

Zitierhinweis

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The current trend in history publishing for a 'one stop shop edition' of essays on a particular subject, variously entitled 'Handbooks' or 'Companions', is a welcome addition for teachers and students of history alike. These volumes collect together the same number of essays as two or three volumes of Macmillan's successful *Problems in Focus* series of old and thus provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the most recent research and thinking on a historical subject. *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution* edited by Mike Braddick presents a series of 33 essays from leading scholars covering the whole gamut of the political, religious, social and cultural history of this complex and densely studied period between c.1637–1662.

The first apparent oddity, however, as Mike Braddick admits in his introductory chapter is the use of the term 'English Revolution' in the title. Since the late 1980s historians have recognised that the mid-17th century political crisis spanned all the British, Irish and colonial possessions of Charles I. As Austin Woolrych's 2002 popular textbook *Britain in Revolution* (1) shows, readers have become used to the notion of a British revolution and it is therefore surprising that OUP chose to maintain the 'English Revolution' label. Nevertheless, Scotland and Ireland each get three dedicated chapters each along with other chapters discussing three kingdom issues. Given that Braddick has co-edited one of the more useful collections on the British Atlantic world, a standalone chapter on the colonial American and the Caribbean reaction to the Civil Wars and Interregnum would have been a welcome addition, but is sadly missing from this collection.

The collection is opened by an introduction by Braddick collating the themes of the essays and a polemical chapter by Peter Lake locating the historical background to the Revolution in the political and religious tensions of the post-Reformation. Looking to the creation of rival polemical languages and a 'public' that could deploy them in the century or so before the Civil War, Lake refuses to outline 'the causes of the English civil war' in a sense that might have satisfied Lawrence Stone or Conrad Russell, but shows the potentiality of such languages and structures to tip over into conflict.

The chapters on English political history are kicked off by Richard Cust and Michael Braddick who explore the periods between 1637 and 1642 and 1642 to 1646 respectively. Summarising his own work and that of John Adamson, Cust refreshes the themes that Conrad Russell so profitably explored in the early 1990s, putting a post-revisionist twist to the argument for the functional breakdown of Charles I's monarchies. Cust also re-iterates the point that the outbreak of civil war in England was not just based on three-kingdom pressure on Charles' administration but also the emergence of a royalist party formed out of growing abhorrence at the extremist policies of the dissident Parliamentary *junto*. Braddick's essay on the first civil war picks up on this extremism stressing the ideological radicalism that emerged as the Parliamentary *junto* sought to justify its challenge to royal authority. Stressing mobilisation over allegiance, Braddick narrates how King and Parliament, despite attempting to maintain a rhetoric of peace and settlement, grew further apart as the bloody war progressed.

Braddick's chapter is complemented by Rachel Foxley's analysis of the variety of parliamentary positions. As Dr Foxley puts it parliamentarians were thrown into a war of interpretation amongst themselves as to what 'the cause' actually meant, giving rise to a series of 'parliamentarianisms' ranging from presbyterian confessionalism to the Leveller call for liberty. Ted Vallance's essay on the political thought in the period picks up on this theme and explores the centrality of notions of liberty and how these ideas progressed in the 1650s in Hobbes and Harrington's versions of the ideal commonwealth. Alan Cromartie's essay on the varieties of royalism, a mirror essay to Foxley's offering, provides a welcome analysis in a book that, as with the academic field generally, is weighted towards Parliamentarianism. As Cromartie notes, many (historians included) underestimated King Charles, inadequate as he was, and misunderstood the force of those who put arguments for him, particularly in matters of religion. The result of this was the emergence of what Restoration historians call Cavalier-

Anglicanism, the backbone of which being the reactionary and vindictive country gentry who would ensure that the Restoration settlement was ultimately the persecuting and exclusive settlement that Charles II himself wished to avoid.

English politics in the 1650s and the Parliaments of the three kingdoms are covered in two chapters by David L. Smith. These set out a succinct yet solid analysis of how the institutions of Parliament were subject to the play of events over the revolutionary period. Dr Smith suggests that one future area of research is the nature of personal and network relationships in shaping the power and policy of the three kingdom's political institutions. This, in some degree, is picked up in J. C. Davis's chapter on Oliver Cromwell, the one individual who warrants a chapter of his own. Davis stresses the tension in Cromwell's personality between the more commonly understood godly ideologue and the less well-explored negotiator, seeking without success to find 'healing and settling'. Davis rightly re-asserts the importance of what Gerald Aylmer called 'the quest for settlement' in Cromwell's politics. In line with the recent reconsideration of Richard Cromwell, Davis tentatively suggests that Richard's problem was not so much his alleged personal weakness as that he capitalised on his father's late rapprochement with the civilian, largely presbyterian parliamentarians who had gradually come round to the idea of the Protectorate as the least dire of a bunch of bad options.

