1 Introduction: rethinking royalists and royalism

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I

Royalism has never been particularly fashionable among historians of the English Civil Wars. There has long been an unfortunate tendency to dismiss those who were loyal to the Stuarts as, in the immortal words of *1066 and All That*, 'wrong but romantic', or as the products of unthinking political and religious reaction. We do possess a number of first-class studies of those who were loyal to the monarch,[1] but when one compares this work to the multitude of books and articles on the various parliamentarians and sectaries of the period one is struck by the great imbalance between the two. As long ago as 1981 Ronald Hutton drew our attention to the lack of research on royalism, and a decade later Conrad Russell wrote that

> it is the English Royalists, not the English Parliamentarians, who are the real peculiarity we should be attempting to explain ... The intellectual and social antecedents of Royalism have not yet been studied with the care which has for many generations been lavished on the Parliamentarians.[2]

Since then, a number of important studies have been produced by historians and literary scholars, including David L. Smith's *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement* (1994), Michael Mendle's *Dangerous Positions: The Estates of the Realm and the Making of the Answer to the XIX Propositions* (1985), James Loxley's *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (1997), Jerome de Groot's *Royalist Identities* (2004), and Geoffrey Smith's excellent *The Cavaliers in Exile, 1640–1660* (2003). Despite the high quality of this work we still know far too little about those who were loyal to the Stuarts. This strange neglect of royalism is unfortunate because we can never hope

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[1] Ronald Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort, 1642–1646* (2nd edn, 1999) and David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England, 1649–1660* (New Haven, CT, 1960).
[2] Ronald Hutton, 'The Structure of the Royalist Party, 1642–1646', *HJ*, 24, 3 (1981), 553–69; Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637–1642* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 526, 532.

to unlock the essential characteristics and dynamics of the conflict which engulfed Britain in the 1640s and 1650s until we know far, far more about those men and women from all levels of society who supported the king and thumbed their noses at the puritans and Roundheads.

II

The following ten chapters in this book are intended as a contribution to the task of recovering the royalist experience of Civil War and Revolution. This volume has evolved from an international conference entitled 'Royalists and Royalism: Politics, Religion, and Culture, 1640–60' that we jointly organized at Clare College, Cambridge, in July 2004. This conference brought together more than seventy scholars and students from four continents and a variety of disciplines, all of whom shared a common interest in the phenomenon of mid-seventeenth-century British royalism. The chapters presented here are not, however, merely a random assortment of the papers presented over that wonderfully sunny and convivial weekend by the banks of the River Cam. Rather, we have decided to focus this volume on the decade prior to the regicide; at a later date we intend to produce a collection which examines the sorry tale of loyalism during the Interregnum. For this volume we have selected seven of the almost twenty papers at the conference which examined the years before the regicide; the chosen papers are those which we believe best suit our desire to produce a thematically and chronologically coherent treatment of those who sided with Charles I. We have also commissioned three new chapters (those by Kishlansky, Mendle and Roy) to fill perceived gaps in this volume's coverage of the period under examination. In doing so, we believe that we have assembled an exciting range of high-quality chapters by established and emerging historians and literary scholars. In what follows we shall briefly consider the themes of the contributors' chapters and suggest some of their strengths before turning to some of the possible lacunae within them and between them. We shall then suggest how these issues relate to a number of unresolved (and in some cases, unasked) questions about royalism, before concluding with suggestions as to the most fruitful directions for future research.

The Short Parliament marks an appropriate starting-point for this volume because, as Mark Kishlansky argues in his chapter, it was a watershed in the process by which Charles I himself became the leader of a royalist party. Kishlansky offers a fundamental reappraisal of Charles I's handling of the Short Parliament, arguing that the king displayed 'a

sincere willingness to work with Parliament', that he constantly sought to achieve a compromise with the parliamentary leaders, and that he 'ventured every conceivable concession in every possible way'. By contrast, the parliamentary leaders, especially in the Commons, were both provocative and intransigent: they launched repeated assaults on the royal prerogatives and revenues. Nothing the king could have done or offered would have placated them. This reassessment of the Short Parliament forms part of Kishlansky's wider reappraisal of Charles I's personality and political style. It suggests a monarch far more flexible and conciliatory, and much less arrogant and duplicitous, than that portrayed in much of the existing literature. It also suggests a monarch who was anxious to reach a compromise with his leading subjects and who only concluded gradually and reluctantly that he was unable to agree terms with them.

