

HORACE WALPOLE'S CORRESPONDENCE

To MANN, Friday 29 January 1762

Arlington Street, Jan. 29, 1762.

I WISH you joy,¹ Sir Minister; the Czarina² is dead. As *we conquered America in Germany*,³ I hope we shall overrun Spain by this burial at Petersburg. Yet don't let us plume ourselves too fast—nothing is so like a queen as a king, nothing so like a predecessor as a successor. The favourites of the Prince Royal of Prussia, who had suffered so much for him, were woefully disappointed, when he became the present glorious monarch;⁴ they found the English maxim true, that the king never dies—that is, the dignity and passions of the Crown never die. We were not much less defeated of our hopes on the decease of Philip V.⁵ The Grand Duke⁶ has been proclaimed Czar at the army in Pomerania; he may love conquest like that army, or not know it is conquering, like his aunt. However, we cannot suffer more by this event. I would part with the Empress-Queen, on no better a prospect.

We have not yet taken the galleons, nor destroyed the Spanish fleet. Nor have they enslaved Portugal,⁷ nor you made a triumphant entry into Naples— My dear Sir, you see how lucky you was not to

1. Hardwicke wrote that the Czarina's death 'would probably take a great strength out of the scale of the Viennaliance, it would probably make those allies, and particularly the Empress-Queen more treatable' (to Newcastle, 28 Jan., BM Add. MSS 32934, f. 48).

2. The Czarina Elizabeth (HW). She d. 5 Jan. 1762.

3. 'America has been conquered in Germany, where Prince Ferdinand's victories have shattered the whole military power of . . . France' (Pitt's speech in the House of Commons, 13 Nov. 1761, Basil Williams, *Life of William Pitt*, 1913, ii. 131; it is quoted in part by HW in *Mem. Geo. III* i. 76).

4. Frederick II.

5. Of Spain, whose death in 1746 did not interfere with Spain's prosecution of the War of the Austrian Succession.

6. Peter III (HW). 'Hague, January 26. We have just received an account

of the demise of the Empress of Russia, who died the 5th instant at Petersburg; and we likewise hear, that upon the arrival of that news in Pomerania, His Imperial Highness the Great Duke was immediately proclaimed Emperor . . . at the head of the Russian army' (*London Gazette* No. 10178, 26–30 Jan.). Peter III was not with the army in person; he was at St Petersburg when his aunt died (R. N. Bain, *Peter III*, 1902, pp. 34–40; *Mercurie historique*, 1762, clii. 217–18).

7. 'Portugal is, by the last accounts from Madrid of the 17th December, to be attacked if she refuses to join. . . . Lord Bristol left Madrid on the 17th past, and took the route of Lisbon; the Spanish troops were then said to be in motion towards the frontiers of Portugal.' The number, according to French sources, was 6,000 (Yorke to Newcastle 5 and 15 Jan., BM Add. MSS 32933, ff. 71–2, 294).