löwen-Hertz weicht nicht dem Löwen von der Seiten:
So sieht man überall die Fürstin Dich begleiten;¹²

A striking reiteration of this depiction of Dorothea as martial consort is found in the visual arts in a double portrait of the couple, presumed to have been designed to decorate a triumphal arch in Berlin in 1678 to commemorate Friedrich Wilhelm’s post-Fehrbellin campaign which aimed to drive the Swedes out of Western Pomerania.¹³ This involved

¹⁰ Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, ‘The Eroticization of Judith in Early Modern German Art’, in *Gender Matters: Discourses of Violence in Early Modern Literature and the Arts*, ed. Mara R. Wade, Amsterdam 2013, 81–100.

¹¹ Judith P. Aikin, ‘The Militant Countesses of Rudolstadt: When an unruly army stops by on its way through, it’s time to call on a woman for help’, in *Gender Matters*, ed. Wade, pp. 19–39.

¹² ‘Brandenburgischer Glücks-Löwe, Oder der Geburts-Stern Sr. Churfürstl. Durchl. Friedrich Wilhelms des Grossen, [...] den 6. Febr. Anno 1684. da Se. Churfl. Durchl. nach glücklich überstandenen grossen Stufen-Jahre allbereits dero 65sten Geburts-Tag erlebt hatten’, in Besser 1720, pp. 6–16 (p. 12).

¹³ Börsch-Supan, p. 162.

the six-month siege in 1677 of the strategically important port of Stettin, positioned at the mouth of the Oder. Friedrich Wilhelm and Dorothea, who accompanied him on the campaign, are depicted – their figures in such close proximity that they seem to blend into one another – beneath an allegorical figure of victory, receiving the homage from the personified city of Stettin.

In 1688 Friedrich Wilhelm died. The massive funerary volume *Davids Des Königs in Israel Heilige Fürbereitung zum Tode / und kräftige Ansprach an seinen Sohn und Nachfolger Salomo*, which was, as the title suggests, commissioned by his heir Friedrich III, Luise Henriette's son, contains another poem by Besser, which projects a very different image of Dorothea. 'Die am Begräbniß-Tage Ihres Grossen Fridrich Wilhelms Wehklagende Durchlauchtigste Dorothee' is the companion piece to one of the magnificent engravings of the funeral procession.¹⁴ This depicts Dorothea swathed in white mourning robes, leading the ladies of the court, her face shrouded by a veil. The grieving voice of the poem declares Dorothea's readiness to quit the world, to bid her children farewell, to be encased in her room as in a tomb until she becomes a shadow and skeleton.

With the death of her husband and the loss of her position as electress, the vigorous, lion-hearted Dorothea is suddenly transformed into an old woman who longs for her own death. In 1688 she was 52. Admittedly, according to the traditional life cycle of women in the early modern period, she was embarking on the final, if slightly fuzzily defined, stages of life. Equally, a desire for self-immolation and death belong to the topoi of epicedia. None the less, the contrast between the fecund, robust 'Landesmutter' present in the occasional verse of only a few years earlier and the depiction of the dowager Dorothea in 1688 is striking: her body is now 'abgefressen', it is 'welck' (Besser 1720, p. 140); she has become 'ein lebendiges Grab' (Besser 1720, p. 142). As has been argued elsewhere, this poem is in effect Friedrich's dismissal of Dorothea from court.¹⁵ While new research counters the longstanding view that mutual antipathy

¹⁴ *Davids Des Königs in Israel Heilige Fürbereitung zum Tode / und kräftige Ansprach an seinen Sohn und Nachfolger Salomo / Betrachtet Bey dem höchstbetrübtten Todes-Fall / Des weyland Durchlauchtigsten / Großmächtigsten Fürsten und Herrn / Herrn Friderich Wilhelmen Marggraffen zu Brandenburg / des Heil. Röm. Reichs Ertz-Cämmerer und Churfürsten [...] Nachdem Seine Churfl. Durchl. am 29. April dieses 1688sten Jahres / auf Dero Churfürstl. Schloß Potstamb / unter vielen tausend Thränen Hoher und Niedriger Anwesenden / diese Welt gesegnet / [...] und den 12. Septemb. Dero Churfürstl. Körper im hohen und herrlichen Gefolge zu Dero Ruhe-Kammer und Churfürstlicher Gruft begleitet worden [...] auf gnädigsten Special-Befehl Des auch Durchlauchtigsten / Großmächtigsten Fürsten und Herrn / Herrn Friderich des Dritten / Marggraffen und Churfürsten zu Brandenburg [...]*, Cölln an der Spree 1688. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Signatur: gr. 2^o St 9556. The poem is positioned after the series of engravings and is printed on three pages without any form of pagination. The poem is also published in Besser's collected works. See Besser 1720, pp. 140–42.