This leads us naturally into an examination of how and when a royalist movement emerged. In his chapter, Malcolm Smuts focuses on the role of the Court and courtiers in the formation of royalism. He demonstrates that there were a number of rifts at Court at various points in time but suggests that the really crucial split occurred in 1640–2 *among* those courtiers who had favoured pro-Protestant, pro-French policies during the 1630s. It was this split, he suggests, between men who had often been friends and allies during the Personal Rule, that was critical in the emergence of a royalist party. Smuts argues that those royalist swordsmen like Suckling, Goring, Percy and Jermyn, who became involved in the Army plots, were not – as has sometimes been implied – would-be absolutists or crypto-Catholics. Instead, they were political pragmatists and religious sceptics, with an interest in military affairs. In terms of their background and earlier careers, they had much in common with other courtly figures, some of whom later became parliamentarians. Smuts also suggests that the apparent differences between the army plotters and constitutional royalists such as Hyde and Falkland may have owed more to contingency and short-term tactical decisions than to any fundamental principles. Smuts's chapter thus not only sheds much new light on the politics of the Court at the beginning of the 1640s, but also helps to clarify the nature of the various strands of royalism and the relationship between them.

One of those strands was epitomized in the king's *Answer to the Nineteen Propositions*, drafted by Falkland and Culpeper, and published in June 1642. Michael Mendle argues in his chapter that the *Answer* envisaged a mixed monarchy in which the three elements of king, House of Lords and House of Commons were equated with the three categories of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. The functions of these three

elements were kept clearly distinct, other than in the passage of legislation: Mendle explores the striking metaphor by which each 'estate' was imagined as a river that needed to be kept within its proper bounds. The distinction of their functions was crucial, and Mendle argues that this rested on a doctrine of the separation of powers that anticipated that associated with Montesquieu in the eighteenth century. In the *Answer*, the king and his advisers defended the crown's position by arguing that the assumption of executive powers by the two Houses of Parliament threatened to overturn the natural balance of the constitution. In the later 1640s, other royalists, such as Charles Dallison, continued to advocate the doctrine of separate powers, and it enabled other loyalists to forge links with Independents or Levellers (a point also developed in Rachel Foxley's chapter). The doctrine of separate powers was conveniently flexible and Mendle shows it re-emerged in the Instrument of Government (1653) and was frequently debated in the Protectorate parliaments; its influence was also apparent in the conceptualisation of the Restoration monarchy in 1660.

In examining what she calls the 'rainbow coalition' of royalism, Barbara Donagan explores the diverse opinions and varying degrees of commitment that lay under the broad umbrella of royalist allegiance. She also notes the remarkable similarities in the constitutional views of moderate royalists and moderate parliamentarians. Perhaps the most important distinction between the adversaries was that for many royalists the choice of sides 'seems to have been almost instinctive', and often rested on a strong element of personal loyalty to the monarch or, as Donagan suggests, to local grandees who became royalist officers and decided to offer their allegiance to the king. The role of the personal in the formation of royalist allegiance may help to explain why so many royalists displayed a deep sensitivity to affronts and a notorious propensity to violence and feuds (a theme which is also addressed in Ian Roy's chapter). Donagan is at pains to stress the more personal and irrational aspects of royalism; many sided with the king out of an almost visceral sense that he was a more convincing safeguard of order, hierarchy and settled institutions, including the established Church of England, than the leading parliamentarians. However, for royalists pragmatism and prudence sometimes ran counter to their natural inclinations, and these tensions help to explain why in some cases allegiances were so volatile. The problem of what one contemporary called 'tergiversatious bats' was by no means confined to the royalists, of course, but the highly instinctive and personal nature of so much royalist allegiance often led, Donagan argues, to a collision between such emotional feelings and more rational ideas and calculations of self-interest. It was this kind

of collision that accounts for some of the volatility of the king's armies and the decision of many royalists to retire from the fray at different points in time.

