

Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel

The **Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel** (German: *Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel*), spelled **Hesse-Cassel** during its entire existence,^[a] was a state in the Holy Roman Empire that was directly subject to the Emperor. The state was created in 1567 when the Landgraviate of Hesse was divided upon the death of Philip I, Landgrave of Hesse. His eldest son William IV inherited the northern half of the Landgraviate and the capital of Kassel. The other sons received the Landgraviate of Hesse-Marburg, the Landgraviate of Hesse-Rheinfels and the Landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt

During the Napoleonic reorganisation of the Empire in 1803, the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel was elevated to an Electorate and Landgrave William IX became an Imperial Elector. Many members of the Hesse-Kassel House served in the Danish military gaining high ranks and power in the Oldenburg realm due to the fact that they were a cadet branch of the Oldenburg dynasty members of the family who have been known to serve Denmark-Norway are Prince Frederik of Hesse-Kassel, Prince Frederick of Hesse-Kassel, Prince Charles of Hesse-Kassel. It was later occupied by French troops and became part of the Kingdom of Westphalia, a French satellite state. The Electorate of Hesse was restored at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, though by that time there was no longer an emperor to elect.

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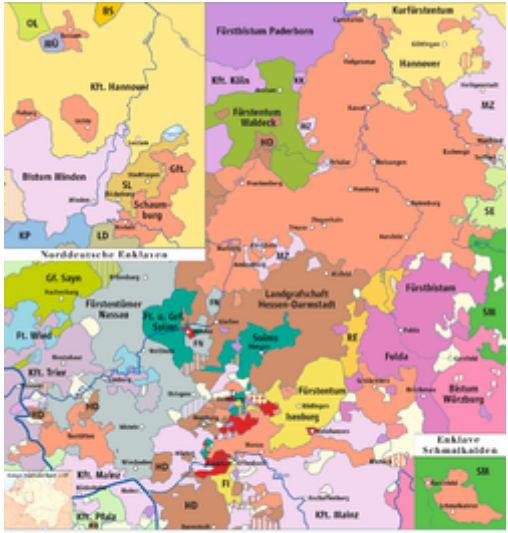
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History

The Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel was founded by William IV the Wise, the eldest son of Philip I. On his father's death in 1567, the Landgraviate of Hesse was divided into four parts. William IV received about half of the territory, with Kassel as his capital. Hesse-Kassel expanded in 1604 when Maurice, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel inherited the Landgraviate of Hesse-Marburg from his childless uncle, Louis IV, Landgrave of Hesse-Marburg (1537–1604).

Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel <i>Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel</i>	
1567–1803	
	
Coat of arms (1736–1804)	
	
Hesse-Kassel in 1789	
Status	Landgraviate
Capital	Kassel
Common languages	German, Hessian
Religion	Lutheranism Calvinism (from 1605)
Government	Absolute monarchy
Landgrave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1567–1592 William IV • 1730–1751 Frederick I, King of Sweden • 1751–1760 William VIII • 1760–1785 Frederick II • 1785–1803 William IX (Elector of Hesse)

Thirty Years' War

In 1605, Maurice became Calvinist and entered the Thirty Years' War on the Protestant side. After being forced to cede some of his territories to Hesse-Darmstadt, Maurice abdicated in 1627 in favour of his son William V. His younger sons received appanages, which created several cadet lines in yet another partition of Hesse. William V allied himself with Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and then France, losing most of Hesse-Kassel when Imperial troops invaded. He died in exile in 1637, leaving his widow Amalie Elisabeth of Hanau-Münzenberg to act as regent for their eight-year-old son William VI.

Amalie Elisabeth vigorously advanced the interests of Hesse-Kassel. After expelling Imperial troops from Hesse-Kassel, she sent troops to take the city of Marburg, which her father-in-law had lost to their Hesse-Darmstadt relatives. At the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Hesse-Kassel was further rewarded with most of the County of Schaumburg and the newly-secularized Hersfeld Abbey. Amalie Elisabeth also introduced the rule of primogeniture to prevent Hesse-Kasse from being divided again in the future. However, her health was ruined by the stresses of the war and she died in 1651.

17th and 18th centuries

William VI, who came of age in 1650, was an enlightened patron of learning and the arts. He was succeeded by his son William VII, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, then an infant, who died in 1670. He was succeeded by his brother Charles I. Charles' chief claim to fame is that he hired out his soldiers to foreign powers as auxiliaries, as a means of improving the finances of his principality. William V was succeeded by Landgraves William VI and William VII. Frederick I of Sweden, the next landgrave, became by marriage King of Sweden. Although the Landgraviate was in personal union with Sweden from 1730 to 1751, the King's younger brother, Prince William, ruled in Kassel as regent until he succeeded his brother as William VIII.

