

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON BRITAIN'S CIVIL WARS

Regicide and Republicanism: politics and ethics in the English Revolution, 1646-1659. By Sarah Barber. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998. Pp. x + 246. ISBN 1 85331 211 8. £40.00

The English Civil War: the essential readings. Edited by Peter Gaunt. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Pp. viii + 360. ISBN 0 631 20809 7. £15.99.

Soldiers, writers and statesmen of the English Revolution. Edited by Ian Gentles, John Morrill and Blair Worden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. xi + 343. ISBN 0 521 59120 1. £40.00.

Constructing Cromwell: ceremony, portrait, and print, 1645-1661. By Laura Lunger Knoppers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. xiii + 249. ISBN 0 521 66261 3. £35.00.

The Journal of Thomas Juxon, 1644-1647. Edited by Keith Lindley and David Scott. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. x + 214. ISBN 0 521 65259 6. £45.00.

The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, 1621-1641. Edited by J.F. Merritt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 293. ISBN 0 521 56041 1. £37.50.

Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution. Edited by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker. Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1998. Pp. x + 376. ISBN 0 520 20920 6. £13.95.

Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars. Edited by John R. Young. Edinburgh: John Donald, 1997. Pp. viii + 232. ISBN 0 85976 452 4. £20.00.

The crisis that gripped the three kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland in the mid-seventeenth century continues to fascinate historians. The sheer variety of names attached to these events reveals the diversity of interpretations and preoccupations that scholars have brought to them. ‘The English Civil War’, ‘the English Revolution’, and ‘the British Civil Wars’ are just three of the different labels found in the titles of the eight books under review. Between them, these books offer a valuable cross-section of current work on the period. They present a range of perspectives, principally on the 1640s and 1650s, and give a flavour of the experiences of very different individuals living through these extraordinary events. They also indicate the variety of approaches that historians are now adopting to the period, ranging from finely focused work on particular figures to the reconstruction of British (or un-English) dimensions, and the use of interdisciplinary methods. Rarely in this field can such a wide range of tools have been simultaneously applied to so many different areas or individuals or types of source material. Such varied approaches are essential for recovering the experiences and mindsets of those who lived through these events, and between them these books offer a vivid sense of the richness, diversity and drama of the period.

The book that covers the earliest chronological phase is the collection of essays on The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, edited by Julia Merritt. Most of these papers emerged from an international conference held at Sheffield University in July 1994, and collectively they shed much light not only on Wentworth’s career but also on early Stuart political history more generally. In particular, the volume shows the great value of focusing on the career of one prominent figure and locating it within a series of overlapping contexts. Julia Merritt

presents a very convincing rationale for such a method when she argues in her introduction that ‘until historians can put forward an explanation that can encompass the extraordinarily complex and varied career of Wentworth, they cannot hope to explain the broader structures of British political life in the early Stuart period’ (p. 22). In an attempt to make sense of Wentworth’s protean career, this volume generates many stimulating new insights into the political world of early seventeenth-century Britain and Ireland that he inhabited.

To speak of a ‘political world’ is not to imply a narrow concentration on high politics. A number of the essays explore the nature of political culture that has been a prominent theme in several recent works on the period.¹ Richard Cust’s essay shows how the concept of ‘self-fashioning’ helps to explain the course of Wentworth’s career during the later 1620s. In particular, he demonstrates that the key to Wentworth’s behaviour lay in his conscious adoption of a range of different ‘identities’, rather than in any attempt to ‘change sides’. In a similar vein, Julia Merritt’s essay reveals how during his years in Ireland, Wentworth controlled the flow of information back to London, and deliberately manipulated the perceptions held of him by friends and enemies alike. To analyse such processes really effectively involves sensitivity to the relationships between political rhetoric and action, and between high and low politics. It involves a finely integrated approach of the kind presented by Terence Kilburn and Anthony Milton in their reconstruction of popular reactions to Strafford’s trial and execution. That essay is especially notable for its examination of the strategies that both Strafford’s supporters and enemies deployed to shape public opinion.

Such an integrated approach, and the avoidance of the false dichotomies encountered in some older accounts, yields rewards at other levels as well. Anthony Milton warns against the dangers of seeing the political thought of the 1630s in terms of a binary opposition between ‘absolutists’ and ‘constitutionalists’, or the religious history of the same period in terms of a similar dualism between Calvinism and Arminianism. He nevertheless acknowledges that ‘there were significantly different

ideological forces at work' in both Church and State (p. 156). This opens up plenty of scope for disagreement among historians about the nature and extent of such divisions. A good example of such continuing debate is the exchange between Tom Cogswell and Conrad Russell over the degree of anti-Catholicism and Hispanophobia in the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624. This in turn engages with a wider debate over the scale and significance of ideological commitments and principled disagreements within the political elite.

