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The Cromwell Association was formed in 1937 and is a registered charity (reg no. 1132954). The purpose of the Association is to advance the education of the public in both the life and legacy of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), politician, soldier and statesman, and the wider history of the seventeenth century.

The Association seeks to progress its aims in the following ways:

- campaigns for the preservation and conservation of buildings and sites relevant to Cromwell
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- supports and encourages the Cromwell Museum and Cromwell Collection in Huntingdon run by Cambridgeshire County Council
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- encourages interest in the period in all phases of formal education by the publication of reading lists, information and teachers' guidance
- publishes news and information about the period, including an annual journal and regular newsletters
- organises an annual service, day schools, conferences, lectures, exhibitions and other educational events
- provides a web-based resource for researchers in the period including school students, genealogists and interested parties
- offers, from time to time grants, awards and prizes to individuals and organisations working towards the objectives stated above.

Editor of *Cromwelliana*: Dr MAXINE FORSHAW, BSc, PhD

The Cromwell Museum,
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The Cromwell Museum is in the former Huntingdon Grammar School where Cromwell received his early education. The museum, which is fully accredited by the Arts Council of England is run by Cambridgeshire County Council, and has a wide-ranging collection which illustrates the life and legacy of Oliver Cromwell. In addition to the permanent collection the museum has a programme of changing temporary exhibitions and activities.

The museum is open all year Tuesday – Sunday, admission is free.

For information:

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Cromwelliana

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CROMWELLIANA

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‘promoting our understanding of the 17th century’

CROMWELLIANA 2014

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CONTENTS

Editor's Note	2
Cromwell Day Address (September 2013)	3
Honouring Cromwell? Cromwell and Honour By Prof J C Davis	
Cromwell Collection Lecture (November 2013)	10
Oliver Cromwell and Parliament By Prof Blair Worden	
The Religious Context of the Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland By Prof John Morrill	29
The Cromwellian Navy in Ireland, 1649-1653 By Dr Elaine Murphy	36
Cromwell and the Irish land Settlement By Dr John Cunningham	50
Writings and Sources XVI: 'Your Loving Father' - Letters from Oliver Cromwell to Henry Cromwell, 1655-1658 By Dr Joel Halcomb and Dr Patrick Little	64
Book Reviews By Dr Patrick Little, John Goldsmith and Prof Peter Gaunt	84
Bibliography of Books By Dr David Smith	94
Bibliography of Journals By Prof Peter Gaunt	97

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the 2014 edition of Cromwelliana. Three of the articles included here are from the very successful 'Cromwell and Ireland' study day held at Madingley Hall, Cambridge, in October 2013. Also included are the Cromwellian Collection Lecture by Professor Blair Worden and a Writings and Sources feature from the forthcoming edition of Cromwell's writings to be published by Oxford University Press.

My thanks to all the contributors for their valuable input to this edition.

The cover illustration shows a 17th century engraving of ships outside Drogheda in 1641.

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2013
HONOURING CROMWELL? CROMWELL AND HONOUR

By Prof JC Davies

Since their inception, the observation of these annual ceremonies' addresses and the accompanying addresses published in Cromwelliana have both commemorated and honoured Oliver Cromwell; not always in an uncritical manner. This morning I am not so much concerned with honouring him as with asking what value Cromwell himself attached to honour and specifically to his personal honour. How significant was 'honour' in his own attitudes, thinking and utterance?

Let me begin by noting a few indicators of the central place of honour in the political environment which Cromwell inhabited. For example, the great, mid-seventeenth century, political philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, is often depicted as the hard-headed analyst of a politics driven by fear. In fact, he saw the three great determinants of western political culture as honour, fear and profit, and in that order.¹ Of the titles of works printed between 1640 and 1660 in the Thomason collection a quarter contain the word honour. Or, using the textual word counts available on Early English Books Online for the same period (1640 to 1660), in 7,050 works there are 83,412 hits for the word honour, indicating an average usage of the word twelve times per printed work. The language of honour was commonplace and historians of the civil wars have recently begun to take a renewed interest in its influence on recruitment, conduct and even the behaviour of turncoats.² To quote Dan Beaver, "the violent competition for honour [was] at the heart of orderliness and power in the seventeenth century"³, while Michael Braddick has argued for the importance of honour as a "crucial currency" in a world of civil conflict and shifting alliances.⁴ Richard Cust's magisterial biography of Charles I repeatedly stresses the importance of honour in the political actions and attitudes of the King. Even Charles' refusal to plead at his trial was in this view substantially driven by his sense of honour.⁵ And, Sir Keith Thomas has recently written of honour as one of 'the ends of life' towards which all were exhorted to strive.⁶ The maintenance of reputation and the symbols of honour has become a preoccupation, not only of contemporaries and of historians studying them, but of historical novelists and television documentaries and dramas and we are still apparently dazzled by it.

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2013
HONOURING CROMWELL? CROMWELL AND HONOUR

By contrast, Cromwell's own references to honour are scarce and there are virtually none to his personal honour. The most frequent use of the language of honour in his letters and speeches relates to the honour of God and often suggests that the obligation to honour God relegated human honour to irrelevancy.⁷ Secondly, Cromwell saw service to the cause of civil and religious liberty, "the honour and liberty of Parliament", as honourable.⁸ Occasionally the two are linked. Writing to Colonel Jones on 14 September 1647, he reminded him that service to God and the public good would in the end be to his honour.⁹ But, because it was judgement by the standards of the world, too worldly, there are also strong indications of Cromwell discounting honour. Service to God was no guarantee of honorific status in the world's eyes. "The Lord may lay us in the dust when He pleaseth, yet we serve Him - He is our Master, this is our boasting"¹⁰ The victory at Langport was the work of "poor ignorant men".¹¹ There was no honour in it but that of God. In 1651 he warned his son's father-in-law of Richard's prodigality and deplored the vanity of the desire to impress others which was worldly honour.¹² At the other end of the scale, dissolving his first Parliament in January 1655 he observed that they had been "like other nations sometimes up, and sometimes down, in our honour in the world". Yet what mattered was they were always a people who "have had a stamp upon them from God".¹³ In August 1651, attempting to persuade Lord Wharton and others to rejoin the cause which the regicide had alienated them from, he urged that they offer themselves willingly for God's work. "Wherein to be accepted, is more honour from the Lord than the world can give or hath."¹⁴ Even military honour which Cromwell is often alleged to have taken more seriously appears infrequently and sometimes slightly in his letters and speeches.¹⁵ On 15 February 1650 he reported to Lenthall that the Irish town of Fethard had surrendered "upon terms which we usually call honourable".¹⁶ The values Cromwell was more likely to stress in his own communications were 'honesty', 'integrity', 'fidelity' and 'faithfulness' rather than 'honour' and his personal honour barely featured at all.

Why does this matter?

What I am proposing is that Cromwell should be seen in the context of negotiation and coalition building and that the relative absence of a preoccupation with personal honour freed him for what that involved.¹⁷

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2013
HONOURING CROMWELL? CROMWELL AND HONOUR

A lack of key coercive, bureaucratic and fiscal resources, necessarily meant that early modern government functioned through negotiation. The personal government of Charles I, ignoring this necessity in the 1630s, ordering rather than negotiating, came to be regarded as misguided and tyrannical.

Equally, to fight a civil war without those resources necessarily meant negotiating for support - for men, money and materials. Look at Cromwell's correspondence in 1643 when he was beginning to emerge as a potential military leader and you will see what I mean. He is pleading for men - and men of the right quality - money and support. His bargaining counters are security, protection, the cause. Moreover, both sides in the civil war were negotiated coalitions which experienced periods of great fragility and had to be renegotiated - militarily, politically and religiously. Cromwell's quarrel with Manchester is a good example of a military coalition passing the limits of fragility only to be replaced by a new one with the Fairfaxes and the formation of the New Model Army. Religiously too, Cromwell negotiated hard for a broad spectrum protestant coalition which would not press too heavily on tender consciences.

From late 1646, victory and the blank sheet created by the abolition of the episcopal church meant that the centrifugal forces within the parliamentary coalition could barely be contained. And yet Cromwell made a determined effort - at some cost to his reputation for plain dealing - accepting on occasion the possibility of a presbyterian church, working through 1647 to keep parliament and the army together in the face of provocations from both sides, and supporting that remarkable attempt to reconcile all, or most, parties, the Heads of Proposals. Even in 1648, following the defiance of providence by the King and the Scots which was, to him, the second civil war, Cromwell sought, despite considerable pressure from the irreconcilables in the army, a negotiated peace. Post-regicide, it was he above all who persuaded moderates and those who could not abide the killing of the King to come back on board. By the mid-1650s, we could argue that, even in post-conquest Ireland and Scotland, Cromwell was trying to make rather than impose peace, looking for alliances out of which to shape national coalitions.

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2013
HONOURING CROMWELL? CROMWELL AND HONOUR

Negotiation and coalition building required flexibility and a willingness to compromise which often involved setting aside the demands of personal honour. Cromwell, I would argue, was distinguished from many contemporaries in this regard. For example, in terms of military capabilities, others such as Fairfax or Lambert might be at least equally outstanding, but neither were negotiators or coalition builders. Or, consider again Charles I, who according to Richard Cust, was “seemingly oblivious to any priority except the vindication of his honour” which he pursued regardless of “any prospects of success”. Such “oversensitivity” ultimately induced inflexibility, “often serving to personalise confrontations, and making it harder to back down”.¹⁸ Cust’s verdict is that the inflexibility of his honorific codes limited the king’s capacities to that of a party, rather than a national, leader. The mature Cromwell, I suggest, strove to reverse that formula - to move from party to national leadership. In that regard, the absence of a preoccupation with personal honour was an asset.