Donagan's emphasis on the role of the personal within royalism connects neatly with David Scott's discussion of the dynamics of counsel and factionalism in the king's party between 1642 and 1646. Scott shows how Charles I's marked preference for personal counsel and for informal discussion ensured that his reliance on 'cabinet counsels' – already evident during the Personal Rule – persisted into the 1640s. Scott argues that as a result, the real seat of policy-making at Oxford lay in the king's bedchamber rather than in the Privy Council or the Council of War. Membership of the bedchamber gave direct access and personal proximity to the king, and this was the basis of the considerable political influence wielded by men such as Richmond, Ashburnham and Porter. The careers of these and other members of the bedchamber reflected what Scott calls the 'triumph of access over high office', a triumph that helps to explain the fierce competition for places in the bedchamber that was apparent throughout this period.

Scott's chapter also attempts to shed light on the nature of – and the relations between – different groupings of royalists. He suggests that an underlying antagonism persisted between the swordsmen and many of the leading civilian councillors. In the wake of the battle of Naseby, there was a hardening of the division between those, such as Richmond, Hertford and Hyde, who continued to seek a negotiated settlement, and those, like Ashburnham, Culpeper, Jermyn and Digby, who favoured trying to bring in foreign support on the king's behalf, beginning with his Scottish supporters. Scott is highly critical of the traditional description of the royalist leaders as either 'absolutists' or 'constitutionalists'. Instead, he posits a novel interpretation of the influence of Machiavelli and Tacitus upon the justifications for the use of force put forward by Lord Jermyn and his allies. He contrasts this allegedly Tacitean politics with the arguments of Hyde, Richmond, Hertford and their allies who tended to emphasize the relationship of trust, loyalty and even love that should ideally exist between king and people.

Charles's relations with his family and closest advisers were reflected most clearly in his private correspondence, and these letters – and the rhetorical strategies that Charles deployed in them – form the subject of Sarah Poynting's chapter. Poynting argues that Charles's deep desire to be 'rightly vnderstood' coloured his letters throughout the Civil Wars until the very eve of the regicide. In particular, the king often added short apostiles to his letters that provide helpful insights into his state of mind. It seems that Charles, far from being aloof, stern and authoritarian,

strongly disliked being at odds with those to whom he was close. When Jermyn and Culpepper wrote to him in 'astonishingly blunt' terms about the Newcastle Propositions, Charles's response was to try to cajole and persuade them rather than to command them into agreement with him. His letters to Ormond, Lanark and Hamilton adopted an air of much greater spontaneity and immediacy, while his correspondence from Carisbrooke Castle to Henry Firebrace, Silius Titus and Sir William Hopkins was easy, relaxed and cordial. All in all, Charles adopted a variety of rhetorical strategies and voices in his correspondence, depending on the person to whom he was writing. Poynting's nuanced and intriguing examination of the king's writings reminds us that even now, more than a century and a half after Carlyle's edition of Cromwell's letters and almost seventy years after that of W. C. Abbott, we lack a comparable source for the study of the king. Poynting's forthcoming edition of Charles's writings promises to be a major source which will simultaneously allow for a much more rounded picture of the king than has hitherto been possible, and force us to re-examine much of the received wisdom concerning politics during the 1640s.

Ian Roy's chapter explores various ideals of royalism and the extent to which these were lived out in practice. He traces the positive images of Cavaliers that the king and his advisers sought to project as a recruitment strategy in the summer of 1642. The *Military Orders* of August 1642, together with later royal proclamations, set out codes of conduct that emphasized the importance of loyalty and obedience, as opposed to the 'popularity' associated with the London rebels. In practice, however, the royalists faced widespread problems of poor behaviour, disorder and absenteeism. Roy contrasts the nobility of character displayed by some Catholic martyr-soldiers, such as Sir Henry Gage, with the record of other rather less attractive figures. By 1644–5, pillage by royalists was an increasing problem, and the lofty ideals of royalist loyalty and nobility that the king and his advisers had presented in the summer of 1642 were little more than a distant memory.