The volume is also a very useful addition to the burgeoning literature on what has been called the 'new British history'.² Wentworth's career certainly demonstrates the compelling need for an archipelagic perspective. As John McCafferty shows, Wentworth's policies towards the Church of Ireland were motivated less by a desire to make it uniform with the Church of England than by a wish to realign it within the three kingdoms as a whole. His policies were thus intimately bound up with Charles I's aims and priorities as king of a multiple monarchy. This theme also emerges in Jane Ohlmeyer's essay, which shows how Wentworth and Charles's management of the 'Londonderry Business' was crucially influenced by their concerns over the growing Scottish presence in Ulster. Equally, as Nicholas Canny warns us, it is important not to get too carried away with the 'new British history'. There is, in particular, a danger of mapping issues and themes associated with English history onto the other kingdoms without doing full justice to other contexts and influences, not least those from continental Europe. It is clearly important to retain a sense of national histories alongside, and as well as, archipelagic history.³

Merritt's volume closes with a remarkable historiographical 'retrospective' by Peter Lake. He welcomes the extraordinary diversity of voices and approaches so characteristic of early Stuart historiography at present, and urges historians not to be in any hurry to compose a new 'master narrative'. Rather, he feels it would be better 'to prolong the luxurious and rather rare indeterminacy and multi-vocality of the post-revisionist moment' (p. 283). That reassuring message certainly strikes a chord as we

reflect on the diversity both of Merritt's collection and of the other books under review.

With research in the field advancing on so many fronts, it is always helpful to have collections that survey previous work or collate salient works that have appeared in diffuse and sometimes obscure locations. Peter Gaunt's volume on The English Civil War, in Blackwell's useful Essential Readings in History series, is a highly effective and convenient compendium that will no doubt be welcomed by scholars and students alike. He pulls together sixteen of the most important articles on the 1640s to have appeared since 1972, and assembles them into four groups, providing thoughtful and perceptive historiographical introductions at the beginning of each section. There is also a very useful and up-to-date select bibliography at the end. Any selection of this kind is bound to be personal, but it is difficult to see how this could have been done better, and the final product is a model of organisation and balance. Gaunt has consciously chosen pieces that represent and epitomize salient interpretations and key approaches to the period. In many cases, they are case studies or prospectuses for book-length works, many of which have subsequently appeared, yet they remain important in their own right.

The editorial material manages to survey the vast and highly complex historiography of the period without getting bogged down in a mass of detail. The reader is guided through the different lines of interpretation in a way that does full justice to the range and diversity of the literature while avoiding crude pigeon-holing. Gaunt also uses the effective device of beginning and ending with some powerful quotations from the commonplace book of Sir John Oglander, an Isle of Wight Royalist who vividly recorded his impressions and experiences of this period. Oglander's account of 'a miserable, distracted time' in which 'when thou wentest to bed at night, thou knewest not whether thou shouldest be murdered afore day' strongly evokes the sense of fear and desolation of those who lived through the Civil Wars (pp. 1-2). The use of such extracts makes Gaunt's introductions more than just historiographical commentaries.

The first section, on ‘Approaches to the 1640s’, comprises three articles by John Morrill, Brian Manning, and David Underdown addressing the question ‘What was the English Revolution?’, that first appeared in History Today in 1984. Reading these again, I was struck by the vitality and freshness of the writing: they are vibrant, panoramic pieces that remain stimulating and provocative. The second part contains five articles under the heading ‘Causes of the Civil War’. Mary Fulbrook offers a salutary warning against the more extreme claims of ‘revisionism’, while John Fielding’s analysis of Robert Woodford’s diary provides an excellent insight into the mental world of provincial Puritanism and its deep hostility towards Charles I’s Personal Rule. The other three pieces are all by Conrad Russell and synthesize his fundamentally important research on the ‘British’ nature of the crisis, and the crucial role that Charles I played. It is especially welcome to have the piece on ‘Why did Charles I fight the Civil War?’ (History Today, 1984) reprinted here, as Russell did not include this interesting article in his collected essays.⁴

The third section is devoted to ‘the course of the Civil War’, and contains five diverse but significant pieces. Martyn Bennett examines the contrasting administrative machines which Royalists and Parliamentarians created at the beginning of the Civil War in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland and Staffordshire, while Simon Osborne shows how the existence of an effective military presence in an overlapping group of five counties (Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire) helped to prevent the emergence of an effective popular neutralism and thus explains ‘the absence of the clubmen’ in those counties during the first Civil War. There are two outstanding case-studies, one of a Royalist (Derek Hirst on Sir Edward Dering), the other of a Parliamentarian (John Morrill on Sir William Brereton), that reveal much about the characteristic attitudes that motivated allegiance to each side. Finally, Ian Roy’s piece on ‘England turned Germany’ helpfully sets the conflict in a European context and draws out the strong parallels between English and continental practices of war.