Although not an essay on Charles I himself, Philip Baker takes up the recently contentious subject of the Regicide, exploring late 1640s politics. Baker summarises the recent debate between those, such as Sean Kelsey, who see the King's trial as a final attempt at negotiation with Charles and those, most characterised by the late Mark Kishlansky and Clive Holmes, who reject this re-interpretation. Although critical of aspects of Kelsey's thesis, Baker largely finds it to be the more compelling argument on the subject.

Moving on to the trio of essays on Scotland, Julian Goodare's chapter provides a very serviceable narrative and analysis of the rise of Covenanter movement in Scotland until the entering into the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643. I stumbled somewhat on Goodare's suggestion that the Covenanters did not hold to a two kingdom theory but rather accepted parliamentary rather than royal supremacy over the Church. This may have been true of some lay Covenanters, but it was surely not the case for others, such as Archibald Johnston of Wariston or the presbyterian clerics at the heart of Covenanter propaganda such as Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie and Samuel Rutherford. From their first writings these figures advanced the classic 16th-century Calvinist two-kingdom doctrine found in earlier presbyterians such as Thomas Cartwright and Andrew Melville. The other two chapters on Scotland, Laura Stewart's essay on Scottish politics 1644–51 and Scott Spurlock's essay on state, politics and society pick up where Dr Goodare leaves off. Both Stewart and Spurlock seek to refocus the historiographical gaze away from the Scottish politicians, clergy and soldiers in England to the history of the Covenanter regime in Scotland. In doing this, both set out a manifesto for future study of the political culture of the Scottish revolution, a scholarship that they admit is unhappily underrepresented at present. These two essays show how the later 1640s witnessed a not-entirely-happy working out of the tense relationship between the political elite, the Kirk and popular (or at least 'middling') forces unleashed by the Covenanter movement in the late 1630s. As political stability in the three kingdoms shattered over the issue of how to find peace with the Stuart kings, the Covenanter regime fractured, leading to the divisive Engagement for Charles I in 1648 and an equally hopeless campaign for Charles II in the early 1650s. The consequences of these divisions in the 1650s were not only the Cromwellian conquest of Scotland but the failure of the Covenanter revolution of 1637 itself. Yet, as Drs Stewart and Spurlock point out, the Covenanters set in motion many of the structural and intellectual changes that would affect Scottish society for generations to come.

Unlike the consensus on Scotland, the chapters on Ireland, as Toby Barnard acknowledges in his chapter, show the more divisive character of scholarship on mid-17th-century Irish history. It is generally agreed, however, that internal division in the face of the English

Parliament's war machine was fatal for Ireland. Joseph Cope ably summarises the Irish rising of 1641, giving a helpful analysis of recent work on polemic, history and memory in light of the 1641 depositions relating to the Irish insurgency against Protestant settlers. Cope argues that this evidence points to the Irish insurgents carrying out ethnic targeting of English (as opposed to Scottish) settlers, a fact that contributed to the (already polemic-fuelled) horror of the Irish rising in England. On the other hand, Michael O Siochru, who loosely structures his essay thematically around answering the various critics of his 1999 monograph *Confederate Ireland 1642–1649* (2), stresses the remarkable ethnic inclusivity of the Confederate position of the mid-1640s. Read together, these two chapters provide a detailed reminder of the ethnic dimension of the British Revolution that has also been explored in the English, Cornish and Welsh context by Mark Stoye and Lloyd Bowen. Taking a longer view, Toby Barnard argues that Cromwell and the Cromwellian repression of Ireland was both a product and a step in the tragic and unhappy history of Ireland in the 17th century. The consequences of English ascendancy over its neighbours are analysed by balanced and insightful chapters from Derek Hirst and John Morrill, focusing on the problems that the English republic and its bloody victory over its territorial neighbours unleashed.