On Frederick I's death in 1751, he was succeeded by his brother William VIII, who fought as an ally of Kingdom of Great Britain during the Seven Years' War. His successor, Frederick II, converted to Catholicism after a long line of Protestant Landgraviates. When the American Revolutionary War broke out, Frederick II leased Hessian troops to Great Britain for service in America.

End of the Landgraviate

Following the reorganization of the German states during the German mediatisation of 1803, the Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel was raised to the Electorate of Hesse and Landgrave William IX was elevated to Imperial Elector, taking the title William I, Elector of Hesse. The principality thus became known as *Kurhessen*, although still usually referred to as Hesse-Kassel.

In 1806, William I was dispossessed by Napoleon Bonaparte for his support of the Kingdom of Prussia. Kassel was designated as the capital of a new Kingdom of Westphalia, where Napoleon appointed his brother Jérôme Bonaparte as king. Following Napoleon's defeat in 1813, the elector was restored. At the Congress of Vienna, a number of Napoleonic electorates were elevated to kingdoms, and William tried to secure recognition as King of the Chatti. However, he was rebuffed by the Great Powers, who listed him as a "Royal Highness" along with the other grand dukes.^[1] To secure his pre-eminence over his cousin, the Grand Duke of Hesse in the former Hesse-Darmstadt, William chose to keep his title of Prince-Elector. The rulers of the Electorate of Hesse became the only Prince-Electors in the German Confederation even though there was no longer a Holy Roman Emperor for them to elect.

Hessian troops in foreign service

The Landgraves of Hesse-Kassel were famous for renting out their army to European Great Powers during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was a widespread practice at the time for small countries to rent out troops to larger countries in exchange for subsidies. International jurists drew a distinction between mercenaries and auxiliaries (*Hilfstruppen*). Mercenaries served in foreign armies as individuals, while auxiliaries were sent by their prince to the aid of another prince.^[2]

	to 1821)
History	
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">EstablishedRaised to Electorate</div>	<div><p>1567</p><p>1803</p></div>
<div><p>Preceded by</p><p> Landgraviate of Hesse</p></div>	<div><p>Succeeded by</p><p>Electorate of Hesse </p></div>
Today part of	 Germany

Hesse-Kassel took the practice to an extreme, maintaining 5.3% of its population under arms in 1730.^[3] This was a higher proportion than even Prussia,^[3] a country that was so heavily militarized that it was described as "not a country with an army, but an army with a country". The Hessian army served as a readily-available reserve for the Great Powers.^[4]

During the American War of Independence, 25% of the British army consisted of troops rented from German princes, half of whom came from Hesse-Kassel and nearby Hesse-Hanau. For this reason, Americans refer to all German troops serving with the British armies as "Hessians".^[5] a form of synecdoche.

Other uses

The village of Hessen Cassel, Indiana near Fort Wayne, founded by German immigrants, is named for the Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel.

See also

- List of rulers of Hesse
- List of Swedish monarchs
- List of Finnish monarchs
- Line of succession to the Hesse Throne
- New Sweden
- Pennsylvania Dutch
- New Netherland

Notes

- a. Following the German spelling reform of the early 20th century, the town of Cassel became Kassel, long after the dissolution of Hesse-Kassel itself.

References

- Satow, Ernest Mason (1932). *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice* London: Longmans.
- Atwood, Rodney (2002). *The Hessians: Mercenaries from Hessen-Kassel in the American Revolution* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. p. 1 ISBN 9780521526371
- Black, Jeremy (1994). *European Warfare, 1660-1815* London: Routledge. ISBN 9781135369552 "Whereas in the mid-eighteenth century Austria and Russia had between approximately 1.1 per cent and 1.5 per cent of their population in the army the percentage for Prussia for 4.2. ... In 1730, a year of peace but also of war preparations, Hesse-Cassel had 1 in 19 of the population under arms".
- Tilly, Charles (1992). *Coercion, Capital, and European States*(<https://books.google.com/books?id=b1FzvFLSBBUC>) Cambridge: Blackwell. ISBN 1-55786-368-7.
- Kennedy, David M. (2012). *The American Pageant* Cengage Learning. p. 147."Because most of these soldiers-for-hire came from the Germany principality of Hesse, the Americans called all the European mercenaries Hessians".

External links

- Hoeckmann.de: Map of Hesse (Northern part) — in 1789
- Hoeckmann.de: Map of Hesse (Southern part) — in 1789

<div><div> </div><div>Preceded by</div><div><u>House of Palatinate-Zweibrücken</u></div></div>	<div><div> </div><div>Landgraves of Hesse-Kassel</div><div>1567–1803</div></div>	<div><div> </div><div>Succeeded by</div><div><u>House of Holstein-Gottorp</u></div></div>
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