Gaunt rounds off the collection with three articles on various aspects of the ‘consequences of the Civil War’. These were published slightly earlier than many of the essays in the preceding sections, between 1973 and 1980, and they deserve to be better known than they are. Colin Davis explores the religious basis of Leveller ideology and stresses in particular the importance of equity that fused elements of divine and natural law and was closely associated with the ideal of practical Christianity. This in turn underpinned a strong, but vague, moral imperative towards liberty of conscience. The significance of religious imperatives also emerges powerfully in Patricia Crawford’s seminal 1977 article on blood-guilt. Crawford shows how Old Testament ideas of blood-guilt gained a hold among many Army officers during the later 1640s, leading them to brand Charles Stuart a ‘man of blood’ whose destruction was a necessary expiation to prevent further bloodshed. The powerful radical potential of such an idea was vital in legitimating the trial and execution of the King. Finally, Christopher Hill’s impressively wide-ranging piece ‘A Bourgeois Revolution?’ reminds us of the importance of his contribution to the field over many years. He redefines a ‘bourgeois revolution’ so that the term’s applicability requires neither that the bourgeoisie willed the revolution, nor even that a bourgeoisie existed at all. By the end, I was left wondering whether the term was being so loosely defined that its value was distinctly doubtful and, indeed, that it might make more sense to abandon it altogether.

Gaunt concludes his final editorial introduction with another extract from Sir John Oglander’s commonplace book, in which he laments that the Isle of Wight ‘was once a pleasant happy place, and men envied our happiness, but now we are slaves to mean soldiers, which formerly lived on our charity’ (p. 278). A very different perspective from that of the Royalist Oglander is afforded by the journal of Thomas Juxon, a London Puritan sympathetic to Parliament, for whom the 1640s were a time of intense exhilaration accompanied by periodic bouts of frustration and despair. The journal, a manuscript of some 120 folios in Dr Williams’s Library at 14 Gordon Square in London, has received less scholarly attention than it merits, and it is

therefore extremely welcome to have this fine printed edition by Keith Lindley and David Scott, complete with full scholarly apparatus. In their excellent 38-page introduction, the editors provide an account of Juxon's life and a discussion of his journal's significance, while appendices reproduce the wills of both Juxon and his father. The whole volume is meticulously researched and beautifully put together. Throughout, the quality of the apparatus is consistently high, and there are several very useful editorial decisions and practices (explained on page 38), such as the highlighting in bold of dates given in the text.

Juxon was 'a puritan Londoner who produced and traded in sugar', and his journal, covering the years 1644-7, takes us into the mind-set of the London godly. Juxon was steeped in providentialism, and divine interventions in the course of political events form a central theme of his journal. Here he is, for example, on the Scottish Parliament's vote of 24 December 1646 that the King must consent to all the Newcastle Propositions or else the government of Scotland would be settled without him:

Thus God, who has His overruling hand upon the hearts of all, has not only disappointed the hopes of enemies, but united us more firmly than ever, and droven [sic] the king still farther off and beating him from all those things he thought to have saved himself by, be [i.e. but?] in vain (entry for January 1646/7, p. 145).

For Juxon, such manifestations of a providential God were 'taken as axiomatic' (p. 13).

The quotation above is particularly interesting because until about 1646-7, Juxon seems to have been quite suspicious of the Scots and apparently disliked the idea of a 'covenanted uniformity' between the two kingdoms. He was an Erastian, hostile to Presbyterianism in both its Scottish and English forms. Although cautious about extending religious toleration, his political sympathies lay with the Independents, and particularly with figures such as Sir Henry Vane the younger and Oliver St John.⁵ The picture that emerges is of a dedicated Parliamentarian, not

‘locked into party loyalties’ (p. 10), who was generally out of sympathy with the Levellers. His visceral hostility towards both the King and the Lords nevertheless fell well short of outright republicanism. But as the journal stops in the summer of 1647 (the editors speculate tantalisingly about the possible existence of a continuation, now lost), it is impossible to know precisely how Juxon would have reacted to the unfolding crisis of 1648-9, culminating in the Regicide and the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords.

Juxon’s diary concentrates mainly on public affairs and on political and military developments, and he was extremely well placed to record the internal politics of the London Common Council, the bitter struggles accompanying City elections, and the nature of parliamentary proceedings throughout these years. It is, ultimately, on the fresh information that the journal yields on these themes that its importance rests, and in a number of respects it modifies or nuances our existing understanding. For example, Juxon offers one of the most detailed accounts of Cromwell’s denunciation of the Earl of Manchester in the Commons on 25 November 1644 (pp. 67-8), which includes the detail - so far only found in this source - that the previous evening, in a bid to defuse the confrontation, ‘the countess of Manchester did invite Cromwell and Sir Henry Vane to supper, and told him at the table that her lord did exceedingly honour and respect him’. Cromwell allegedly responded, biting, ‘I wish I could see it’ (p. 67).