Negotiation and coalition building took their toll in terms of dignity, reputation and honour. Cromwell’s negotiations of 1647/8 were branded as scheming driven by personal ambition. Throughout the 1650s his dignity as Lord Protector was exposed to the frustration and serial humiliations of trying to reach accommodations with old republicans like Ludlow, Fifth Monarchists like John Rogers and Quakers like George Fox. What is surprising is the degree of his persistence with such people, his tolerance of their obduracy, even their rudeness and the range of people with whom he was prepared to engage. Presbyterians, Prayer Book Anglicans, old royalists and even Roman Catholics were on the list of those with whom accommodation might be sought. Imposing peace meant the military occupation of Britain at what was probably a politically and economically unsustainable cost. Making peace, the option Cromwell increasingly turned to, meant negotiation in the name of healing and settling and that could and did involve reversals, frustrations and humiliations.¹⁹ Personal honour was at a discount - and Cromwell was capable of discounting it.

Many of those critics of the Lord Protector most admired by posterity, men such as Milton, Vane and Richard Baxter saw the Good Old Cause in terms of a party, rather than a national, coalition. Such people favoured rule by a select coalition of the saints, the godly or of the better sort. Edmund Ludlow identified this with “those of all sorts who had acted with fidelity

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2013
HONOURING CROMWELL? CROMWELL AND HONOUR

and affection to the public” - i.e. people like us.²⁰ This was to settle for an alliance so narrow that it could only be sustained and made effective by military force. Cromwell, in contrast, was seeking a broad coalition which would facilitate the civilianisation of the regime and a substantial restoration of local autonomy. His struggle with the offer of the Crown in 1657, itself a negotiating process, can be seen as essentially a struggle over what coalition could best deliver that future of the Protectorate most desired by Cromwell. Was it to be a partisan triumph or a reconfiguration of the political nation? Unless we make the assumption that he was playing an extraordinarily and, in my view, implausibly long game, what was not an issue for him, in the face of that offer, was the personal and dynastic honour of the royal title.²¹

Coalition building, which I believe to be a crucial key to Cromwell’s career, made ideological purity and personal honour negotiable. The rainbow coalition, which healing and settling implied, involved finding and appealing to common interests. As Cromwell himself ruefully observed of the failure to find a negotiated settlement after the civil war, “we had our humours and interests, and indeed I fear our humours were more than our interests”.²² To recalibrate the thesis of Mervyn James’ seminal work on honour in this period²³ the politics of lineage and honour were giving way to the politics of interest and that appeal to shared interest remains a cardinal feature of modern politics. Was Cromwell then in some sense the practitioner of a new politics, the first of the modern politicians?

If I am right, the ironical question I leave you with is this: should we honour Oliver Cromwell for discounting the politics of personal honour?

This Cromwell Day address was given on 2nd September 2013.

¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Eight Books of the Peloponnesian War, Written by Thucydides The Son of Olorus*, in Sir William Molesworth (ed.), *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, vols. 8 and 9 (London, 1843), I, 82. Also noteworthy is Hobbes’ extensive treatment of honour in Chapter 10 of his masterwork *Leviathan* (1651).

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2013
HONOURING CROMWELL? CROMWELL AND HONOUR

- ² Barbara Donagan, 'The Web of Honour: Soldiers, Christians and Gentlemen in the English Civil War', *Historical Journal*, 44 (2001) pp. 365-89; Monica Patterson-Tutschka, 'Honour Thy King: Honouring as a Royalist Theory of Praxis in Civil War England 1640-1660', *History of Political Thought*, 32:3 (2011) pp. 465-98; Andrew James Hopper, 'The Self-Fashioning of Gentry Turncoats during the English Civil Wars', *Journal of British Studies*, 49:2 (2010) pp. 1-22.
- ³ Dan Beaver, "Bragging and daring words": honour, property and the symbolism of the hunt in Stowe, 1590-1642', in Michael J. Braddick and John Walter (eds.), *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001) p. 164. See also Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour* (Cambridge, 2006).
- ⁴ Michael J. Braddick (ed.), *The Politics of Gesture: Historical Perspectives* (Oxford, 2009) p. 26. For honour as a social cement offsetting religious diversity see Mervyn James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1986) p. 435.
- ⁵ Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (London, 2007) p. 459 and *passim*.
- ⁶ Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfillment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2010) Chapter 5.
- ⁷ W. C. Abbott (ed.), *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 volumes, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1937-47). References to this work will be in the form of A followed by volume and page(s) number(s). A, I, 96, 340; II, 110-11; III, 157, 284, 335, 591, 859; IV, 72, 388-9. The language of honour creeps more regularly into his Latin, diplomatic correspondence but this was invariably drafted by others, including John Milton.
- ⁸ A, I, 292; for examples see also A, I, 127-8, 360; II, 462-3; III, 58-9, 531; IV, 225, 241, 482, 486, 819.
- ⁹ A, I, 506; see also I, 374-8; III, 361.
- ¹⁰ Cromwell to Colonel Hammond, 13 May 1651, A, II, 418.
- ¹¹ A, I, 365.
- ¹² A, II, 425.
- ¹³ A, III, 579.
- ¹⁴ A, II, 453.

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2013
HONOURING CROMWELL? CROMWELL AND HONOUR

- ¹⁵ Alan Marshall, *Oliver Cromwell Soldier: the Military Life of a Revolutionary at War* (London, 2004) p. 274 for the view that Cromwell's military aims were not glory and honour but "a just peace and a righteous religious settlement".
- ¹⁶ A, II, 213. Compare II, 216, 226-7, 196, 368.
- ¹⁷ The fuller version of the argument I am drastically summarising here will appear in Michael J. Braddick (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution* (Oxford, 2014).
- ¹⁸ Cust, *Charles I*, pp. 61, 260, 473, 30; see also 215-6.
- ¹⁹ For the significance of this distinction see J. C. Davis, 'Oliver Cromwell Peacemaker', *Cromwelliana* (1998) pp. 2-7.
- ²⁰ A, IV, 221.
- ²¹ See his enigmatic remarks on the offer of the crown associating honour with worldliness and weakness. The offer made in the Humble Petition and Advice was "exceeding high honour and respect" .."according to what the world calls good". A, IV, 444-6. Speaking amongst his intimates, he was famously, according to Ludlow, prepared to compare the crown with a "feather in a man's cap" or a child's rattle. A, IV, 509.
- ²² A, IV, 435.
- ²³ James, *Society, Politics and Culture* .

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OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

By Prof Blair Worden

If you write about the seventeenth century these days, the one thing you're told you mustn't be is Whiggish. To describe a historical interpretation as Whig is enough to condemn it. There has, we're led to believe, been a tradition of 'Whig history', which has distorted the past, and from which it is a duty of professional or academic history to deliver us. A great deal of modern historical research has been a conscious striving for emancipation from Whig history: research which tends to get called 'revisionist' or 'revisionism'. And on no subject has revisionism had more to say than seventeenth-century parliamentary history. It's true that, at least on the surface, the academic world has moved on: that we've had 'post-revisionism', in which revisionism has itself been revised. But it hasn't made the term Whig history less pejorative; and it will be an implication of what I say that revisionism hasn't been revised enough.

What is, or was, Whig history? The most obvious application of the term belongs to the period of the Whig party, from the late seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. The Whig history of that era was party history. It proved, by historical illustration, the Whig political case. It showed that throughout English history, in Anglo-Saxon times or the high middle ages or in the seventeenth-century civil wars, the only legitimate authority of rulers was that which came from below. That authority rested on the consent of subjects and was accountable to them. The medium of consent was parliament, whose rights the Crown had sought to suppress or supplant. Whig history countered Tory views of history, which gave historical illustration to the divine right of kings or showed the extent of the royal prerogative.

In the nineteenth century, under the influence of Macaulay, a new strain entered Whig history: the idea of progress. The English constitution was shown to have evolved, for the better. It had gradually established principles and practices of liberty, and had curbed and regulated the arbitrary tendencies of rulers. The view of English history as progress towards constitutional freedom survived the death of the Whig party and its replacement, from the mid-nineteenth century, by the Liberal Party - even if by now purely party history had virtually disappeared. The seventeenth century seemed a decisive stage in that process. Progressive and reactionary

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

forces had fought it out, first on the battlefields of the 1640s, then in the Revolution of 1688. Progress, and liberty with it, had won.

That view of the seventeenth century produced many distortions, which revisionism rightly disposed of. Whig history had muddled the practices and values of the past with those of the present. Seventeenth-century parliaments were in important ways very unlike eighteenth- or nineteenth- or twentieth-century ones. There was no large-scale organization of political parties. There was no such thing as ‘the opposition’, an anachronistic term that was still unblushingly used in accounts of 17th-century parliamentary history written in the middle third of the twentieth century. Rather, resistance to government policy at Westminster was normally organized not by people who were excluded from the arena of government, but from ministers and courtiers who had lost their battles at court and who took them to parliament and mobilised support there. Again, the House of Lords was a far more powerful body in the 17th century than it is now. It is the achievement of revisionism that these points no longer have to be laboured. There was another failing of Whig history. It was written for the winners. It found Roundheads more interesting and sympathetic than Cavaliers, so that only now is royalism earning anything like comparable attention.

And yet wherever our own sympathies lie, the basic premise of Whig interpretations of the seventeenth century, that the constitutional powers of parliament were a central, even the central issue of political conflict, seems to me true, and increasingly a forgotten truth. Admittedly if you look at parliament before 1640, the year first of the Short Parliament and then of the meeting of the Long Parliament, it looks an endangered species. Representative institutions were subsiding in continental Europe. If the English crown could only sort out its financial problems by getting the judges to back new initiatives for extra-parliamentary taxation (as it did) and by administrative reform (which it attempted), and if it could only avoid suicidal initiatives such as Charles I’s new Prayer Book for Scotland, what was to stop parliaments from going the way of their continental counterparts and to prevent the establishment of a continental style of absolute monarchy? Parliaments, after all, met only for short periods at long intervals. They were summoned and dissolved solely at the crown’s bidding and convenience; and by 1629 the crown had come to find them all too inconvenient.