¹⁵ Sara Smart, 'Höfische Trauer und die Darstellung der fürstlichen Gemahlin: Zur Funktion des Trauergedichts am Berliner Hof 1667 und 1705', in *Theorie und Praxis der Kasualdichtung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Andreas Keller, Elke Lösel, Ulrike Wels and Volkhard Wels, *Chloe: Beihefte zum Daphnis*, 43, Amsterdam 2010, pp. 277–301.

characterised their relationship, this had been put under severe strain by rumours of Dorothea's involvement in attempts to poison him. Certainly the image of Dorothea in 'Die wehklagende Dorothee' bears the stamp of the new regime and its shift in the constellation of power: Besser's evocation of the no-longer fertile female body renders visual the relegation of the widow and step-mother from the ranks of the influential.

Dorothea died just over a year after her husband in August 1689. Perhaps it was precisely because she was dead and whatever friction between her and Friedrich was consigned to the past that Besser felt able to revive her image as the martial consort. After the death of Friedrich Wilhelm, he began work on a massive epic poem, which, although never finished, is arguably the literary equivalent of Schlüter's equestrian statue in that it celebrates Friedrich Wilhelm as Great Elector, as invincible warrior. The famous military prowess, forged – Besser suggests – in the flames of the Thirty Years' War, is celebrated in the portrayal of a series of major victories, including the siege of Stettin. The depiction of the siege allows for the stylisation of the Hohenzollerns as a military dynasty. The elector, 'des Himmels Waffenträger', is supported by his son Friedrich, shown riding fearlessly among the troops engaged in siege warfare. Dorothea, too, is present:

Die grosse Dorothee, nun ausser ihren Zimmern,
Ließ ihre Herrlichkeit wie Feuer-Wolcken schimmern,
Mit Pallas Feder-Pusch und güldnem Helm geziert.¹⁶

Besser has her witness an overwhelming display of the destructive power of the Brandenburg artillery. The stylisation of Dorothea as a second goddess of war lifts her depiction as loyal campaigning spouse to a new level. Her presence in the immediate vicinity of battle attired in the plumed helmet, the icon of the early modern female warrior, associates her with the tradition of the heroic woman as detailed by Du Bosc and Le Moyne.¹⁷ Presumably this shift in nuance was undertaken so as to project Dorothea as the Great Electress, the ideal consort of the Great Elector, with the attribution of strength to Dorothea – as was the case in the Judith parallel – designed to stress her compatibility with her husband. Whether or not the epic, like Schlüter's statue, was bound up with Friedrich's campaign

¹⁶ The first volume of the third edition of Besser's works includes the final version of the 'Lob-Gedichte, Oder der Zunahme, Friedrich Wilhelms des Grossen, Chur-Fürstens zu Brandenburg, 1688'. *Des Herrn von Besser Schrifften, Beydes In gebundener und ungebundener Rede; Erster Theil. Ausser des Verfassers eigenen Verbesserungen, mit vielen seiner noch nie gedruckten Stücke und neuen Kupfern, Nebst dessen Leben Und einem Vorberichte ausgefertiget von Johann Ulrich König / Sr. Kön. Majest. in Pohlen und Chur-Fürstl. Durchl. zu Sachsen geheimen Secretar und Hof-Poeten*, Leipzig 1732, pp. 26–57. For quotations, see p. 52.

¹⁷ Pierre Le Moyne, *La Gallerie des femmes fortes*, Paris 1647; Jacques Du Bosc, *La femme héroïque, ou, les héroïnes comparées avec les héros en toute sorte de vertus. Et plusieurs reflexions morales à la fin de chaque comparaison*, Paris 1645.

to establish the kingship in Prussia, is unclear. Certainly, Besser's suggestion of a military ethos that embraces the dynasty as a whole is typical of the work he produced that contributed to this campaign. The idealisation of the deceased Dorothea as the Hohenzollern *femme forte*, the iconographically coherent pendant to the image of the all-triumphant elector, is yet another articulation or variation on the theme of dynastic fortitude.