Juxon is also an important commentator on Cromwell’s opponents, the supporters of Essex and the political Presbyterians. One of the most striking findings to emerge from the journal is the way in which Sir Philip Stapilton, rather than Denzil Holles, appears as the dominant figure among Essex’s allies in the Commons up to 1646. Juxon even refers, in April 1647, to the ‘Stapiltonian party’ (p. 154). The journal significantly revises the received interpretation of this group, which placed the main emphasis on Holles’s leadership. Juxon also shows the close political links that existed between that group and the ‘covenanter-engaged’ citizens in the City of London, including evidence of specific meetings between aldermen and other citizens

with Presbyterian members of both Houses (for example at pp. 114, 123, 128, 161-2). Such contacts had long been surmised but could not, until now, be properly substantiated.

Another subject where the journal is very valuable is the events of the spring and summer of 1647. Juxon gives a particularly full and vivid account of the Army's politicisation, the Commons' 'declaration of dislike', the besieging of Parliament in July and the flight of the Independent members to the Army, followed by the Army's reinstatement of them the following month (pp. 152-70). These pages have all the urgency and immediacy of an eye-witness account, and further bear out the close relationship between the politics of the London Common Council and certain members of the Lords and Commons, together forming a lay Presbyterian alliance within the capital.

Juxon's journal thus sheds much light on the world of London politics, in both the City and Parliament, during the period from January 1644 to August 1647. One of the most distinguished historians of these years, and of the 1640s and 1650s more broadly, is Austin Woolrych, and he is the honorand of a festschrift entitled Soldiers, writers and statesmen of the English Revolution which, in its range and richness, offers a very fitting tribute to his own immense erudition and versatility. The volume is equally strong on both the 1640s and 1650s, and embraces political history, military history and the history of ideas.

Several of the contributions demonstrate the diversity of individual experiences during this period. For example, the Independent Robert Scawen, who was chair of Parliament's Army Committee from the spring of 1645 until the end of 1648, and who was a crucial figure in maintaining the Independents' domination of that body, presents a striking contrast to the Royalist George Digby, Secretary of State from 1643 to 1645 and one of Charles I's most intimate advisers. Their careers and attitudes are reconstructed here by John Adamson and Ian Roy respectively, in studies that evoke the fluidity and turbulence of Civil-War politics. The realities and sheer human cost of the conflict also emerge powerfully in Barbara Donagan's

examination of the ways in which both sides cared for the sick and wounded. Donagan shows that such care was considerably more efficient and extensive than has often been supposed, and that the two sides displayed a sense of reciprocal obligations to the dead and wounded. In other respects we can discern contrasts between the two sides, as Ian Gentles shows in an enterprising study of the banners that Royalist and Parliamentary armies carried into battle. Perhaps his most notable finding is that seventy-two per cent of surviving Parliamentary banners made prominent use of religious themes, whereas only fifty per cent of Royalist banners did so, many preferring to concentrate instead on themes of honour and deference. This would tend to suggest that, in general, religion was a more galvanising motive among Parliamentarians than among Royalists.⁶

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, much of the most exciting work on the English Revolution took the form of local studies of particular counties or urban communities. Although this theme has become less prominent in the historiography of late, it clearly remains a very important and illuminating aspect of the period. It helps to explain how far, and when, the two sides were able to raise recruits, as Sarah Barber's article on the second Civil War demonstrates. It can shed light on the relationship between local and central politics, as C.B. Phillips shows in a case study of Kendal from the mid-1640s to the mid-1650s. Above all, perhaps, local studies allow us to focus in depth on the impact of the Revolution and the extent of change or continuity on the ground. John Sutton's analysis of the Staffordshire commissioners for preserving the peace of the Commonwealth, appointed in 1655 to assist the Major-Generals, is a particularly good example of the value of such an approach. Sutton argues that these commissioners were predominantly drawn from the lesser gentry or more prosperous 'middling sort': although they were mainly 'godly' men, their social and political outlooks were generally conservative, and they did not represent a radical departure from the more traditional county elites. Such studies provide one useful yardstick of the Revolution's impact at grass-roots level.

Many of the other articles in this volume are contributions to the history of ideas, and chart not only some of the intellectual odysseys travelled by particular individuals but also certain unexpected and fruitful connections. Glenn Burgess, for example, shows how the relationship between sovereignty and the rule of law found in Hobbes and Harrington has some affinities with Constitutional Royalist writings of the years 1642-5, despite the very different implications that they ultimately drew from this paradigm. Harrington's republicanism is further explored in Colin Davis's article, in which he argues that Harrington defined equality in terms not of liberty or civic rights but of the common interest and the preservation of stability. One major reason for shifting intellectual allegiances during the 1650s was disillusionment with the Protectorate, and some of those who had lent their support to the Regicide and the Commonwealth ultimately turned against Cromwell as the Protectorate came to appear far too reminiscent of the monarchy. That was the case with Milton, as Blair Worden brilliantly unravels, and also with Richard Overton, as Barbara Taft reconstructs from a manuscript that Overton wrote in prison in the 1660s, and that she helpfully edits and explicates here. Equally, Nicholas von Maltzahn shows that some of Milton's own contemporaries - such as Samuel Butler and Roger L'Estrange - came to find his republicanism, expressed in such works as The Readie and Easie Way, rather grandiloquent and even self-interested by 1660. Intellectual and political contexts changed so rapidly that anachronism and teleology are ever-present dangers: intellectual ancestries can be more apparent than real, as the late Gerald Aylmer shows in his convincing study of Locke's lack of indebtedness to the Levellers.