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

And yet when we turn from parliaments before 1640 to the Long Parliament, we find a body ready to make very bold claims for its authority and to act upon them. It acted as the sovereign body of the realm. The idea that parliament, 'the great council of the realm' as it was often called, was the highest authority in the land was not in itself a challenge to the Crown. As Henry VIII had said, the authority of monarchs never stood so high as in parliament. But that was because the king himself was one of the three estates of parliament. Parliamentary legislation commanded its authority because the will of Lords and Commons was added to that of the king, not because it was imposed on him. The idea of parliament acting as a body separate from the king, which is what happened in the 1640s, took some getting used to.

Yet happen it did. Even before the civil war had broken out, the Lords and Commons had asserted their right to act independently of the crown. They overrode the king's veto of legislation, his 'negative voice'. Instead of 'acts', which required the royal assent, they passed 'ordinances', for which they claimed no less authority; and after the abolition of the monarchy in 1649 parliament resumed the word 'act'. Before the Long Parliament, parliaments had been legislative, or law-making, bodies only. They had had nothing to do with the enforcement of law; nothing to do with the executive, the operation of government. Yet in 1642 Lords and Commons took over the government, and became the executive. They levied forces against the king and conquered him.

That, surely, was a political revolution. How could MPs justify it to themselves? Like all politicians they chose words to suit their political needs. There was a lot of special pleading and expediency in parliament's claims to be fighting for the king even as it fought against him: in the argument that the king had been seduced by wicked counsel into deserting his parliament, which in his absence had had, from necessity, to act without him. Yet to persuade even those who made them the arguments needed a basis of conviction. MPs had one. They saw themselves as fulfilling the historical role of parliaments in national emergencies: the role, fulfilled in 1640-2 as it had been in 1253 or 1327 or 1399 or 1422, of expressing and implementing the will of the nation. Appeals to historical precedents of that kind were critical in giving the MPs of that legalistic generation the sense that what they were doing was lawful: that parliament represented legality and Charles

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

I's attack on it illegality. In the sixteenth century, during the conflicts of the Reformation, Protestant groups had claimed a right to rise in resistance to established Catholic rulers. The Long Parliament was in the main wary of that argument, which had been taken over by Catholics and was therefore now associated with popery. The Long Parliament, in its own eyes, was not resisting authority. It was the lawful authority, on which the king was which the king had waged war.

Members of the Long Parliament saw the 1640s as an exceptional decade. Though they wanted parliaments to meet regularly, and though they legislated to that effect, they did not think that parliaments should normally sit for long or that they should normally run the government. A 'Long Parliament', in almost constant session, was an unfamiliar notion. When the Long Parliament was over and Cromwell summoned the parliaments of the protectorate, they readily accepted a return to parliaments of brief duration and left the running of the executive to protector and council. Yet there was an important distinction in MPs' minds: a distinction between what it was wise or healthy for parliaments to do, and to be, in normal times, and what they were entitled to do, and to be, if abnormal times demanded it. In abnormal times they could do anything, ideally with the king but if necessary without him. They were sovereign bodies with sovereign rights.

Those notions were not a retrospective invention by Whig history. During the eighteenth century, the great Whig century, two books written by members of the Long Parliament were published in the service of the Whig political outlook. One, which had first appeared in two volumes in 1647-51 and had been reprinted during the exclusion crisis of Charles II's reign, was by the Suffolk lawyer Nathaniel Bacon. It was, in the words of its title, *A Vindication of the Way of Parliaments in England*. With resourceful scholarship it claimed that Saxon and medieval history showed the English monarchy to be properly elective and contractual and to be properly subject to parliamentary supervision. Admittedly, as Bacon regretted, arbitrary rule had over time obscured that principle, but it had not removed it. The other book, not published in the seventeenth century, was by another lawyer, Bulstrode Whitelocke. There was nothing extremist about either Bacon or Whitelocke. Both men opposed the execution of Charles I and the military coup which made it possible. Neither man was a republican. Under the protectorate both men wanted the restoration of the monarchy. They

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

sought a Cromwellian monarchy because a Stuart one was impracticable. But they wanted that monarchy, whoever was the monarch, to be based on parliamentary consent. Whitelocke wrote, in manuscript, another work, a 'History of the Parliament of England', of 'our great, public, supreme council of the nation', which argued that 'the ancient constitution of the policy of our nation' was 'government' – that is, the setting up and supervision of government – 'by parliament'.

Those were not the perspectives of lawyers alone or of MPs alone. The Long Parliament could not have raised armies or won public backing had not the constitutional revolution it effected in 1640-2 been backed by a wide section of public sentiment. The royalist statesmen Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, acknowledged the king's difficulty, even after the parliament had appropriated executive powers, in constructing a royalist case that would overcome the 'reverence' and 'veneration' that were 'generally entertained for parliament', that 'fatal disease' by which 'the whole kingdom was misled', and which, Hyde judged, gave Westminster an unassailable advantage in the recruitment and maintenance of regiments. Other royalists shared his assessment: parliament had become an 'idol'; it was 'a word that carried armies in it'. Of course, if royalists had shared the Roundhead view of parliaments there would have been no civil war. Some royalists cared little or nothing for parliament; others respected it but argued that what the Lords and Commons did, without the king, in the 1640s was a monstrously illegal perversion of the institution. But at least Charles I was brought, by Hyde, to understand the damage that his refusal to call parliament between 1629 and 1640 had done. In the royal declarations of 1642, drafted by Hyde, Charles implicitly renounced the personal rule. The king emphasised that his own actions in raising an army were not directed against 'the dignity, privilege and freedom of parliaments', 'whose freedom distinguishes the condition of his majesty's subjects from those of any monarchy in Europe'. It was obvious, Charles acknowledged, 'that it is impossible for him to subsist without the affections of his people, and that those affections cannot possibly be preserved or made use of but by parliaments'. Even at his trial and on the scaffold Charles remembered to insist on his respect for the 'privileges' of parliament.

In resisting and fighting Charles I, parliament claimed to be acting as 'the representative of the people'. The strength of that conviction in the popular

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

mind is indicated by the protests which it provoked. For the protests were not against the principle of representative government: they were against the failure of parliament to live up to it. How, asked royalists, could the Lords and Commons claim to represent the nation when the expulsion of royalists from Westminster had left their constituencies unrepresented? More fundamental protests came from the Levellers, who complained of the geographical imbalance of the electoral map and – though the subject was far less important in their minds – of the limitations on the franchise. They got their way on the question of the electoral map, for Oliver Cromwell's parliaments on the basis of a fundamental overhaul of the constituencies, as radical a transformation as that achieved by the Great Reform Act of 1832.

The institution that was left most vulnerable by the doctrine of representation was the House of Lords. What was 'representative' about it? By 1649 the Lords had got in the Commons' way, or rather in the way of the remnant of the House of Commons, the Rump, which the army had allowed to sit after Pride's Purge, and which was preparing to bring the king to trial. So the Commons unilaterally abolished the Lords. In January 1649 the lower house declared that 'the people are, under God, the original of all just power'; that the Commons, 'being chosen by, and representing, the people, have the supreme power in this nation'; and that whatever the Commons enacts, or declares to be law, 'hath the force of law', even if 'the consent of king, or house of peers, be not had thereunto.' Thus a claim that had been made to bypass the king in 1642 was extended to bypass the Lords in 1649.¹ The Rump was laying up problems for itself, for, to put it mildly, Pride's Purge had made the idea that the Commons represented the people unpersuasive. Yet the abolition of the House of Lords was carried through with scarcely a murmur - and aroused nothing like the hostility brought by the abolition of monarchy at the same time. It was not only regicides who objected to the powers of the Lords. To Nathaniel Bacon the veto or 'negative voice' of the Lords was as indefensible as that of the king. For why should 'that which is by the representative of the people determined' be 'dis-determined by' either 'one [the king] or a few [the Lords], whose counsels are for the most part grounded upon private' interests?²

Yet in fighting the king, parliament – the Commons as well as the Lords - had claimed to be defending the ancient constitution of the three estates of king, lords and commons. It had saluted the notion of a 'mixed'

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

constitution, in which power was balanced between king and parliament and among the three estates; and it had repeatedly pledged to the nation its resolve to restore that ancient government once the war was over. The abolition of kingship and the House of Lords bluntly broke those pledges and was fundamentally inconsistent with them. How did those MPs who went along with the constitutional revolution of 1649 vindicate it? It was not only regicides who did so, or the small body, which had such difficulty in raising a quorum, that steered through the execution of the king and the abolition of king and Lords. There was the much larger number of MPs who returned to Westminster after the king's death and who, however horrified they had been by it, endorsed the change of government that it had produced.

Why did they do so? Those MPs, too, were not republicans. Few if any even of the regicides were republicans, at least at that time, though some of them became so later. Charles I was executed not for being a king but for being a tyrant and, as we would say, a war criminal: not for occupying the kingly office but for abusing and perverting it. Only two months after the regicide was the monarchy abolished, and even then in nervous, tentative, almost apologetic language; and it took a further two months to announce the introduction of the 'Commonwealth and Free State'. The Rump explained, as the Lords and Commons had done in 1642, that 'necessity' had left them no option but to set existing constitutional arrangements aside. The Rump did not say that kingship was to be abolished for all time, or that it was unsuitable to all countries at all times. It merely said, in so many words, that there was no other way out of the hole the nation had dug for itself. Charles I's intransigence and untrustworthiness had made a return to peace and stability impossible while he lived; and once he was dead there was no alternative candidate for the throne on whom the contending parties could have agreed. Since it was impossible to have a king, the nation would do without one.

