

William Makepeace Thackeray, *The First Four Georges*, Parts 1 and 2)

What is Thackeray like as a historian? What is his persona? What are his political opinions? What is his definition of history (or of what he is writing)? Why does he emphasize that he isn't writing "grave historical treatises" (2, 10)? Do you like him? Do you trust him?

George I

How does he describe the Hanoverians in their pre-British days (2-3)? Hanover (8-9)? Why does he emphasize the disparity of wealth and poverty on the European continent (4-5)? What does Thackeray think of Hanoverian religious convictions (5-6)? What does he think about the hiring out of mercenaries (3, 6)?

What is Thackeray's final judgment of George I (6, 19)? On what does he base it? Why does Thackeray discount the opinion of George's cousin Elizabeth Charlotte?

What is Thackeray's opinion about the story of George I's wife? Does he think that George was a monster for locking her up in a castle (11-14)? Why does he compare her with Mary Queen of Scots and Caroline of Brunswick?

Who is Thackeray criticizing on 14-15 the King and his German train, or the newly loyal English subjects who received him? What does he think of the Duke of Marlborough?

What is the point of the counterfactual on p.16?

What does Thackeray think is the proper attitude toward monarchy (20)? Does he exemplify it?

George II

Why does Thackeray emphasize his small size? His martial nature? What is T's overall estimate of George II (177)?

What does Thackeray think about Sir Robert Walpole (176)?

What does T think of Queen Caroline? What is the point of the "J'aurai des maîtresses" anecdote (181)?

Why does Thackeray include a generalized evocation of old (18th century) England (184-7)? How persuasive is it?? What is the point of the newspaper excerpts on 187-8?

What does Thackeray think of George's fondness for things German (189-90)?

What does Thackeray think of his caperings as an old man (190-1)?