Soldiers, writers and statesmen of the English Revolution is consciously focused on what John Morrill calls 'that Mount Everest of British History, the English Revolution' (p. xi). The 'British' dimension is nevertheless not neglected, and comes through most strongly in John Reeve's article which shows how the anti-Catholic policies that the English Secretary of State Viscount Dorchester pursued in collaboration with one of the lords justices, the Earl of Cork, during the years from 1629 to 1632/3 contributed to Irish Catholic fears that exploded in the rebellion of

1641. If the Woolrych festschrift indicates the diversity of English experiences in this period, the volume edited by John Young offers similarly valuable illumination of the un-English dimensions. This collection is based on the proceedings of a conference held at the Research Centre in Scottish History at the University of Strathclyde in April 1995, and it pulls together an impressive range of work by younger scholars many of whom were completing, or had just completed, their doctoral theses at the time of writing. In quite a few cases, these papers were the forerunners for major monographs that have subsequently appeared, and this gives the volume considerable value as an overview of recent research in the field.

John Morrill's introduction is very helpful in drawing out the themes of a volume that he freely admits has 'no great congruity or coherence thematically or methodologically'. Rather, 'what binds the volume together is a very loose sense of the need to examine the non-English aspects of British civil wars' (p. 2). Two particular themes emerge both from the introduction and from surveying the essays as a whole: firstly, the fact that attempts to adopt a holistic approach to British and Irish history can supplement but not supplant the national history of each kingdom; and secondly, the crucial importance of Charles I's rule in destabilising the British monarchies. It is worth considering each of these points in turn.

In recent years, a number of Scottish and Irish scholars, including Keith Brown and Nicholas Canny, have warned that some of the 'new British history' is in danger of becoming a form of English cultural imperialism.⁷ The process of constructing an integrated history can have the effect of making British history seem like English history writ large. The essays in this collection help to overcome this problem by showing that despite the interconnections between the three kingdoms, each retained its own distinctiveness and integrity. There can be no case for abandoning work on the independent national histories of Scotland, Ireland and England, but only for enriching our understanding of the contexts within which these unfolded. One of the most interesting findings here is the way in which both the Crown and the elite of each kingdom could learn from, and even try to emulate, what

they saw happening in other kingdoms within the archipelago. For example, William Kelly's essay shows that the example of the English Short Parliament helped to make the second Irish parliamentary session of 1640 much more intransigent than the first. Another instance might be the extent to which the English Triennial Act of 1641 was inspired by a similar act already passed in Scotland. John Young's study of the emergence of a 'Commons' within the unicameral Scottish Parliament suggests some intriguing differences from the bicameral Parliaments of England and Ireland. This in turn indicative of the many illuminating comparisons and contrasts that can be made between the different kingdoms and which are brought out in many of these essays, perhaps most explicitly in Éamonn Ó Ciardha's analysis of the similarities and differences between Irish Tories and Scottish Moss-Troopers during the 1650s. It is also evident that just as a 'British' approach has its dangers, so too do attempts to speak of a coherent Celtic or Gaelic dimension. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin's essay on the Irish clergy during the 1640s and Pádraig Lenihan's study of the Irish Catholic Confederate armies in the same period reveal that so much depended upon distinctive local conditions that it is virtually impossible to speak of characteristically Gaelic or Celtic patterns.

Perhaps the most important common denominator of the Stuart monarchies is that they all had to cope with being ruled by Charles I, and this emerges as the second major theme of Young's volume. As John Morrill writes in his introduction, 'there is one transcendent cause of the war(s) of the three kingdoms - Charles I himself' (p. 3). Thus, quite apart from the issue of whether Charles I had a 'British problem', it is clear that 'Scotland, Ireland and England all had a Charles I problem' (p. 4). Throughout his three kingdoms, Charles evoked similar reactions from his critics and also produced similar dilemmas for his advisers and supporters. As the essays by John Scally on Hamilton and William Kelly on Ormond show, Charles was 'an uncounsellable king' (p. 28), whose refusal to compromise and tendency to take opposition 'as a personal insult' (p. 29) made him an extraordinarily difficult monarch to serve. Similarly, whether it was in the radical Covenanters of South-West Scotland

or in an austere scholar such as Samuel Rutherford (examined here by Sharon Adams and John Coffey respectively), the perception that Charles behaved in a more tyrannical and arbitrary manner than his predecessors steadily took root. Indeed, Rutherford came to see Charles as ‘an agent of Antichrist’ (p. 86). This is all the more remarkable in a culture in which reverence for the monarchy as an institution remained deep-rooted and where, in the circumstances of the Restoration, it could reassert itself vigorously in a rejection of the Covenanting revolution. The essays by Ronnie Lee and Clare Jackson draw out the implications of this reaction for the politics of Restoration Scotland very persuasively.