The thesis used to justify the change of government was not republicanism. It was the sovereignty of parliaments. For however ancient the ancient constitution might be, it had always lived, explained MPs, on sufferance. It had been set up, in immemorial antiquity, by a national council or the national will, and if the nation's well-being demanded its removal the national will could remove it. In 1649 the Rump asserted the right of

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

parliament ‘to alter or change any government’ ‘when they shall judge it to be no longer for the good and safety of the people’. They had a ‘natural right and inherent power to take up or lay down what form of government we think fit, and judge most convenient’. Having debated ‘what government the people of England shall choose’, they came down in favour of a sovereign House of Commons.

Most of the people who went along with those arguments did so with reluctance, and a majority of the MPs who had sat until 1648 opposed them. But it was not the principle of parliamentary sovereignty that antagonized them. It was the use of armed force and the rule of the sword, which violated the very principle of consent to which the new government appealed. MPs who refused to join the Rump could at least understand the decision of those of their colleagues who reluctantly sat in it. We see the point if we move forward from 1649 to 1657, when parliament offered Cromwell the crown under the new constitution, the Humble Petition and Advice. The argument that had been used to abolish monarchy in 1649 was now used to advocate its return. As the MP Nathaniel Fiennes, son of Lord Saye and Sele and a key figure in the protectoral government, put it in conference with the protector, in 1649 ‘one parliament thought the present state of affairs required the taking away the name and office of king’, and now ‘this parliament judgeth the present state of affairs requireth the restoring of it’. Fiennes was one of the MPs who had refused to sit in the Long Parliament after Pride’s Purge. He had played no part in the decision to abolish the monarchy. Yet he was ready to argue for the Humble Petition and Advice on the principle on which the monarchy had been abolished. His argument was echoed by the Anglo-Irish peer Lord Broghil, the architect of the Humble Petition and Advice: ‘what one supreme authority may suppress, another may erect.’

In April 1653 the Rump was forcibly expelled by Cromwell. Eight months later he became protector. The principal work of propaganda published on behalf of the new constitution, the Instrument of Government, Marchamont Nedham’s *A True State of the Case of the Commonwealth*, hailed it as a return to the principle of the mixed or balanced constitution. The Instrument announced in its opening clauses a return to the division between legislative power, which would be parliament’s job, and executive power, which would be the protector’s and council’s. In accordance with the

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

terms of the Instrument, Cromwell called a parliament in September 1654. The Presbyterians, that is those parliamentarians who had been excluded from the Rump or refused to join it, were allowed back. When the parliament met, the new constitution immediately came under heavy attack. Cromwell had to resort once more to armed intervention, and forcibly purged the house. Yet even then he could not secure the house's agreement even to a modified version of the Instrument.

Yet it was not the content of the Instrument of Government that provoked the basic resistance to the Instrument in the parliament. As in 1649, it was the military basis of the government, rather than the form that the government took, that Presbyterians could not swallow. Although some clauses of the Instrument were unacceptable to MPs, on the whole the new constitution was close enough to the terms of the constitution proposed by the Long Parliament in 1642 (with Charles I rather than Cromwell as the single ruler). But it was the army, not the parliament itself, that had brought the constitution in. The Instrument had no basis in parliamentary consent. The parliament simply refused to recognise the constitution's existence. It regarded the period of rule between December 1653 and its own meeting simply as a military usurpation. Now the nation must start again, and provide its own, parliamentary constitution. The parliament of 1654 was perfectly prepared to produce its own constitutional bill, which silently took clauses over from the Instrument, and which recognized Cromwell as protector. But the passage of the bill would be conditional on Cromwell's acceptance of parliament's right to define the constitution for itself. He was to have such power as the parliament determined. In the parliament there were, it is true, former members of the Rump who would never have accepted Cromwell's rule on any terms; but the military purge eight days after the parliament met got rid of them. The MPs who survived the purge accepted the premise that the government should be by 'a single person' – Cromwell - 'and parliament'. But, they insisted, the single person was to be 'limited and restrained as the parliament should think fit'. Now as in Anglo-Saxon or medieval times, now as in 1649, now as would happen again in 1657, parliament would lay the foundation of future government.

In 1660 the king came back and parliament was taught, for a time, to lower its sites. And yet when we ask how the Restoration came about, we find that the same principle which animated parliament in 1649 and 1654 and 1657

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

prevailed. The Restoration was the restoration of parliament before it was the restoration of the king. It arose from the petitioning movement early in the year in favour of a 'free parliament', that is, a parliament freely elected and free from the armed force which had purged or destroyed so many parliaments in the 1640s and 1650s. Naturally royalists and Presbyterians, the two groups which led the campaign, looked to a free parliament to secure different ends; but the great differences between them could be overcome, and an alliance between them formed to overthrow the army, only because of the prevailing sense that parliament alone could supply a mechanism for the resolution of the nation's differences. The petitioners looked, for the solution, to 'consent of the people in a free parliament', to 'the grand privilege' of the people of England 'of being represented in parliament, without which we are no better than vassals'. Lord Broghil, who had proclaimed parliament's right to lay down what constitution it pleased in 1657, in March 1660 looked again to parliament for the solution, even though he feared the return of the king. For men should 'obey whatever a free parliament shall enact.'

I have mentioned Bulstrode Whitelocke, the prominent politician of the revolution who wrote a treatise saluting the sovereignty of parliament. Whitelocke is best known to historians for the diary or record which was published in 1682 as his *Memorials*. Normally a staid document, it breaks into emotion when he recounts the forcible expulsion of the Long Parliament by force on 20 April 1653, when Oliver Cromwell, after a vituperative harangue against its remaining members, called in his musketeers, who cleared the chamber and ordered the mace to be carried away: 'Take away this bauble'. 'Thus', noted Whitelocke, 'was this great parliament, which had done so great things', 'this assembly famous through the world for its undertakings, actions and successes, wholly at this time routed.' From the later seventeenth century to the nineteenth – through the era of the Whig party and beyond it – writers queued to pay tribute to the 'great', the 'famous', the 'ever-memorable' parliament which had met in November 1640. Naturally there were differences of perspective among its admirers. The most daring and radical Whigs hailed the parliament's achievement in executing the king. More mainstream ones concentrated on its achievement in overthrowing the tyranny of the king by the legislation of 1640-1, and were embarrassed by the memory of the regicide.

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

Even so the removal of the parliament by force in 1653, by the man who destroyed both sides, king and parliament, of the civil wars, was remembered as an epochal moment, in some eyes as an event comparable in significance to the regicide. Only in the past century or so, when the esteem of parliament in the public mind has declined, has the event lost its hold on the nation's imagination and its collective memory. Even people of Tory or royalist sympathy thrilled to the drama of it. Dr Johnson suggested that a painting of the moment when Cromwell 'ordered the bauble to be taken away' would make 'a picture of unexampled variety and irresistible instruction.' In 1783 the artist Benjamin West obliged with a painting, which acquired lasting fame and influence, of Cromwell ordering the mace to be removed. Macaulay wrote that watching the passage of the Great Reform Bill through the Commons in 1832 was 'like seeing Cromwell taking the mace from the table.' In 1845 Thomas Carlyle noted the 'shudder' with which the event was still recalled. Frederic Harrison, Cromwell's biographer in 1899, called the event 'one of the most famous scenes in our history'.²

For perceptions of Cromwell, down the ages, have been closely bound to perceptions of parliament. Harrison wrote that the dissolution was 'that which of all other things weighs most heavily on his fame' – some statement, given the notoriety of Cromwell's part in the regicide. Yet commentary on the expulsion of the Long Parliament has by no means been all hostile to Cromwell. I said that in the 1640s the Long Parliament's embrace of the principle of representation rebounded on it, when people asked how representative the parliament was. Whig salutes to the Long Parliament, and Whig denunciations of its expulsion, likewise rebounded. In the 1640s people claimed that the parliament, having made war on the royal tyranny, had created a tyranny of their own, the tyranny of a rich and corrupt oligarchy which swallowed up the offices of state and was bent on its own perpetuation in power. After the Revolution of 1688, when parliaments met every year and when an increasing proportion of MPs became paid members of the executive, parliaments came under attack on similar grounds. In histories of the civil war and its discussions of it, the Long Parliament was often presented in the same light, not only by Tories but by people who, like those who had demanded electoral reform in the 1640s, revered the ideal of parliament and were dismayed by the distance of the present-day reality from it.

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

The sentiment has persisted ever since. Whenever some episode exposes failings or corruption among our representatives at Westminster someone writes a letter to *The Times* invoking words supposedly spoken by Cromwell when he expelled out the members, when he is said to have announced his determination to cleanse the Augean stables. In fact the words attributed to him were a forgery, composed in 1767 in aid of the protests against the parliamentary treatment of John Wilkes.³ The forgery was written to show how parliamentary corruption and tyranny had been dealt with in a previous age and how they should be dealt with now. The speech was invoked in the famous debate of May 1940 which produced the fall of Neville Chamberlain, when Leo Amery, adding his own embellishment, quoted words supposedly said by Cromwell at the coup: 'You have sat long enough. In the name of God go.'

The forgery of 1767 played on a broad public sentiment. It was shared by Dissenters or Nonconformists whose faith was excluded from representation at Westminster. George Crabbe's poem 'The Frank Courtship' described a Dissenting congregation recalling the moment when Cromwell 'turned out the members and made fast the door, ridding the House of every knave and drone'. Nonconformist admiration for the coup would long endure. The historian John Walsh has told me that, when he used to visit his Methodist grandfather's terraced mill-house town in Lancashire between the wars, a Victorian print, 'Take away that Bauble', 'hit the eye immediately as one came through the front door.' There was working-class pleasure in the episode too. In 1811 the radical weaver Samuel Bamford was shocked, when he first visited the House of Commons, by the contrast between the ideal and the reality: 'And are these, I thought, the beings whose laws we must obey? This "the most illustrious assembly of free men in the world"? Oh for a stamp of stern old Oliver on the floor, and his voice to arise above this babel-howl: Take away this bauble. Begone; give place to honest men'. Twenty years later, in the crisis over the Reform Act, a notice appeared in the *Poor Man's Guardian* in these words: 'Wanted, a man of the most honest and most uncompromising activity, who will undertake to clear St Stephen's, and the whole country, of a host of vermin who are fattening themselves upon the productions of our poor starving and miserable fellow-countrymen. Any person of the name of Cromwell would be preferred.'