Rachel Foxley explores whether the attempts by some royalists to form a rapprochement with the army leaders during the summer and autumn of 1647 were the product of shared, rational principles or the result of grubby, temporary political opportunism. Many of the royalists and the Independents in the army and the two Houses of Parliament certainly had some significant areas of shared ideological ground, not least a hatred of presbyterianism and an increasing resentment of parliamentarian tyranny. A commitment to religious freedom of conscience was something that the Independents and most royalists could also accept, as is clear from the remarkable religious clauses of the *Heads of the*

Proposals, which envisaged a moderated episcopacy, shorn of coercive powers, co-existing with a generous measure of liberty of conscience.

Yet, as Foxley argues, a willingness to build bridges with royalists was not the same thing at all as actually becoming a royalist. There was a genuine gulf of ideology and principle between the two sides in the projected settlement of 1647 over the nature of the king's powers. At a particular moment in time, *individual* royalists were indeed able to open up meaningful links with *individual* Independents and Levellers – as the rapport between John Lilburne and the royalist judge David Jenkins shows – but Foxley argues persuasively that royalists did not compromise their core beliefs in these negotiations. Any alliance that they might have been able to forge would have been a temporary and 'self-conscious and uncomfortable' one. Even as they conducted these ultimately unsuccessful negotiations both sides were undoubtedly aware that they would, in all likelihood, be forced to fight each other at some point in the future.

Blair Worden develops Foxley's theme of the remarkable resilience of royalism during the years of the king's captivity. He argues that 'never was Royalism more buoyant on the page than in the two years that preceded the execution of the King'. Worden's reappraisal of Andrew Marvell draws out the royalist aspects of a poet traditionally classified as a parliamentarian. He argues that between 1648 and 1650, Marvell wrote four poems that reveal a royalist allegiance. In particular, possibly Marvell's most famous poem, *An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* (1650), can in Worden's view sustain a royalist perspective. In the *Horatian Ode*, Marvell's Cromwell is driven by ambition: he is 'restless Cromwell', pursuing his 'fiery way'. The contrast with Marvell's depiction of Charles I, who at his execution 'nothing common did or mean / Upon that memorable scene', is very pronounced and reflects the extent to which Marvell continued to cling to royalist sentiments. He was never drawn to republicanism, or to the idea of a sovereign parliament. Instead, the extraordinarily complex and enigmatic nature of the *Horatian Ode* helps us to chart the painful process of adjustment by which royalist attitudes and allegiances began to come to terms with the regicide.

The essential resilience and plasticity of royalism is also evident in Sean Kelsey's chapter, which claims that some royalists were already beginning, by the autumn of 1648, to think seriously about the possibility of life after Charles I, and to pin their hopes on the prospective succession of Charles II. Kelsey traces Charles I's deep distress at the concessions that he made during the treaty of Newport and his feeling that by making those concessions – however insincerely – he had come

too close to accepting his guilt for all of the blood shed during the Civil Wars. Figures such as Hyde and Ormond even wondered, Kelsey claims, if the king had made concessions that were not within his power to make. Kelsey shows how the knowledge that the Prince of Wales was at liberty, and the prospect that he might lead a royalist naval strike from the continent, directly shaped the course of events at Westminster. By the autumn of 1648, he suggests, some supporters of the House of Stuart were coming to regard the prospective succession of Charles II as a glimmer of opportunity, and were as a result more able to reconcile themselves to the possibility of Charles I's trial and execution.

III

There are striking convergences in this book between, say, the work of Donagan and Worden on the nature and extent of changes of allegiance during the conflict. There are also some equally striking tensions between, say, Kishlansky, who sees Charles I as a fundamentally honest character, and Kelsey, who describes the king as essentially duplicitous. Both individually and collectively, all of these chapters present royalism as a complex and fascinating phenomenon, full of vitality and vibrancy, and every bit as creative and worthy of scholarly interest as those whom they fought against on the battlefield and in print. In the light of these chapters it should no longer be possible to view royalism as a static, fixed and unchanging entity. It was an allegiance in the process of constant adaptation in response to changing contexts and circumstances, and it looks different depending on whether we are examining the formation of the royalist party in the early 1640s, the period of actual war-fighting, or the complex series of negotiations which took place after the surrender of the king to the Scots in 1646. The royalists described in this collection were not reactionary, absolutist extremists but pragmatic, moderate men who were not so different in temperament or background from the vast majority of those who decided to side with, or were forced by circumstances to side with, parliament and its army. One is also repeatedly struck by the recurring theme of the importance of contingent and personal factors in the creation and maintenance (or, indeed, recantation) of royalist allegiance. Finally, it is important to point out that not the least of the strengths of this collection is the evident willingness of at least some historians and literary scholars to engage with each other's arguments, sources and methodologies. It is to be hoped that the example of the chapters produced by Poynting and Worden will convince other researchers of the great benefits to be gained by sometimes stepping outside their own disciplines.