That it was possible to reverence the office of king while reviling the person of Charles I also forms an important theme of Sarah Barber’s Regicide and Republicanism. This is a highly original, interesting and thought-provoking book, the main thrust of which is to trace the contrasting intellectual ancestries of the drive for regicide in 1649 and the republicanism that came to fruition during the 1650s. Barber suggests that there was no necessary or logical connection between these two lines of argument and polemic. The early chapters show how the distinction between the person and the office of the King opened the way for criticism to become focused directly on Charles’s failings: this focus became gradually sharper during the later 1640s until it generated a perception of Charles’s unworthiness strong enough to justify killing him. Barber carefully analyses the various arguments that were used, both by the Army and by civilian politicians, to legitimate regicide. In particular, she demonstrates that a belief that Charles’s actions had contravened the law of God was sufficiently powerful to override deference to a divinely instituted monarch. The arguments are ably anatomized without losing sight of the rapidly changing political context. In one fascinating footnote, Barber describes her unsuccessful attempt to uncover the identity of those members of the Commons who dissented from the vote on 5 December 1648 that the King’s answers at Newport constituted a satisfactory basis on which to continue negotiations. This was the vote that prompted Pride’s Purge the following day, in which the Army excluded those members of the

Commons who seemed likely to oppose bringing the King to trial. Later, in February 1660, the Commons' clerk erased from the manuscript Commons' Journal the names of those who had dissented from the vote of 5 December 1648 and who were still alive in 1660, for fear of reprisals as the restoration of the monarchy became imminent. Sadly, Barber's ingenious attempt to analyse the ink to ascertain which names were thus struck out proved inconclusive, but it was an imaginative and enterprising bid to solve a tantalising mystery (p. 140, note 9).

The later chapters concentrate on the different strands that developed within a broad republican framework. Barber shows that there was little agreement as to what constituted an acceptable republican framework, and that the events of 1653 (the dissolution of the Rump Parliament, the collapse of Barebone's Parliament, the adoption of the Instrument of Government and the establishment of the Protectorate) were a setback from which the republican 'cause' never fully recovered. Figures such as Henry Marten and Henry Vane mounted a feisty republican critique of the Protectorate, and these 'commonwealthsmen' displayed an integrity and commitment to the Good Old Cause that remained impressively consistent from 1648-9 to 1658-9. But it is hard to resist the conclusion that the Republic ultimately fell victim to its own internal dissensions and contradictions. In the end, republicanism failed to command sufficient support to make it viable, and the very de factoist arguments that had been employed in the early 1650s to justify the republic on the grounds that it alone offered security and stability could be used, by the end of the decade, to destroy it.

This book is extensively researched, vigorously and entertainingly written, and full of ideas. There are occasional factual lapses, most notably the references in chapter 7 to the Engagement of 1649-50 as an 'oath' when in fact it was a declaration: it was not sworn but subscribed, probably in a conscious attempt to enhance the number of people who felt able to take it. There is an impressive amount of research detailed in the footnotes, in both manuscript and printed primary sources, and it is therefore regrettable that the select bibliography lists only a sample of those primary

and secondary works most often cited. A full list of all the sources referred to in the footnotes would have been very helpful. In general, the book is strongest on the period from 1647 to 1653, and the section on the Protectorate is probably the thinnest and least effective. Indeed, whereas 179 pages (pp. 22-201) are devoted to the years 1647-53, the years of the Protectorate, 1653-9, are covered in only 37 (pp. 202-39), and there is surely much more to be said on the republican critique of the Protectorate and the dilemmas that the regime posed for committed republicans. Overall, though, this is a stimulating and lively book that deserves to be widely read.

A very different perspective on the Interregnum is found in Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645-1661 by Laura Lunger Knoppers. Love him or loathe him - and there are many in each category among both historians and his own contemporaries - Oliver Cromwell was undoubtedly the dominant figure of the Interregnum, and Knoppers offers a fascinating exploration of the various images and representations of him in contemporary ceremonial, portraits and printed forms. Her interdisciplinary approach is very rewarding, and she combines the historian's awareness of specific political and intellectual contexts with the literary critic's sensitivity to the texture, style and voice of texts. Her overall argument, that there was no straightforward assimilation between Cromwell and monarchical ideas and symbols, is generally convincing and produces a number of stimulating reinterpretations of particular texts and episodes along the way. For friends and foes alike, the one thing that was impossible with Cromwell was to ignore him, and his afterlife in the popular imagination has been an exceptionally long one.