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

Whether approving or disapproving, the wealth of commentary on the expulsion presents Cromwell in violent opposition to the institution which had overcome Charles I. Yet in 1899 parliament agreed to the erection of the statue at Westminster, at which this Association gathers each year. In championing the proposal for the statue, Lord Rosebery, the Liberal leader who was the driving force behind the scheme, had to acknowledge that Cromwell 'was not a parliamentarian in a strict sense'.⁴ It was quite an understatement. Not only did Cromwell's army expel the Rump. It marched on London to cow parliament into submission in 1647. It carried out Pride's Purge in 1648. It fixed the dissolution of Barebone's Parliament in December 1653. It forcibly purged the parliament of 1654. It decreed the exclusion of a large batch of members elected to the parliament of 1657. What had become of a revolution that had been conducted in the name of the liberties and privileges of parliament? Think of the indignation when Charles I had entered the Commons and attempted to arrest the five members. Charles at least had not attempted the parliament's forcible expulsion.

For if parliament, as royalists complained, had become an 'idol', Cromwell did not share in the idolatry. The civil war was fought on two grounds: one political, the other religious. Parliamentarianism allied with Puritanism. The two movements were brought together by Charles I's attack on both of them, but there was no inherent connection between the two. Some parliamentarians, such as Henry Marten, disliked Puritanism. Many more brought parliamentarian and Puritan convictions together. But to Cromwell parliaments were but means to godly ends, to be used or disposed of as those ends demanded. When he thought about forms of government he adapted a verse of the Epistle to the Philippians and described them as but 'dross and dung in comparison of Christ'. His uses of force on parliaments illustrate the point. He knew that the will of the God of the Old Testament, of which Cromwell saw himself as the instrument, was not to be curbed or regulated by man-made constitutional conventions. To the Cromwellians the civil wars were an epic moment, perhaps an apocalyptic moment in the divine scheme of history, when all man-made institutions might be transformed or swept away.

Yet Cromwell's career is unintelligible unless we add, to that point, two others which qualify it. First, scratch the ideological pronouncements of

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

revolutionary Puritanism and you often find, behind them, more conventional outlooks, about the ordering of politics and society, than you might expect. Cromwell had the mind of a country gentleman – however minor a county gentleman – as well as the mind of a Puritan. The doctrine of divine predestination was central to his spiritual life, but he never shared the Fifth Monarchist supposition that the elect are entitled, by virtue of their election, to rule on this earth at the expense of the unregenerate. Secondly, Cromwell was a politician, who did not think that the mission of divine providence with which he had been entrusted exempted him from political action and calculation. He knew that God, however transcendent his ends, wants his servants to work through political means. He understood the strength of parliamentarian feeling, and when he could he tried to make use of it to his own, and God's, ends. He knew how parliament mattered to key allies of his and to the whole movement that resisted Charles I. Although his speeches in the early debates of the Long Parliament were mainly on religious issues, he gave his backing to a bill for regular parliaments. After the war he knew what hostility the use of force on parliament would provoke, and he did what he could to avert it. 'That which you have by force', he told his fellow soldiers, 'I look upon as nothing'.

Yet everything he got thereafter he got by force. In the 1650s he repeatedly strove to undo the damage wrought by his military interventions. He knew how crucial parliamentary sanction would be if his rule were to establish roots in public opinion. He strove to re-create the parliamentarian unity – frail and bitter as the unity had been – which Pride's Purge had shattered. In the aftermath of the purge he sought for expedients that would allow the purged members back. He resisted the abolition of the Lords. Yet, then as at other times, he gave way in the cause of higher ends.

All the parliaments of the 1650s ended in wreckage. None of them met his needs, and they paid the price. The Rump did provide the army with the nearest thing it could hope for as a basis of legitimacy while he conquered the Irish and Scots in 1649-51; but when he returned to Westminster he could not control the assembly. He urged it to reform the law and the church and provide liberty of conscience, that abiding preoccupation of his career. He lost. Seventeenth-century parliaments were not friends of liberty of conscience. Cromwell, Charles II, James II all had to use extra-parliamentary means to secure liberty for dissenters.

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

The occasion of the expulsion of the Rump was its defiance of his and the officers' demands over the holding of fresh parliamentary elections. Why, he and they indignantly demanded, did the parliament cling to power? Why did it seek to 'perpetuate itself' and not confront the electorate? But once the parliament had been dissolved the truth came out. As his own words acknowledged, he had expelled the Rump not because it had refused to hold elections but because it had decided to hold them: not because it resisted the principles of representative government and rule by consent, but because it followed them. The 'bill for a new representative' which the Rump was about to pass when Cromwell dissolved the House would have provided for fresh elections in each constituency.⁵ He knew what that would lead to. The bill laid down electoral qualifications that excluded royalists, but did not exclude the kinds of MPs – the Presbyterians – who had been purged in 1648. He knew from harsh experience their hostility to liberty of conscience and to the army which demanded it. The result would be even worse than the Rump.

The expulsion of the Rump drove the revolution into no man's land. Despite the various purges and despite the abolition of two of the three estates in 1649, the continuance of the Long Parliament for thirteen years had provided some thread, and some basis, of constitutional legitimacy. What would he do now? His answer was to call a parliament, but one chosen not by the electorate but by his friends in the army: a body, that is, with the advantage of the name of parliament but without the inconvenience of elections. He had not lost sight of the desirability of parliaments or the representative principle. The members of parliament were apportioned to the counties in line with the army's plans, which the Rump had endorsed, for the redistribution of constituencies. Barebone's was intended to sit for a limited period, after which it would choose its own successor, which in turn, Cromwell intimated, would make way for a return to elected parliaments. But that would plainly depend on the nation's willingness to accept the godly reformation that his army would impose on it.

After the fiasco of Barebone's Cromwell changed his tune about the Presbyterians. The Instrument of Government, the constitution of the protectorate, provided for a return to parliamentary elections, with qualifications of the kind the Rump had envisaged: that is, with royalists

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

excluded but with Presbyterians allowed back to Westminster. Rather than excluding the Presbyterian movement from power he would rely on persuasion and clerical patronage to steer it towards an acceptance of the principle of liberty of conscience. But the Instrument put an end to the permanent parliaments of the previous 13 years. Barebone's, like the Long Parliament before it, sat in permanent session and combined legislative power with executive power, which, like the Rump, it had entrusted to a council of state subordinate to parliament and accountable to it. Now parliaments were to meet every three years, and need last only five months.

We have only a little evidence about the framing of the Instrument, but almost all of it points in one direction.⁶ When the document, having been drafted by John Lambert and a few others, was submitted to him it largely accepted the principle of parliamentary sovereignty on which the Long Parliament had proceeded. The executive power of the protector and council was not to be wholly independent. Much of it was entrusted to them by parliament in the intervals between parliament, and could be resumed by parliament, if parliament wished, when it met. Cromwell successfully pressed the drafters to eliminate that principle and secured a large degree of autonomy for the executive. He had had enough of parliamentary rule.

During the parliament which met in 1654 he had a choice. He could either back down to the parliament's demands for a parliamentary constitution, or hold out. If he followed the first course he could secure an incalculable advantage: he would get legislative or statutory endorsement for his rule, which hitherto had rested on a military decree. He would acquire constitutional legitimacy, or anyway as much constitutional legitimacy as the political legacy of the 1640s allowed. But there would be a price. He would hold power only by parliament's permission. His goals – religious reform and liberty of conscience above all – would be at parliament's mercy. It was a price he would not pay. He preferred to dissolve the parliament at the earliest moment – calculating the five months as lunar months – and to fall back on the rule of the sword. Angrily he told the parliament of 1654 that the protectorate had been legitimate from the outset and that the Commons had no right to replace its constitution with its own. He took his stand on the independence of the executive; on his control of the armed forces or the militia (the focus of conflict between Charles I and parliament in 1642); and on that cardinal principle of the Instrument, 'liberty of conscience', which

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

the parliament of 1654 assailed. The dissolution of the parliament was a critical moment in the protectorate. In the nine months before the meeting of the parliament, the protector and his council had passed interim legislation which was to be submitted to the parliament for its approval. That legislation had included crucial elements of Cromwellian policy, especially for reform of the church and the law. Cromwell had hoped that the parliament would quickly accept the Instrument and then proceed to the endorsement of the ordinances. In the event it endorsed none of them. After the parliament's dissolution Cromwell acted as if the ordinances remained in force. He had to raise money without parliamentary consent, and so provoked protests in the courts reminiscent of the ship money case of the 1630s. Having failed to get parliamentary sanction for his rule, he turned to the purely military rule of the Major-Generals to maintain public order and impose a godly reformation.

In 1656 he reluctantly accepted the argument of the Major-Generals themselves that another parliament would have to be called. It behaved differently from its predecessor, and Cromwell behaved differently towards it. Both sides had learnt something. Confrontation gave way for cooperation. Now he was determined to get a parliamentary constitution if he could, and the parliament was ready to offer him one: the Humble Petition and Advice. The document proposed a wide measure of freedom of conscience. That legislative sanction was, he said, 'the greatest provision that ever was made' for religious liberty: there had not been 'anything since Christ's time for such a catholic [that is, a broad and comprehensive] interest for the people of God.' He was right to be pleased. He had persuaded the gentry represented in parliament that there could be no return to stability so long as liberty of faith and worship were not granted to dissenting Puritan groups.