There are, however, a number of important gaps and omissions in this collection as a whole, and these weaknesses are symptomatic of some of the most important problems with the current conceptualization of royalists and royalism among the broader scholarly community. These weaknesses include a strangely old-fashioned preoccupation with social elites; a two-dimensional model of allegiance which does not take account of the complexity of politics and war; and a reluctance to define or theorize the exact nature or definition of royalism.

In general, these chapters are preoccupied with the careers and choices of high-status males at the Court, and among the upper echelons of the military and clergy. In particular, a number of authors have concerned themselves with the phenomenon of factional infighting at Court. Such an approach is not intrinsically without merit, as is demonstrated by the wonderfully erudite arguments and conclusions of Malcolm Smuts. Factional struggles among the elite are certainly of interest if one is interested in factional struggles among the elite, but do they illuminate, or even come close to explaining, the wider cultural, social, religious or political culture of royalism? Why, we might ask, when there are so many gaps in our knowledge about the nature and extent of the broader royalist party, do so many scholars feel the need continually to revisit the minutiae of these internecine squabbles? Have these lengthy researches resulted in anything other than the invention of new names for factions that were identified long ago by scholars such as S. R. Gardiner or David Underdown? This question is particularly pertinent in the wake of Geoffrey Smith's recent *The Cavaliers in Exile, 1640–1660* which has argued forcibly that faction is not the key to royalist politics that many imagine it to be: most supporters of the king never adhered to a faction; many people moved between different factions at various times; and there were personal and familial relationships which cut across factions, just as there were intense political and personal disagreements between people who were supposedly members of the same faction.

This emphasis on the petty jealousies and hatreds of the leading loyalists is unfortunate because it contributes to a widely held impression that the royalist party consisted of nothing more than a few dozen grandees with very few followers among the wider population. There is a crying need for more work on at least some of the hundreds of thousands of men and women outside the rarefied milieu of the Court who supported the king during the conflict. One naturally thinks of the tens of thousands of men who enlisted in the royalist armies but it is important to realize that only a minority of the king's supporters ever took up arms; the loyalism of the vast majority of the king's supporters necessarily consisted of less

active or dangerous activities, but those actions were vital to the maintenance of the cause and the ability of that cause to raise, deploy and maintain significant numbers of armed men. To borrow a metaphor from modern warfare, we need to begin to consider the nature, extent and composition of the water in which those who actively fought for the king were nourished and protected.

A study of royalism below the level of the elite has never been attempted because many scholars in the field share the late Gerald Aylmer's scepticism as to the validity of research into royalism among lower social groupings.[3] There has also been little or no attempt to apply the methodology of cultural history to the study of royalists, except in the context of high culture and entertainment.[4] Until very recently one could have been forgiven for assuming that, apart from Queen Henrietta Maria, there were no female royalists.[5] It is surprising that so little has been published on the use of print by those loyal to the Stuarts during the Civil Wars. Print has always been seen as a radical, destabilizing force: an agent of social change, innovation, and revolution.[6] It is high time to demonstrate how lively, vibrant and exciting the use of print as an agent of social stability and cohesion could be.[7] In the same way that the neglect of royalists and the disproportionate emphasis on the parliamentarians has impaired our knowledge of the Civil Wars in general, we can never hope to understand the role played by print in the conflict until we know much more about how the royalists approached and used this medium of communication. The study of royalist print-culture will necessarily transform our understanding of the relationship between royalist activists and the wider population.[8] It is true that there has been

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[3] G.E. Aylmer, 'Collective Mentalities in Mid-seventeenth Century England: II. Royalist Attitudes', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 37 (1987), 29.