As the first chapter shows, Royalist denunciations and satires of Cromwell in the later 1640s ironically served to enhance his significance, and there was thus a real sense in which the Royalists helped to create their own worst enemy. For example, the image of Cromwell as a cunning Machiavel, found in such works of 1648 as Craftie Cromwell or A Case for Nol Cromwell's Nose, only reinforced the perception of Cromwell as a key figure on the national stage. Following the Regicide, the Republic appropriated monarchical forms in portraiture, panegyric, and ceremonial,

and in the process of adopting them also adapted and revised them. This tension provides the context for a particularly interesting reading of Marvell's Horatian Ode that sees the poem as a reassertion of Cromwell as a heroic, martial figure (pp. 52-6), and thus adds a valuable new dimension to recent appraisals of this work.⁸

Paradoxically, Cromwell himself emerges here as a strangely passive figure in terms of shaping his own image during the Protectorate. He was apparently very reluctant to take the initiative, and this only made representations of him all the more contested by the mid-1650s. One of the most interesting sections of the book concerns the offer of the kingship to Cromwell in 1657 and his decision to decline it. Knoppers argues that Cromwell's rhetoric consistently stressed his own modesty and submissiveness, and that his comments remained clearly opposed to kingship. This is an important new perspective that extends older discussions, of which those by Firth are probably still the fullest.⁹ Knoppers' account is very well researched although it does raise the question of why Cromwell took so long to decline the offer if he was so opposed to it all along. Perhaps Knoppers understates the sheer complexity and ambivalence of Cromwell's attitudes, and the agonies of indecision that he experienced. I also felt that she underestimates the extent to which he was drawn towards monarchical forms, almost despite himself, as evinced not only in his famous question to Bulstrode Whitelocke 'what if a man should take upon him to be king?'¹⁰, but also in his earlier remark in September 1651, shortly after his victory at Worcester, that 'a settlement with somewhat of monarchical power in it would be very effectual'.¹¹ Knoppers' argument here seems slightly too clear-cut to do full justice to the ambiguities of Cromwell's personality and motives.

The discussion of Cromwellian ceremonial is lively and fresh, and emphasizes the central theme that monarchical forms were revised in the very process of being assimilated. Knoppers convincingly shows how, despite its monarchical trappings, Cromwell's second inauguration as Lord Protector in June 1657 nevertheless fell far short of a coronation ceremony. However, one might equally argue that it was startling that it contained as much monarchical symbolism as it did - certainly

republicans at the time thought so - and that it strikingly differed from the much more austere first inauguration in December 1653. In arguing, very convincingly, that the Protectorate did not bring a whole-sale or uncritical revival of monarchical forms, there is perhaps a danger of underestimating the extent to which it was moving in that direction, as epitomized in Cromwell's funeral effigy and obsequies. Cromwell's state funeral was modelled on that of James VI and I in 1625, and his funeral effigy – used for both the lying in state and the state funeral – portrayed Cromwell clad in royal robes of purple and ermine, holding an orb and sceptre, and wearing a crown.

The final two chapters present a thoroughly researched account of the different images and representations of Cromwell that followed his death. Knoppers shows that even those works that demonized Cromwell - be they republican or royalist - acknowledged that he was a pre-eminent figure. She also suggests that Charles II revived and adapted certain Cromwellian forms, for example those showing him in a martial pose, or those based on earlier Van Dyck images. That last point is possibly stretched slightly too far, in that it was surely the Van Dyck images of his father that Charles II was principally seeking to revive, and it was only accidental that Cromwell happened to have drawn on them as well. Indeed, it seems probable that Charles II was not so much indebted to Cromwell specifically as that they were both working with generic seventeenth-century symbols and motifs of political authority. Such quibbles apart, this is an interesting, arresting and richly researched book, ably argued and illustrated, that contributes much to our understanding of how Cromwell's contemporaries perceived him.

The fruitfulness of interdisciplinary approaches is also evident in the volume that covers chronologically the latest period, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker. In their introduction to Refiguring Revolutions, the editors argue that much remains to be done to break down the traditional divisions between political, social, and cultural history. They suggest that once the chronological constraints of dynastic accidents are removed, the coherence and integrity of the period from 1649 to 1789 become much clearer. It is a perceptive and stimulating claim, and the various essays

do much to draw out the continuities and common concerns that span the years between the English Revolution and the Romantic Revolution. Throughout, the intertwining of the political, the social and the aesthetic is persuasively explored. The contributors throw a series of revealing spotlights on particular issues or preoccupations, including such diverse subjects as Queen Anne's use of maternal connotations and symbolism to reinforce her political authority and distract from her failure to produce an heir (Toni Bowers); the language of sentiment that characterized English reactions to the execution of Louis XVI (John Barrell); contemporary habits of reading and writing marginal annotations (Steven Zwicker); the social and political radicalism of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads (Gerald Izenberg); the political implications and significance of trends in the design of eighteenth-century gardens (Stephen Bending); and the instability of pastoral as a genre in this period until it was finally absorbed into the Romantic movement (Michael McKeon). I particularly enjoyed the essay by Mark Jenner on the political and religious importance of views on bathing and baptism in the closing decades of the seventeenth century, and also the late Roy Porter's piece on attitudes towards doctors, medicine, and the body in Georgian England. Overall, the editors' objective of subverting customary chronologies and demarcations between different fields of enquiry is surely successfully achieved, and the insights that result help to establish the distinctiveness of the period 1649-1789 very convincingly.