In August 1679 Friedrich married Elisabeth Henriette, the second daughter of his father's sister Hedwig Sofie (1623–83), wife of Wilhelm VI, Landgrave of Hessen-Kassel (1629–63). Reputedly the marriage was happy, based on a mutual affection established during childhood and adolescence, and a healthy child, Luise, was born in 1680. The happiness was, however, short-lived. In July 1683, Elisabeth Henriette, aged 22, fell fatally ill with smallpox.¹⁸ There was a burst of funeral writing that accompanied her death, which provides an illuminating source for the study of the portrayal of a young dynastic wife. The manner of her depiction is remarkable precisely because it illustrates the strength of tradition and convention that governed perceptions of female dynastic roles. The dominant image of Elisabeth Henriette to emerge is characterised by her piety and prayerfulness.

In death she is styled the perfect Christian, a model of obedience to God's will, an example for others to follow. Her Christian awareness of the transience of worldly glories and her steadfastness in death are celebrated in three very different works: Besser's 'Unsterblichkeit im Tode', a courtly epicedium written at the command of Friedrich; 'Trauer Gedancken', a poem contained in her funerary work; and *Fürstliches Exempel Im Christlichen Leben und seligem Tode*, a tour de force of sixteen printed pages of alexandrines by Johann Bödiker (1641–95), grammarian and rector of the gymnasium in Cölln.¹⁹ So as to accentuate her exemplary death, Bödiker introduces the voice of the dying princess:

¹⁸ In her brief marriage Elisabeth Henriette also suffered a miscarriage and was pregnant when she died: Werner Schmidt, *Friderich I. Kurfürst von Brandenburg König in Preussen*, Munich 1998, pp. 66–7.

¹⁹ Johann von Besser, 'Unsterblichkeit im Tode, zum Trost und auf Befehl damahligen Chur-Printzens von Brandenburg, ietziger Königlicher Majestät in Preussen, vorgestellt, als dessen erste Gemahlin, die Durchlauchtigste Fürstin, Elisabeth Henriette, Land-Gräfin von Hessen-Cassel, den 27. Junii 1683. in ihrem zartesten Alter verstorben war', in Besser 1720, pp. 158–65. 'Trauer-Gedancken / Über den Hochseligsten Hintrit Der Durchläuchtsten Chur-PrinceBinn / und auff die erste Trauer-Predigt / des Tages hernach / in der Churfürstl. Schloß- und Thum-Kirchen / unter vielen Thränen der ganzen Gemeine gehalten/ gerichtet', in *Der von Gott werthgeschätzte Tod seiner Heiligen / Aus dem CXVI. Psalm v. 15 In einer Trauer- und Klage-Predigt / über den frühzeitigen und höchstseligsten Hintrit der Durchlauchtigsten Fürstin und Frauen / Frauen Elisabeth Henriette / Gebornen Landgräffin zu Hessen/ vermählten Chur-Princessin zu Brandenburg / Hertzogin in Preussen / [...]* *Des Tages nach Ihrem seligen Tode / war der 28. Junii, des Jahres 1683 [...]* *An stat der Donnerstags-Predigt / in der Churfürstl. Schloß- und Thum-Kirchen / unter vielen Thränen der ganzen Gemeine vorgestellt Von Heinrich Schmeltawen / Churfürstl. Brandenb. Hoff-Prediger, Cölln an der Spree 1683, HAB Signatur: Da 69 4^o (1), H1r–H4r; Johannes Bödiker, *Fürstliches Exempel / Im Christlichen Leben und seligem Tode An der Durchläuchtigsten Fürstinn und Frauen / Frauen Elisabeth Henrietta / [...]* *Nunmehr Christmildester Gedächtniß / Ihrem / durch Dero Tod / hoch betrübtem Eh-Gemahl / Sr. Chur-Printzlichen Durchläuchtigkeit /**

Wir haben statt gelebt / und wollen nichts begehren/
 Das uns die grosse Welt noch könnte wo gewehren.
 [...]