[4] R. Malcolm Smuts, *Culture and Power in England, 1585–1685* (1999).

[5] Hero Chalmers, *Royalist Women Writers 1650–1689* (Oxford, 2004); Jerome de Groot, 'Gorgeous Gorgons: Royalist Women', ch. 5 of his *Royalist Identities* (Basingstoke, 2004); de Groot, 'Royalist Women' and Claire Walker, 'Loyal and Dutiful Subjects: English Nuns and Stuart Politics', in James Daybell (ed.), *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450–1700* (Aldershot, 2006).

[6] The classic statement of this position is Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1979).

[7] Jason McElligott, 'Stabilizing and Destabilizing Britain in the 1680s', in Jason McElligott (ed.), *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 9–10.

[8] On this see Jason McElligott, 'Edward Crouch: a Poor Printer in Seventeenth Century London', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, ns, 1 (2000), 49–73; McElligott, 'John Crouch: A Royalist Journalist in Cromwellian England', *Media History*, 10, 3 (2004), 139–55; McElligott, 'The Politics of Sexual Libel: Royalist Propaganda in the 1640s', *HLQ*, 67 (March 2004), 75–99; and *Royalism, Print and Censorship in Revolutionary England* (Woodbridge, 2007).

a good deal of recent work on royalist literature but even here, with a few honourable exceptions, there has been a tendency to concentrate on a small range of topics; the *Eikon Basilike* itself, or canonical authors and poets with connections to the royal Court or other prominent loyalists.[9] There were, quite simply, many more royalists and many more different types of royalists than the existing literature might lead one to believe.

A fundamental problem with the current conceptualization of royalism is the inability to think beyond the simplistic and all-too convenient dichotomy between 'absolutists' and 'constitutionalists'. A prime example of the limitations of this hoary paradigm is afforded by David Scott's chapter in this volume. He is loudly critical of the division of loyalism into these two separate, mutually antagonistic groupings. Instead, he argues that the real division was between those drawn to the justifications of the use of force put forward by the classical thinker Tacitus, and those who were opposed to this world view. At its most basic level this new model of royalist politics is open to the objection that it is difficult to establish that any of Scott's 'Taciteans' had ever read Tacitus, let alone digested and appropriated his arguments. More importantly, however, it is clear that we are still being encouraged to think of politics in terms of strict polarities. Some readers may wonder whether Scott offers us not so much a thoroughgoing rethink of royalist politics as a rebranding of the familiar categories with 'Tacitean' replacing 'absolutist' and 'anti-Tacitean' being substituted for 'moderate' or 'constitutionalist'.

The construction and maintenance of a strict dichotomy between 'absolutists' and 'moderates' is problematic because it tends to ignore a whole spectrum of rich and variegated opinion between these theoretical extremes. It also presupposes the same penchant for intellectual clarity, consistency and logical thinking among the supporters of the king as is expected of modern scholars. Only a relatively small number of royalists could ever have experienced the Civil Wars without borrowing bits and pieces of ideological baggage from the theoretical extremes of 'absolutism' and 'moderation' at different times, or perhaps even at the same time. The strict demarcation of two theoretical extremes also leads to a remarkably static view of political allegiance which expects one to accept that people took fixed positions at the start of the conflict which they never altered during the terrible events of the following years. Rather than seeing royalist identity as a choice between two mutually exclusive extremes, we perhaps need to see a broad spectrum of opinion

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[9] See, for example, the disproportionate emphasis on the poet Henry Vaughan in Robert Wilcher's *The Writing of Royalism, 1628–1660* (Cambridge, 2001).