Tim Harris' chapter on the Restoration points out that the problems of the British revolution were not unique to the period and continued into the Restoration settlement, which is ultimately seen as a failure. The edging towards the return of Charles Stuart as King Charles II was a mixed affair, with decisions being made in the chaotic events of late 1659. Seditious words against the new king were not uncommon and the vast majority acquiesced as the only viable way of obtaining peace. Harris concludes that the failure to address the problems of the 1640s and 1650s, and even to exacerbate them, ultimately cost the Stuarts their dynasty. The century long aftermath of the revolution is discussed in chapters by Mark Knights and John Miller who explore the commercial, fiscal, religious and cultural consequences of the mid-seventeenth century crisis. It has sometimes been argued that the British Revolution was of little consequence in the *longue durée* of British history, but these concluding essays beg to differ.

The handbook also presents more thematic chapters including a fine chapter on the print revolution by Jason Peacey. Andrew Hopper presents a chapter on the armies of the period and Stephen Roberts tackles localism and the problems of central government in his chapter on state and society. Along with Roberts' chapter, John Walter's chapter on crowds and popular politics provides a welcome reminder that the British Revolution was as much about politics 'out of doors' as it was about elite institutions and people. Ann Hughes' chapter on the complexities of the gender and gender politics strikes at narratives of the revolution as being a simple transition from the medieval to the modern. Phil Withington's chapter on urban citizens in England is a focused essay that explores how citizenship was a critical element in mobilising the Parliamentary cause, particularly from towns and boroughs that had recent grants of charters allowing them to return MPs to Westminster. Professor Withington imports concepts from the ethnography of politics to reconceptualise the various practices and stratagems that were played out in the urban field during the Revolution. He concludes that the period is characterised by a transition from Tudor notions of commonweal to one of partisanship and a politicized consciousness characteristic of later urban politics. John Coffey's essay on religious thought explores the recent refocusing of scholarly attention away from the 'radical' sects toward what Gary De Krey has described elsewhere as 'Reformed Protestants' and the resurgence of the non-Laudian episcopalian tradition. Often derided as 'conservatives' by a previous generation of historians, the Reformed Protestants held the central place in the religious debates of the period and advanced a confessional vision of the ends of the Civil War that is best encapsulated in the notion of godly rule. Coffey crisply analyses the dynamic between these reformers and those discontented with the totalising vision of a strict confessional reformation.

The art and literature of the revolution are covered by three chapters from Stephen Zwicker (Literature), Timothy Wilkes (art and architecture) and Laura Lunger Knoppers (the reimagining of the revolution in 19th-century art and literature). Zwicker provides a discussion of authors and the book trade, exploring that the ambiguities and contradictions of literary authors writing in the 'whirlwind' of the revolution. In surveying the visual art of the period, Wilkes explores the 'warts and all' negotiation between godly iconophobia and the continuing demand for aristocratic and military portraiture, as well as providing a brief critical review of the architectural history of the period. Knoppers' essay is a finely crafted piece discussing the cultural legacy of the English Revolution in Victorian art and literature. Focusing on Alfred Bate Richards, Paul Delaroche, Sir Walter Scott and Victor Hugo, Knoppers explores the political significance of the 19th-century obsession with the revolution. In line with her research interests, Professor Knopper's main focus is on images of Cromwell and her discussion of Paul Delaroche's *Cromwell opens the coffin of King Charles I* (1831) is an object lesson in the reconstruction of how the past and the (then) present construct the historical imagination. I was slightly disappointed that Knoppers did not have space to discuss other well known works of the Victorian historical re-imagination of the revolution. A wider discussion of works of literature such as Frederick Marryat's *Children of the New Forest* (1847) and paintings such as J.R. Herbert's *Assertion of liberty of conscience by the Independents of the Westminster Assembly of Divines 1644* (1847) or the still chilling image of military rule shattering childhood innocence in W. F. Yeames' *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* (1878) would have been welcome in this volume. In conclusion, *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution* covers most of the essential topics of the period and provides a depth of analysis in a single volume that many monographs dedicated to the period miss. I would venture the conclusion that all but the most assiduous or jaded scholars of the period will come away from the volume with a desire to undertake some further study, and for college level students the essays will be very welcome in getting a handle on the debates of the period. Nevertheless, a volume of 33 essays can only provide a first stop for scholars, teachers and students. Fortunately, the inclusion of adequate footnoting and further reading lists make this work a useful starting point for those seeking to expand their knowledge of an increasingly complicated field of study.

Notes

1. Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution, 1625-1660* (Oxford, 2002).
2. Michael O Siochru, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649: A Constitutional and Political Analysis* (Dublin, 1999).