Der Glantz der Eitelkeiten/
 Der Erden leere Pracht / das Glückes-Spiel der Zeiten /
 Und diß / was sterblich heißt / wird in die Grufft nur gehn;
 Was unser eigen ist / wird immer mit uns stehn. (B4^r)

Her awareness of the fragility of the body gives rise in ‘Trauer Gedancken’ to a graphic memento mori:

Wann gleich schwartzer Erden /
 Corallen-Lippen /
 Und Beingerippen
 Abscheulich werden:
 Wann krauser Locken Schmuck das Haupt muss lassen fallen /
 [...]
 Wann durch der Kählen Rohr und Brüste Schlangen zischen /
 [...]
 Wann sich der Wangen Milch und Blut in Staub verstellen /
 Die Zähne blecken /
 Den Hals / Haut flecken
 Und Moder fällen;
 Sol diß seyn werth geschätzt? (H2^r)

Reflection on the decay of the physical body leads on to celebration of the immortality of the soul. Consolation is offered in the depiction of Elisabeth Henriette’s ascent to heaven in a chariot, her soul embraced by Christ, waiting to be reunited with Friedrich in the afterlife. In similar vein, Besser portrays her in a heavenly court attended by angels, while Bödiker imagines her being received in heaven by ranks of deceased electresses, including Friedrich’s mother Luise Henriette. Such images, while offering testimony to Elisabeth Henriette’s perfect piety, leave no doubt that the dynasty is beloved of God.

The epicedia also eulogise her piety in life, Bödiker in particular focusing on its application to her ‘Landeskinder’. Although Elisabeth Henriette was wife of the heir to the electoral title and not the official mother of the state, Bödiker attributes to her the qualities of the ideal ‘Landesmutter’: she has a ‘Mütterliches Hertz’, she listens ‘wie eine Fürstinn soll’ to the wants and needs of others, she prays for the well-being of the state and the good of her subjects (B1^v). Another aspect of this gendering of prayerful piety emerges in his demarcation of a specifically female sphere of influence: Elisabeth

Zu kräftigem von Gott erwünschtem Troste / [...] vorgestellt, Cölln an der Spree 1683, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Signatur: 73 in: Ag 923. Further references appear in the text.

Henriette's education in piety and virtue begins at her mother's court in Hessen-Kassel:

Die theure Mutter war das heilige Leit-Exempel /
 Ihr Hoff der Tugend Schul' / und frommer Sitten Tempel.
 Da ward die Gottesfurcht von Kind an eingeflößt /
 Und was ein Fürstlich Hertz dem Himmel nähern läßt.
 [...]

 So wuchs die Fürstinn auff in Fürstlichem Beginnen /
 Und fasste selbst zur Hand den Zügel ihrer Sinnen;
 So / daß Ihr keusches Hertz an Gott und Zucht behieng (A3^v).

According to Bödiker, the education continued in Berlin under the tutelage of her mother-in-law, Dorothea. Whether Friedrich's equivocal relations with his step-mother allowed this remains unclear, but in the ideal world of occasional verse rooted in the norms of the period dynastic women are united in a discrete contribution to the well-being of the state with patterns of behaviour passing from one generation to the next. Indeed, it is possible to trace the transfer of this role-identification to Luise. That Besser in his epicedium directs Friedrich to find comfort in the fact that his then three-year-old daughter is 'der abgepflanzte Geist' (Besser 1720, p. 165) of her mother suggests that from her childhood Luise's stylisation is determined by the norms that defined her mother's idealised identity. Her association with prayerful piety emerges with striking clarity in the verse on her own early death aged twenty-five after five years of marriage to her cousin Friedrich I of Hessen-Kassel (1676–1751). The qualities that are attributed to her in 1705 directly echo those attributed to Henriette Elisabeth in 1683. Besser, called to write yet another epicedium, this time to console Friedrich in his paternal grief, details the various characteristics of Luise, prominent among them goodness and piety, which predictably endowed her husband's state 'mit einem Wollfahrts-vollem Seegen'.²⁰

Up to now the focus has largely been on spiritual perfection, or inner beauty. In the case of Luise a new emphasis emerges; her external appearance is also presented in such a way that it, too, serves dynastic interest, although of a rather different kind. This is particularly evident in Besser's official description of her wedding in 1700.²¹ For much of the report Luise has a relatively low profile. Besser is largely concerned

²⁰ Johann von Besser, *Tröst-Ode/An Seine Königl. Majestät von Preussen/Uber den Verlust Ihrer Einzigen und Höchstgeliebtesten Frau Tochter/Der Erb-Printzeßin von Hessen-Cassel Königlicher Hoheit*, Cölln an der Spree 1706, A4v. HAB Signatur: Gm 4^o 110: http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/gm_4f-110/start.htm?image=00010.