between these pure, unsullied ideological positions. If one accepts that
the royalist political spectrum is divided into a whole series of bands of
different colours which represent different political, religious and cul-
tural positions, then one must also accept that each distinct band of
colour shades into and is, to some extent at least, overlapped by the posi-
tions on either side of it. One might argue that there were certainly two
political positions which can be termed 'absolutist' or 'constitutionalist',
but they were distinct points joined by a much bigger, and arguably more
interesting and important, spectrum or continuum of inter-related and
overlapping positions which could, and did, change over time. Alter-
natively, one might consider that, apart from a few inconsequential
extremists, almost every royalist was a constitutional royalist, as that
term has been defined by David L. Smith.[10] Who could not be for
law, order, the ancient liberties of the subject and the church 'as by
Law established,' especially if the criteria for admission to that church
could be loosely defined and interpreted? If there is a sense in which
'absolutists' were almost as rare as hen's teeth, then perhaps the danger
implicit in 'constitutional royalism' is that the criteria for membership of
the club are so broad and general – so commonplace – that the term
encompasses almost everyone on the royalist side. We might need then
to be open to, and aware of, the broad range of political and religious
opinions, strategies and tactics which could be encompassed *within* the
mainstream of 'constitutional royalism'.

Scholars have usually been content to define a royalist as somebody
who took up arms for the king.[11] This definition has the benefit of
simplicity, but it does not enable us to do justice to the vast majority
of the population who supported one side or other in the conflict without
ever actually taking up arms. It also has the disadvantage of not enabling
us to consider how individuals viewed themselves: should we really
consider a man to have been a royalist who had no interest in politics
but was forcibly enlisted in the king's forces? Is it not time to move
beyond *prescriptive* definitions of royalism – what people must have
thought or believed in order to qualify for membership of the royalist
party – in favour of a *descriptive* definition which examines what actual
royalists thought, believed or argued? When one considers the diverse
men and women who sided with the king the only acceptable definition
of a royalist is this: somebody who, by thought or deed, identified

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[10]   David L. Smith, *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement, c. 1640–1649*
        (Cambridge, 1994).
[11]   James Loxley, *Royalism and poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword*
        (Basingstoke, 1997).

himself or herself as a royalist and was accepted as such by other individuals who defined themselves as royalists. These royalists could (and did) hold a wide variety of political or theological opinions but they were united by a concern to see the Stuarts return to power on their own terms or, failing that, the best possible terms available. This definition of royalism is admittedly broad, but is not so broad as to be meaningless. It also allows us to realize for the first time that not every expression of antipathy to parliament or sympathy for the plight of the king is evidence of royalism. The members of the New Model Army who advocated a temporary alliance with the supporters of the king in 1647 were not royalists.[12] They never defined themselves as such and were anxious to secure the return of the king to power on the best possible terms for themselves. For the same reasons it is clear that the Scottish army which invaded England on Charles I's behest in 1648 was not a royalist army.[13] Neither did the Catholic confederates of Ireland become royalists when they formed alliances with Ormond and his men.[14] It should also be clear that occasional expressions of sympathy for the personal plight of Charles I by a number of pro-parliamentary writers in the months before the regicide are not evidence of royalism.[15]

What then was the relationship between royalism and loyalism? Both terms were in use among contemporaries during the Civil Wars but the foreign root of the word 'royalist' – 'roy' is the old French word for 'king' – seems to have ensured that the supporters of the king referred to themselves more often as 'loyalists' than 'royalists'. Modern scholars have traditionally drawn a distinction between the royalist, whose obedience was to the person of the king, and the loyalist, whose allegiance was to the office and authority of the monarch. This is a convenient division, yet it is one of the themes of this introduction, and many of the chapters in this book, that the intellectual consistency and clear-cut polarities favoured by many scholars do not accurately describe the muddled and often confusing politics of the period. The nature and course of civil war politics is best explained not by reference to the history of political thought or ideas, but in terms of contingency, opportunism, short-term

[12] Michael Mendle, 'Putney's Pronouns: Identity and Indemnity in the Great Debate', in Mendle (ed.), *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, the Levellers, and the English State* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 125–47.

[13] David Stevenson, 'A Revolutionary Regime and the Press: The Scottish Covenanters and their Printers, 1638–51', *The Library*, 6th ser., 7 (1985), 315–37, at 332.

[14] David Scott, *Politics and War in the Three Stuart Kingdoms, 1637–49* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 182–3.