So the confrontations of 1654-5 made way for the conciliation and cooperation of 1656-7. In the negotiations Cromwell behaved with extreme deference to the principle of parliamentary authority. He was, he declared, 'obliged' to accept whatever parliament should impose upon him. Yet it turned out that he wasn't. The parliament offered him the Humble Petition either to accept, or to reject, in its entirety. Yet he found ways of bargaining and of getting its terms modified. And he rejected what to the framers of the constitution had been as essential an element as any: the offer of the

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

crown. There will always be disagreement about the reasons for his refusal, but whatever the cause – the claims of his conscience; pressure from the army and the congregations; the thought that it might be better to wait until the next parliament – he had put those reasons before the claims of parliamentary authority. His rejection of the title gravely weakened his following in parliament. The party which had framed the Humble Petition slunk despairingly away. When parliament reassembled in January 1658 he immediately lost control of it; and he had quickly to dissolve it in panic.

As protector Cromwell had a dual role, as leader both of the people of God and of the people of England; as a Christian and as an Englishman. In his speeches he fashioned a language which presented ‘civil liberty’ as the natural friend of ‘religious liberty’, the interest of God’s people as the same as the interest of all the people, his responsibilities to Christianity as inseparable from his duties to England.⁷ He indeed yearned to reconcile the two sets of values, and so to be at once Cromwell the gentleman and Cromwell the Puritan. He longed to transform England, by the reform of the ministry and the magistracy and by liberty of conscience, so that God’s people would lead the nation, not be a minority scorned by the wicked and vulnerable to persecution. Civil forms, and respect for civil rights, were means to that end. Even so, they remained dross and dung in comparison of Christ. Westminster may seem an incongruous setting for Sir Hamo Thornycroft’s statue, but in its content, at least, the statue is appropriate. It shows Cromwell with a bible, the manual of his faith, in one hand, and a sword, the instrument through which he did God’s work in the world, in the other. If parliament was the nation’s ‘idol’, then Cromwell, the man who could describe the solemn instrument of parliamentary proceedings, the mace, as a ‘bauble’, was the iconoclast.

This article was presented as the Cromwell Collection Lecture in November 2013.

¹ For this and related points see my *God’s Instruments. Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (2012), chs 6, 7.

² For memories of the coup of 1653 see my *Roundhead Reputations. The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posaterity* (2001), pp. 243-7.

OLIVER CROMWELL AND PARLIAMENT

- ³ C.H. Firth, 'The Expulsion of the Long Parliament (continued)', *History* 1918.
- ⁴ The Victorian movement that led to the statue is described in my *Roundhead Reputations*, ch. 11.
- ⁵ See my *The Rump Parliament 1648-1653* (1974), pt. 5.
- ⁶ See my 'Oliver Cromwell and the Instrument of Government', in S. Taylor and G. Tapsell, eds, *The Nature of the English Revolution Revisited* (2013).
- ⁷ See my 'Oliver Cromwell and the Cause of Civil and Religious Liberty', in C.A. Prior and G. Burgess, eds, *England's Wars of Religion, Revisited* (2011).

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THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE CROMWELLIAN CONQUEST OF IRELAND

By Prof John Morrill

Cromwell arrived in Ireland on 15 August 1649 and departed to take up his command against the Scots on 26 May 1650. In the intervening nine months he had taken more than thirty strongholds (fortified towns and castles), most by threat and negotiation, a few by storm, and by the time he left the back of the resistance to the English reconquest had been broken. It took three more years for his sons-in-law Henry Ireton and Charles Fleetwood to complete the task, but the worst was over. In the course of those nine months, of course, there were two notorious massacres, of the garrisons certainly and civilians possibly, at Drogheda and Wexford, both as a 'righteous judgement upon these barbarous wretches who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood' and (just as importantly) 'to prevent the effusion of blood for the future' (ie *in terrorem*), which together 'are the satisfactory grounds to such actions, which otherwise cannot but work regret and remorse.' (Cromwell to Speaker Lenthall of the House of Commons, 17 September 1649). Actually in a separate letter to a close political ally, he said only that 'this bitterness will save much effusion of blood through the goodness of God' (letter of 16 September 1649, usually said to have been addressed to John Bradshaw, an ascription which is almost certainly wrong).

This is not the place to debate the morality of Cromwell's actions at Drogheda and Wexford (space forbids it). Here I want to point out the problems with the common assumption that Cromwell was out to punish and expropriate the Catholics of Ireland – in the words of the Catholic Bishops gathered in Clonmacnoise in December 1649, that he came to Ireland 'with the resolution of extirpating the Catholic religion, which is not to be effected without the massacring or banishment of the Catholic people.' The first problem with this is that Cromwell fiercely denied the charge. In the *Declaration of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for the Undeceiving of Deluded and Seduced People*, he was contemptuous of their claims. No-one's conscience would be forced, he said, no Catholic required to attend any Protestant worship. Although the blasphemous and idolatrous Mass would be banned, he did not ban all Catholic worship (Catholics would not see this latter as much as a concession, of course, but his point was that no-one would be put under pressure to convert).

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE CROMWELLIAN CONQUEST OF IRELAND

Who did Cromwell see as his opponents in Ireland? Let us look first at what he told the House of Commons on 23 March 1649 as he pondered taking up the proffered command of the army of conquest. His enemies were ‘the papists and the King’s party’ and he is careful to stress that ‘I cannot say all the papists but the greatest part of them’. In listing the army commanders of the union of forces against him he mentions three Catholics and two Protestants (significantly passing over the O’Neills) and although he says he would rather be overrun by a Cavalier interest than a Scottish one (and it is worth speculating why – is this a comment on Scottish theocracy?) and he would rather be overrun by a Scottish interest than an Irish one, he says Irish not Irish-Catholic interest – indeed ‘I speak not of any one religion, almost any of them but in a manner as bad as Papists’ but he concludes that the key is that the ‘now [the King] must come from Ireland or Scotland.’ In the months that followed, before his departure for Ireland, he worked very hard to divide and rule the coalition of royalist and Catholic forces lined up against him. He secretly bought off powerful protestant-settler interests in Munster (the earl of Cork and his party amongst the Ormondists) and more dramatically he bought off the most Catholic and therefore least royalist of the Catholic commanders in the North, above all Owen Roe O’Neill (who fancied the title for himself or fancied handing the title to the King of Spain). By the time he arrived in August, Cromwell had achieved these goals.

More than forty of Cromwell’s letters from Ireland survive from his time in Ireland, about half of them addressed to friends or opponents in Ireland, the other half to allies and friends back home in England, including the letters to Parliament or the Council of State (and intended for publication) in which he announced his victorious progress. What is striking about all these letters is their lack of anti-Catholic content. In his letter to Lenthall, from Drogheda, most dramatically, he does not use the words ‘Catholic’, ‘popish’, ‘popery’, or ‘papist’ once. He uses the word ‘enemy’ twenty one times in this letter, but always with the actual or implied adjective ‘royalist’ or ‘Irish’. The letter is saturated in providentialist language (‘God’ too appears 21 times) but *not* in biblical language. In his campaign letters in 1648 and again in Scotland in 1650-1, he constantly cites the bible. In his Irish letters he does not. Or at least in his *campaign* letters he does not. In some private letters, such as the one he writes to his son Richard from Carrick on 2 April 1650, in which he pleads with Richard to ‘know God in Christ which

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE CROMWELLIAN CONQUEST OF IRELAND

the scripture makes the sum of all', citing the second letter of Peter, St Paul's letter to the Philippians to encourage him to a deeper faith. Even more dramatic is his letter to his estranged comrade Thomas Lord Wharton (1 January 1650) in which he pleads with him to come on board and abandon his scruples about the Regicide: 'be not offended at the manner of God's working; perhaps no other way was left. What if God accepted the zeal, as he did that of Phineas, whose reason might have called for a jury'. The reference is to the Book of Numbers where Phineas a priest drove a javelin into an Israelite and the Midianite slave with whom he was copulating, thus ending a plague with which God was afflicting Israel because of its apostasy. Cromwell's failure to draw on Scripture in his military letters from Ireland is thus a very deafening silence.

In fact in the forty letters written in Ireland, he uses the words 'Catholic', 'popish', 'popery', or 'papist' on only three occasions. The first and fullest was in a letter of 19 December (by which time his truce with Owen Roe O'Neill had collapsed and Owen Roe was actually dead), when he referred to O'Neill's 7,000 troops as 'the eldest sons of the Church of Rome' and he goes on to speak of the 'Roman clergy' working to bring in 'supplies from foreign parts'. But he adds that 'the rest of the army consist of Old English-Irish, some Protestants, some Papists.' He is summing up a royalist party not a Catholic one. A month later, on 16 January 1650 he sent a copy of the deliberations of the Catholic clergy at Clonmacnoise to Lenthall, with the gloss that 'the affaires of the enemy are much endeavoured to be brought under the inspection and Government of the Romane Clergy'. Finally, on 2 April 1650, he reported taking a town on mercy: the defenders were from Ormond's own regiment, including an English colonel from Kent and 'the next day the Colonel, the Major, and the rest of the Commission Officers were shot to death, all but one, who being a very earnest instrument to have the Castle delivered, was pardoned. In the same Castle also we took a Popish Priest, who was Chaplain to the Catholiques in this Regiment, who was caused to be hanged.'