²¹ Johann von Besser, 'Beschreibung dieses Beylagers, nebst allen dabey vorgefallenen Festen und Lustbarkeiten', in Besser 1720, pp. 323–64. Extracts from this report with an English translation are published in *The Cultivation of Monarchy and the Rise of Berlin: Brandenburg-Prussia 1700*, ed. Karin Friedrich and Sara Smart, Aldershot 2010, pp. 131–58.

with conveying the strength of the Brandenburg military, showcasing the architectural development of Berlin, and describing the splendour of the court. It is in this final context that Besser focuses on Luise, or rather, on the splendour of her bridal gown. This is of silver cloth and lace; the skirts as well as the bodice are covered in diamonds; she wears a coronet set with pearls and diamonds which is described as 'recht Königlich'; altogether her jewels are valued at four million 'Reichstaler' (Besser 1720, p. 343). A passing compliment is paid to the inner beauty of the bride – 'ihre bekante Frömmigkeit und Unschuld' are highlighted by the colour of the gown. However, the main thrust of the description is to project an image of the bride's appearance that reflects the electoral – soon to be royal – magnificence of the dynasty. In the summer immediately before the elevation of the Hohenzollerns to kings in Prussia, Luise's diamond-adorned image complete with coronet has a representative function, incorporating not so much the dynasty's aspirations to greater grandeur but rather the imminent realisation of its ambition to achieve the ultimate prize of monarchy.

The establishment of the royal house seems to have prompted a new trend in the depiction of Hohenzollern women as vehicles of dynastic magnificence, a thesis supported by a brief survey of the treatment of Sophie Charlotte (fig. 4). Prior to her coronation Sophie Charlotte's image fell within predictable parameters. Her depiction as a young wife echoed that of her predecessor, Elisabeth Henriette. Sophie Charlotte first entered Berlin as a new bride in 1684. In the description of this entry and the firework display that followed it, she is celebrated quite predictably for her piety and virtue.²² At the beginning of his reign in 1688, Friedrich fought in the Nine Years' War; this led to the brief stylisation of Sophie Charlotte in the mode of Dorothea, as the campaigning Hohenzollern wife, whose presence in the camp lifts the morale of Friedrich's troops.²³ However, with the establishment of the monarchy the presentation of Sophie Charlotte comes into much sharper focus. The official report of the coronation, *Krönungs-Geschichte*, contains conventional compliments, Sophie Charlotte's beauty makes her a queen among women, but more importantly her external appearance is presented in much the same way as Luise's: as a statement of the magnificence of the royal dynasty. A description is provided of Friedrich and Sophie Charlotte's first appearance as king and queen clad in royal regalia of scarlet, gold and purple cloth covered in jewels. The impact on the courtiers is stressed: 'Ein jedweder ward bey

²² Johannes Bödiker, *Einzug und Feuerwerk / Als Der Durchläuchtigster Fürst und Herr / Herr Friderich / Marggraf und Chur-Printz zu Brandenburg / [...] Seine allerliebste Gemahlinn / Die Durchläuchtigste Fürstinn und Frau / Frau Sophia Charlotta / Geborne Hertzoginn zu Braunschweig und Lüneburg [...] heimführte [...]*, Cölln an der Spree 1684. Unpaginated. HAB Signatur: Gm 4^o 244 (2).

²³ Johann von Besser, 'Dancksagung des befreiten Unter-Rheins, an Seine Chur-Fürstl. Durchl. zu Brandenburg, Friderich den Dritten, Nach der Ubergabe von Bonn, im Octob. Anno 1689', in Besser 1720, pp. 124–29 (p. 126).