[15] Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, 1620–1660* (Cambridge, MA, 1961), pp. 121, 124; F. S. Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476–1776* (Urbana, IL, 1965), p. 215.

shifts of tactics, and simply muddling through in the face of unforeseen developments. There may have been a small number of intellectuals at the time who could maintain a distinction between 'royalism' and 'loyalism', but such men (and women) are necessarily few and far between in any age and are unlikely to exert any great influence over political discourse or the course of events during periods of trauma such as that which convulsed Britain during the 1640s. Instead, the vast majority of those who adhered to the king seem to have used the terms 'royalist' and 'loyalist' as synonyms. Indeed, the writer in the leading royalist newsbook of the late 1640s, *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, was adamant that his comrades formed the 'Royall, Loyall party', while another writer appealed to all those with 'honest, royall, and loyall hearts' to stand up for the king.[16] It is for this reason that we have used the terms interchangeably throughout this introduction, often alternating them merely to avoid repetition in the same or succeeding sentences.

IV

To conclude, the chapters in this book offer a variety of fresh and exciting perspectives on royalist politics, religion and culture in mid-seventeenth-century Britain. They provide us with an opportunity to redress the conventional scholarly focus on parliament, its armies, and the various sectaries who came to the fore during the Civil Wars. Such work will inevitably force us to rethink our assumptions about the royalists *and* their opponents, and will also provide us with a more rounded, and convincing, picture of the society in which they lived. The chapters by Mark Kishlansky and Sarah Poynting are important contributions to a necessary reassessment of the traditionally unsympathetic treatment of Charles I. There is also much that we do not yet know about the leading royalist courtiers, soldiers and clergymen. We have suggested, however, that future research on this relatively small number of men might usefully be broadened away from considerations of political faction-fighting. Scholars must realize that there were many individual royalists and types of royalism that have been almost completely ignored. It is vital to understand that there was such a thing as popular royalism, both in the sense of numerical popularity and the ability to appeal to men and women beyond the upper echelons of society. We need to know much more about royalism in Ireland and Scotland and the way in which loyalists from all three Stuart kingdoms interacted with each other,

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[16] *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, no. 18B, 11–18 Jan. 1648, sig. 4v; *Mercurius Elenticus*, no. 2, 22–29 April 1650, sig. 1r.

particularly when they were thrown together in less than salubrious conditions in exile on the continent.

Above all else, we would suggest that it is imperative to move beyond simple and simplistic dichotomies – 'absolutist' versus 'constitutionalist' – when describing and analyzing royalist politics and allegiance. A number of chapters in this collection have stressed the temporary, contingent nature of allegiance and drawn attention to a number of individuals whose loyalty shifted over time. These pieces provide fascinating insights which might usefully be mapped onto other individuals or groups of individuals, such as the large number of royalist troops who joined the New Model Army after Naseby, or the surprising number of royalist polemiasts who only went over to the side of the king in 1647 or 1648.[17] If, as we suspect, shifts in allegiance were much more common than has hitherto been realized and if, as we also suspect, there were discernible patterns to these shifting allegiances, then these chapters are important milestones in the conceptualization and understanding of political allegiance during the Civil Wars as a whole. We might no longer be able to think of allegiance as a fixed, unchanging and unchangeable entity. This insight may explain why all attempts to find pre-determining factors for political allegiance during the Civil Wars have failed. There was, quite simply, no single, fixed, pre-determined allegiance but a conscious choice to adhere to one side or the other which was dependent on a whole series of entirely contingent factors which differed from time to time, from place to place, and from person to person. What is more, scholars have not been sufficiently aware of the fact that for some people – Marchamont Nedham is the obvious example – we have to explain not one but two, or perhaps even three or more, changes of allegiance. The number of permutations and combinations of factors determining allegiance were enormous, but when one factors *changing* allegiances into the equation then there was never any prospect of finding pre-determining reasons for particular political stances. Royalism emerges from this collection as a much more variegated, complex, heterogeneous and interesting creed than has hitherto been described. We hope that in future years more and more graduate students who wish to work on the Civil Wars and Revolution will begin to examine those remarkably neglected men and women who chose loyalty and royalty. Only then will it finally be possible to come close to a balanced assessment of the causes, nature and effects of that calamitous conflict.

[17] For these turncoats see chapters four and five of McElligott, *Royalism, Print, and Censorship*.