And that is it. Compared with these occasional references, with their strong anti-clerical emphasis, he does not use religious descriptors of his 'enemies'. More representative is his summing up of his leading opponents at New Ross as 'English, Scots and Irish, fifteen hundred more, *Ormond, Castlehaven*, and the Lord of *Ardes*' – ie an Irish Protestant, an English Catholic and a

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE CROMWELLIAN CONQUEST OF IRELAND

Scottish Presbyterian; or in the earlier of his accounts of the storm of Drogheda, on 16 September, probably written to an ally in Parliament, where he spoke of ‘the enemy ... under command of their best Officer Sir *Arthur Ashton*, being made governour, they were some seven or eight Regiments, *Ormonds* being out under the command of Sir *Edmund Verney*’ as being those who he killed *in terrorem*: an English Catholic, an Anglo-Irish Protestant, an English Protestant’. It was the heads of English officers he displayed at the gates of Dublin after the fall of Drogheda. It seems that Cromwell came to Ireland not to crush Catholicism but Royalism.

How does this square with Cromwell’s justification of the killing of 3552 combatants and civilians at Drogheda (the figure given by his chaplain, Hugh Peter, who will have buried them). His main emphasis, as we have seen, was that it would be a deterrent that would save lives in the long run; but he also claimed that it was ‘as a ‘righteous judgement upon these barbarous wretches who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood’. This has been assumed for too long to be a claim that he was avenging the massacres of 1641-2 and that the ‘barbarous wretches’ were Irish Catholic rebels. Actually Cromwell fully understood that the garrison at Drogheda consisted of English exiles and that the whole of the garrison was made up of *royalist* regiments of the Marquis of Ormond – those raised *against* the Catholic confederacy. The comment about barbarous rebels comes straight after his account of the summary execution of the *English* commander and of Ormondist soldiers who had taken refuge in medieval towers. It is at least as likely that Cromwell was using the word ‘barbarous’ (a word he has used in England about the defenders of Basing House) about the English who had come to renew the war in Ireland, as that he was misusing it against the Irish. Again, royalism, not Catholicism, was the foe. And yet... would that it was that simple! For, however much Cromwell was preventing Ireland from becoming the Launchpad for a Stuart restoration, he had also as a principal task in coming to Ireland the satisfaction of the Adventurers, that large body of venture capitalists and committed puritans, including more than 100 MPs, Cromwell himself included, who had lent money to Parliament in 1642 to deploy an English army in Ireland that would avenge the massacres of Protestant settlers by Irish rebels the previous winter and to protect the survivors. The Adventurers Act had committed Parliament to compensating the Adventurers with 25% of the land of Ireland. Cromwell was charged with making that happen. This

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE CROMWELLIAN CONQUEST OF IRELAND

meant delving into the events of the winter of 1641-2, into the rebellion of Irish Catholics and the massacres of Protestant settlers (there were retaliatory massacres of Catholics, of course, but Cromwell was charged with avenging the massacres of planters). This was not a 'royalist' rebellion, of course, although it had given rise to the wars of the 1640s. In these wars 'rebels' looking to create a Catholic Ireland owing allegiance to the House of Stuart but no longer a dependency of England had first fought and then made common cause with the 'royalist' forces under the King's Protestant Lord Lieutenant, the Marquis of Ormond against the planter-dominated parliamentary movement. So if Cromwell came to Ireland to fight an immediate royalist threat, he also came to avenge an insurgency eight years earlier and to identify all those who had participated in it or condoned it.

To understand how Cromwell understood his task, we need to look at his major statement of policy, of his diagnosis and prognosis of the Irish problem of the 1640s. Sometime in January 1649 he published first in Cork and then in Dublin his *Declaration of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for the undeceiving of deluded and seduced people: which may be satisfactory to all that do not shut their eyes against the light; in answer to certain late Declarations and Acts framed by the Irish Popish Prelates and Clergy in a conventicle at Clonmacnoise*. This is a 6,000 word point-by-point refutation of the 1,500 word clerical Declaration and an outline of Cromwell's plans for the post-war settlement. It is possible that Cromwell was lying through his teeth, but in fact it is consistent with his subsequent opposition to the settlement proposed by the Rump and by his more radical (and desperate) successors of Ireland who were finding that they could win the war but not the peace and who had seen off the royalist armies only to face an unwinnable guerrilla war against 'Tories' and 'woodkerne', in the dense woods and bogs of Ireland. The ethnic cleansing politics of Ireton and Fleetwood were the product of the dirty war after Cromwell's departure: they were not intrinsic to his mission.

The first point to make about Cromwell's *Declaration* is its withering anti-clericalism. 'Yours' he told the clergy '*is a covenant with Death and Hell*'. Let's hang on to that phrase. He draws attention to the distinction between 'clergy and laity' in the bishops' document and he denounces the distinction – it is, he says, a term unknown to all true churches, which speak instead of 'brethren and saints of the same household of faith', in which there are some who exercise particular ministries under the 'administration of

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE CROMWELLIAN CONQUEST OF IRELAND

ordinances' but in which there are no distinction of merit. It is pride and 'for filthy lucre's sake' that they make the distinction. He accuses the Catholic clergy of preaching rebellion and massacre and he says that they 'poison [your flocks] with false, abominable, and Antichristian doctrine and practices. You keep the Word of God from them; and instead thereof give them your senseless Orders and Traditions', This all-out assault on clerisy takes up most of the pamphlet. He really does not like the Catholic clergy. But then, neither does he like the Presbyterian clergy of Scotland (or for that matter those with clericist ideas in England). Thus in addressing the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland a month before the battle of Dunbar, he accused them of clerical arrogance and pride ('there may a spiritual fullness which the world calls drunkenness as in the second book of Acts') and then, tellingly, he adapts his most severe charge against the Irish clergy: 'there may be *a covenant with death and hell*. I will not say yours was so. But judge if such things have a politic aim: to avoid the overflowing scourge, or to accomplish worldly interests'. It is diluted; but it is the same charge. And he rams it home by urging them to 'read the twenty eighth of Isaiah from the fifth to the fifteenth verse'. He is likening them to the priests of Baal who vomited (through strong drink) over the altars. The Scots ministers vomited out of pride. Cromwell, the old lay preacher from St Ives, would not have clergy of any denomination interposing themselves between God and Man, mediating either sacramental grace or the Word.

So, in his Irish Declaration, his anticlerical fury against sated, Cromwell turned to ponder the reckoning. He was not really in Ireland for the benefit of the Adventurers, he said. Why would the English state be at 'five or six millions pounds charge merely to procure Purchasers to be investing in that for which they did disburse little above a quarter of a Million'? No, he had come to exact justice on the rebels and very specifically the rebels whose mayhem had taken place before the formation of the Confederation of Kilkenny. They had come 'to ask an account of the innocent blood' and to 'hold forth and maintain the lustre and glory of English liberty' (including the liberty of conscience of all Catholics not to be forced to attend Protestant services). The rebels would be escheated. But as for those who served under the Confederacy or under Ormond, they would be treated by royalists in England, subject to similar rules of sequestration and composition (and so a loss of some, in the case of papists-in-arms much, of their land), merciful consideration being withheld only from 'the leading

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE CROMWELLIAN CONQUEST OF IRELAND

persons and contrivers of this rebellion whom I am confident the [Parliament] will reserve to make examples of justice'. He also promised to continue something to which he could point, that exemplary punishment would be inflicted on any in his own army who were 'insolent' and that all the Irish would be protected at law, in taxes and in all things 'equally with the English'.

This was a blueprint for the kind of settlement that he would encourage his son Henry to pursue as Lord Deputy in the later 1650s. but it was at odds with the Acts of 1652 and 1653 and the policy of the radical party, headed by Charles Fleetwood, Lord Deputy from 1652-6, which he strenuously opposed: the policy which has come down through history as 'to Hell or Connaught' – the execution of thousands of Catholic (and some Protestant) landowners, the deportation to Europe or the Caribbean of tens of thousands of demobbed soldiers, and the removal of all remaining Catholic landowners and tenants to the four counties of the west – Clare, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon. The policy was only partially realised and John Cunningham has recently written by far the best of what actually happened (J.Cunningham, *Conquest and Land in Ireland: The Transplantation to Connacht, 1649-1680* [2011]). It is not the case that Oliver Cromwell favoured the policy and as I have shown elsewhere (John Morrill, 'Cromwell, Parliament, Ireland and a Commonwealth in Crisis: 1652 Revisited', *Parliamentary History*, 30:2 (2011), 193-211) he was sacked in May 1652 as Lord Lieutenant by a Rump Parliament in which he was deeply unpopular precisely for opposing the proposed Act for the Settling of Ireland, which was finally passed after bitter debates, three months later.

As a final reflection on this unexpected story, I will just say this: that the list of 'the leading persons and contrivers of this rebellion whom I am confident the [Parliament] will reserve to make examples of justice of' mentioned at the end of Cromwell's *Declaration* of January 1650s does survive, little changed, into 1652. The first 34 names on the list consist of twenty Irish Catholics – but also nine Anglo-Irish Protestants, four Scots Presbyterians and a Church of Ireland bishop. Behind Cromwell's Irish wars of religion, and the ethnic conflicts, lay a deeper obsession: with the House of Stuart.

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THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

By Dr Elaine Murphy

INTRODUCTION

Oliver Cromwell's suffering from seasickness on his voyage across the Irish Sea in August 1649 is well known. Many books recount Hugh Peter's description of how the lord lieutenant was 'as sea sick as ever I saw any man in my life'.¹ Cromwell's surviving correspondence from his nine months in Ireland suggests that he was not very interested in naval affairs. Few of his letters make any reference to maritime events.² In general, the role naval warfare in this period receives relatively little historical attention in comparison to military campaigns on land. In many ways the reasons behind this neglect are easy to understand. Large scale and controversial battles and sieges make the war on land easier to follow than events at sea. Added to this, at first glance, it appears that very little happened in the seas around Ireland in this period with the fighting amounting to little more than isolated encounters between individual ships. This article therefore seeks to explore role of naval warfare in the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland. It will focus on two main areas. Firstly, the logistical support the navy provided to parliamentary armies as they campaigned in Ireland. Secondly, the direct assistance men-of-war gave to the army by taking part in assaults on forts and towns and blockading enemy harbours.