Figure 4. Electress Sophie Charlotte in 1689. Engraving by Johann Hainzelmann. Courtesy of the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig.

dem ersten Anblick eines so grossen Glanzes /alsofort von einer rechten Bestürzung gerühret.²⁴ In other words, the couple's splendour conveys

²⁴ *Preußische Krönungs-Geschichte / Oder Verlauf der Ceremonien / Mit welchen Der Allerdurchlauchtigste / Großmächtigste Fürst und Herr / Herr Friderich der Dritte / Marggraf und Churfürst zu Brandenburg / Die Königliche Würde Des von Ihm gestifteten Königreichs Preussen angenommen / Und Sich und Seine Gemahlin*

the dignity of the monarchy, eliciting the appropriate feelings of awe and respect. This emphasis on display as a manifestation of majesty remains a topos associated with Sophie Charlotte, colouring the presentation of her in the funeral writing that accompanied her death only four years later in 1705. For example, Besser's epicedium, a poem of seventy verses contained in the official funerary work, evokes her regal image at her coronation:

Gewiß wer unter uns noch an die Krönung dencket:
 Wie unsre Königin in ihrem Schmucke saß,
 Wie aller Aug und Hertz entzückt auf Sie gelencket,
 Fast alles übrigen bey ihrer Pracht vergaß;
 Dem wird die Nichtigkeit, die wir anietzt beweinen,
 Bey dieser Fürstin Grab um so viel grösser scheinen.²⁵

In death as in life, the specific focus on Sophie Charlotte's glorious appearance ultimately draws attention to Friedrich's moment of triumph and the ascent of the Hohenzollerns.

The emphasis on female grandeur as a means of representing the magnificence of the dynasty is a long-established tradition particularly evident in the visual arts. Yet the depictions of Luise as an almost royal princess and Sophie Charlotte as queen represent a shift within the conventions of Hohenzollern occasional writing that responds to the establishment of the monarchy, the key achievement of Friedrich's reign. Up to this point occasional writing dedicated to the depiction of dynastic women was concerned not so much with sumptuous display but with fertility and virtue. The sample of material explored in this article suggests that occasional poetry provides the ideal medium for a detailed projection of the feminine ideal. It also suggests the extent to which Hohenzollern female identity conforms to traditional norms. While it is possible to identify a distinctive Hohenzollern female identity, this is only to a limited extent. The image of the Great Electress, who shares the physical vigour and battle-hardiness of her husband, complements the typically martial stylisation of the dynasty. It is rooted in Dorothea's particular characteristics, and although transferred to Sophie Charlotte, this is for a very brief period. Female piety is a much more enduring characteristic than bravery and strength. Such piety is typically identified

/ Die Allerdurchlauchtigste Fürstin und Frau / Frau Sophie Charlotte [...] Den 18. Januarii des 1701. Jahres Durch die Salbung als König und Königin einweihen lassen, Cölln an der Spree 1702, 25. For extracts from the *Krönungs-Geschichte* with an English translation, see Friedrich and Smart, pp. 180–259.

²⁵ *Christ-Königliches Trauer- Und Ehren-Gedächtnüs / Der Weyland Allerdurchlauchtigsten Großmächtigsten Fürstin und Frauen / Frauen Sophien Charlotten / Königin in Preussen / [...] Als dieselbe am 1. Febr. 1705. zu Hannover höchstseligst in dem Herrn entschlaffen. Und Darauf den 28. Junii, mit Königl. Solennitäten in die Königl. und Chw-fürstliche Grufft der Dohm-Kirche in Berlin beygesetzt worden [...], Cölln an der Spree 1705.* HAB Signatur: Gm 2^o 54. Besser's epicedium 'An Se. Königl. Majestät von Preussen / Über dem Absterben Ihrer allervollkommensten Gemahlinn, Königin Sophie Charlotte' is also published in Besser 1720, pp. 145–58 (145).

with prayerfulness, which is in turn associated with a discrete female sphere, uniting mother and daughter, or daughter-in-law, and the electresses of Brandenburg with the landgravines of Hessen-Kassel. However, of all the dynastic women discussed here, Sophie Charlotte pursued the most varied interests, be it as musician, patron of art and architecture or as force behind the establishment of the *Königliche Preußische Societät der Wissenschaften*. It may well be that a more exhaustive examination of writing dedicated to her will reveal nuances that point to a new understanding of the consort's role in the early eighteenth century.