Of all the contributions, it is Kevin Sharpe's that most directly addresses the issues discussed earlier in this article. He examines the reasons why republican culture failed in seventeenth-century England, and argues that by ignoring the visual and the symbolic, historians have underestimated the extent to which monarchical forms and values permeated English culture. He shows how traditional political and religious values remained current after 1649: the manner of Charles I's death only served to reinforce such attitudes, and the frontispiece of the Eikon Basilike was a remarkably powerful 'document' in this context. Sharpe argues that the Commonwealth proved unable to develop an indigenous language or symbolism of its

own that could supplant the monarchy, and the Protectorate marked a significant retreat back towards royal images and government ‘by a single person’. This perspective complements, and in part qualifies, that offered by Knoppers. Equally, when Charles II was restored, monarchy could never be quite the same again, and thereafter the case for monarchy always had to be argued; it could no longer simply be assumed. Overall, I found this a powerful and penetrating piece, as notable for its evocation of the mental world of the Interregnum as for its explanation of why republican culture ultimately failed to send down deep roots into the soil of mid-seventeenth-century England.

That is all the more important because, surveying these eight books as a whole, it would probably be fair to say that the work on the 1640s often seems richer, closer and more rigorous than that on the 1650s. The drama of the Civil Wars and the events and ideas that led up to the climacteric moment of the Regicide continue, understandably, to exercise a powerful fascination on the minds of historians. The sheer colour and passion of a conflict that ended or disrupted so many lives retains its power to shock and disturb, and much of the writing on the 1640s reviewed here involves tracing the impact of the conflict and reactions to it. On the 1650s, coverage is still rather more patchy: in general, the works discussed here are emblematic of current trends in research in that they have more to say on the Commonwealth than on the Protectorate, and focus more on political ideas and culture than on the practice of politics and government. We still badly need more close work on the political history of the Protectorate and investigation into the reasons why it never succeeded in fostering the stability, the ‘healing and settling’, for which Cromwell yearned.¹²

Yet, if there is still plenty more to be done, at the same time the achievement to date, of which these eight books form an important part, is already impressive. There has, perhaps, never been such a rich variety of work available on the period of Britain’s Civil Wars, or so much to startle, excite, and disturb. As a result, it has probably seldom been harder to write a synthetic account of mid-seventeenth-century Britain. The writers of textbooks have rarely been faced with so difficult a task. But

that is a symptom of the vitality of the field and is surely something to be welcomed rather than lamented.

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¹ See, for example, Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, eds., Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England (London, 1994); Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky, eds., Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays presented to David Underdown (Manchester, 1995).

² See Glenn Burgess, ed., The new British history: founding a modern state 1603-1715 (London, 1999). For some other recent works on this theme, see Steven G. Ellis and Sarah Barber, eds., Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State 1485-1725 (Harlow, 1995); Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer, eds., Uniting the Kingdom? the Making of British History (London, 1995); Brendan Bradshaw and John Morrill, eds., The British Problem, c. 1534-1707: State Formation in the Atlantic Archipelago (London, 1996); Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts, eds., British consciousness and identity: the making of Britain, 1533-1707 (Cambridge, 1998); and also the collection edited by John Young reviewed below.

³ This point is discussed more fully below, pp. 000-000.

⁴ Conrad Russell, Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642 (London, 1990).

⁵ He described these two, in an entry for 31 March 1645, as men who ‘most sincerely do intend the real happiness of the nation’ (p. 76).

⁶ Cf. David L. Smith, Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement, c. 1640-1649 (Cambridge, 1994), especially chapters 4-7.

⁷ See, for example, Keith Brown, 'British History: a sceptical comment?', in Ronald Asch, ed., Three Nations: a common history? (Bochum, 1990), pp. 117, 124-5; Nicholas Canny, 'Responses to Centralization, c. 1530-c. 1640', in Grant and Stringer, eds., Uniting the Kingdom?, pp. 147-69.

⁸ See particularly Blair Worden, 'Andrew Marvell, Oliver Cromwell, and the Horatian Ode', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 147-80; David Norbrook, 'Marvell's "Horatian Ode" and the Politics of Genre', in Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, eds., Literature and the English Civil War (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 147-69.

⁹ C.H. Firth, 'Cromwell and the Crown', English Historical Review, 17 (1902), pp. 429-42, and 18 (1903), pp. 52-80; C.H. Firth, The Last Years of the Protectorate, 1656-1658 (2 vols., London, 1909), I, pp. 128-200.

¹⁰ Cromwell posed this question during a conversation that took place in November 1652 not, as Knoppers states at p. 118, in 1653. The full text is readily available in Ivan Roots, ed., Speeches of Oliver Cromwell (London, 1989), pp. 207-14.

¹¹ Roots, ed., Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, p. 207.

¹² Roots, ed., Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, p. 30 (speech of 4 September 1654).