WARFARE AT SEA IN THE 1640's

In October 1641 a rebellion broke out in Ulster that spread quickly and bloodily through the rest of Ireland. In the summer of 1642 the Irish formed a government based at Kilkenny called the confederate catholic association and began to organise a naval force.³ The confederate Supreme Council issued commissions, called letters of marque, to officers willing to set out vessels to attack English shipping. Numerous Irish and foreign captains, often from Flanders, accepted these commissions. These privateers, usually called pirates in the English press, set out fast heavily armed and manned ships known as 'Dunkirk frigates'. Between 1642 and 1649 confederate privateers seized hundreds of prizes.⁴

From the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion the English navy played an active role in the conflict. The government in London set out ships to patrol the coast. For example, the Summer Guard list issued in March 1642 included ten vessels for Ireland.⁵ By the summer of 1642 when the Civil War broke

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

out between Charles I and parliament the bulk of the fleet, dissatisfied with the king's administration of the navy, opted for the parliamentary cause.⁶ During the 1640s parliamentary men-of-war performed a number of duties on the Irish coast including protecting English merchantmen, intercepting confederate privateers and supporting garrisons loyal to parliament. In order to deal with the problem posed by confederate frigates sailing from Wexford and Waterford the navy commissioned a number of new frigates. From late 1646 on these frigates proved their effectiveness in seizing Irish privateers and merchantmen.⁷

THE NAVAL SITUATION IN 1649

The political and military situation altered in 1649 with the execution of Charles I. In Ireland the confederates, royalists and some former parliamentarians formed an alliance that controlled most of the country except Dublin and parts of Ulster. On the maritime front parliament also faced a serious threat in Ireland. In 1648 a revolt among ships stationed in the Downs led to the defection of part of the fleet to the royalists in Holland. There Prince Rupert, the king's nephew, took command and in January 1649 sailed with seven ships to Kinsale. The combination of this flotilla and the former confederate privateers gave the royalists a substantial naval force. The dangers posed to English shipping by royalist naval forces in Ireland were recognised in London.⁸

In March 1649 the council of state advised that:

‘There is no affair before us of greater concern than expediting our fleet to sea, for want whereof the shipping of this nation in daily taken by those pirates and rebels which abound in this and the Irish seas’.⁹

Parliament re-organised and re-financed the navy. In late May 1649 a squadron commanded by three newly appointed generals-at-sea, Robert Blake, Richard Deane and Edward Popham, arrived before Kinsale. There they fortuitously found Prince Rupert's fleet at anchor.¹⁰ With the royalist ships blockaded in the harbour the way was clear for Cromwell's invasion force to cross the Irish Sea.

CROMWELL ARRIVES IN IRELAND

In April 1649 Cromwell was appointed as commander in chief of the army for Ireland. Throughout the summer of 1649 the preparations for

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

Cromwell's expedition were well known in Ireland. In August two returned Irish prisoners reported seeing 15,000 soldiers and forty-six ships readying to sail in and around Milford Haven.¹¹ The question facing the royalist coalition in Ireland was not when would Cromwell sail but where would he land. Dublin remained the most likely destination as Colonel Michael Jones held the city for parliament. A port in Munster was also a possibility as the loyalty of some of the garrisons to the royalist cause was considered doubtful. Jones' victory over a royalist army at the Battle of Rathmines near Dublin in August 1649 secured control of the city for parliament.¹²

On 13 August 1649 Cromwell and a flotilla of around thirty-five ships sailed from Milford Haven to Dublin. A second larger fleet of approximately eighty-four vessels sailed for Munster the next day. Adverse weather prevented these ships from landing in the province and they sailed to Dublin instead. A third smaller flotilla came into Dublin a days later.¹³ With his forces safely landed at Dublin Cromwell marched his army into the field. In September and October 1649 the army stormed the towns of Drogheda and Wexford. Through the autumn of 1649 the royalist fleet at Kinsale made no attempt to break out and attack parliamentary shipping. As Cromwell's army moved south Prince Rupert's position became untenable and he feared losing the fleet if he remained at Kinsale. Therefore in late October he took advantage of a storm to escape with most of his ships to Portugal. The towns of Cork, Youghal and Kinsale defected from the royalists and surrendered to Cromwell soon afterwards. This restored access to these three important southern harbours for the English navy.

SUPPLYING THE ARMY

Something that is often overlooked is the immense scale of the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland. In August 1649 Cromwell landed at Dublin with 12,000 men, fifty-six large artillery pieces, 900 draught animals and £100,000 in money.¹⁴ A one off large scale injection of resources could produce immediate results with overwhelming victories such as at Drogheda and Wexford in 1649. But it could not lead to long term success as disease, enemy action, hardship and bad weather would quickly reduce the strength of any army sent to Ireland. During the 1640s English expeditions to Ireland often achieved spectacular victories in their initial stages before fizzling out once their supplies dried up. To conquer Ireland any army needed a large and reliable supply of re-enforcements, money, provisions and munitions.

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

From the arrival of Cromwell in September 1649 to the final royalist surrender at Cloughoughter Castle in April 1653 the Commonwealth regime pumped vast quantities of all these into the Irish war effort. To keep the army up to strength there was a continuous need for a steady flow of recruits. James Scott Wheeler has calculated that from 1649 to the end of 1651 about 55,000 soldiers served in the parliamentary armies in Ireland. Having suffered over eight years of war and devastation the country could supply relatively few of the supplies the army required. As well as sending soldiers over parliament also needed to ship food, clothing, shelter, arms, horses and many other types of military equipment to Ireland. In an eight month period from January to October 1651 parliament dispatched 28,000 shirts, 16,000 pairs of stockings, 57,000 bushels of wheat, 1,000 tons of cheese and 2,000 tents. On the military front between June 1649 and November 1652 the army received 10,300 matchlock muskets, 8,780 pikes and 2,400 barrels of gunpowder.¹⁵

The only way to get all these men and supplies to Ireland was by sea. Parliamentary men-of-war helped by carrying soldiers and provisions to coastal garrisons for the the army. In October 1649 the *Hector* and *Concord* brought bread for the army from Plymouth to Ireland.¹⁶ Warships often carried high value cargoes or high status passengers. For example in 1651 the *President* carried money from Bristol and Lady Ireton, the lord deputy's wife, over to Ireland on separate occasions. In the same year Major General Edmund Ludlow travelled over on the *Guinea* frigate.¹⁷ The use of warships as transports generally ensured the cargo reached Ireland safely. Few of the privateers that operated on the Irish coast possessed the strength to successfully attack a parliamentary man-of-war.

Men-of-war could not carry all the supplies or re-enforcements the army needed to Ireland so the admiralty hired large numbers of merchant ships to take them over. These vessels ranged from large merchantmen to small ships like *Sarah of Minehead* that transported thirty men at a time.¹⁸ The voyage to Ireland could be extremely hazardous for these ships. The necessity of a continuous flow of supplies meant that shipwrecks often occurred when vessels sailed in poor weather or with crews unfamiliar with the Irish coast. In February 1650 five ships carrying over 200 soldiers sank between Dungarvan and Kinsale during a storm.¹⁹ The navy could do little to prevent the loss of shipping to accidents but it could do a lot to limit

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

losses to enemy action. Privateers remained the principal danger to ships en-route to Ireland. To counter this threat parliament firstly needed to protect ships on their journey and secondly to capture their bases in Ireland and elsewhere in the British Isles.

The generals-at sea deployed a large part of the Irish squadrons at their disposal to convoying vessels across the Irish Sea. Convoys regularly sailed to Ireland from Milford Haven, Liverpool, Chester, Plymouth and other west coast ports. One man-of-war could safely escort several vessels at a time. For example in February 1650 the *Satisfaction* sailed with eight ships from Milford Haven.²⁰ Providing escorts to ships going to Ireland represented one of the most effective ways of ensuring they arrived at their destination. There are very few accounts of convoys protected by parliamentary warships being attacked by Irish privateers. In conjunction with using convoys the navy tried to keep the main shipping lanes between Ireland and England clear of privateers. To achieve this parliament deployed vessels to patrol areas through which large numbers of ships sailed. The navy was able to provide effective convoys and patrols as parliament recognised the necessity of keeping large squadrons on the Irish coast. In 1651, for example the winter flotilla for Ireland consisted of 16 ships or 25% of the total number of men-of-war set out. This made the Irish guard the joint largest squadron that winter.²¹

Wooden warships required regular maintenance to remain seaworthy and sailors needed regular supplies of provisions to keep their ships at sea. In order to maintain the strength of the Irish squadron the admiralty needed to prevent ships leaving the coast for supplies or repairs. Therefore in 1650 a victualling office with provisions for 500 men was established at Kinsale.²² In 1647 parliament appointed a shipwright for the repair of naval vessels at Kinsale. He continued to serve in this position in the early 1650s and a number of men-of-war can be identified undergoing repairs under his supervision. In 1652 for example he tallowed the *Reserve*, *Sun*, *Expedition* and *Providence* there.²³

All was not efficiency and effectiveness in the seas around Ireland. Corruption, neglect of duty and private enterprise also created problems for the parliamentary navy. Some sailors criticised the corrupt practices of their superiors. Richard Meade, the purser of the *Discovery*, complained of various

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

abuses he suffered at the hands of Captain Thomas Marriott. The allegations included charges that the captain employed his son even though he did not come on board the ship, that he sold supplies ashore without permission and that the captain carried passengers to and from Ireland without paying the purser for their food and drink. Meade summed up his predicament 'but if a Captain may do what he please, and sell what provisions he will out of the ship, how shall a purser be able to live and bring in a punctual account'.²⁴ Despite occasional accounts of dubious practices the efforts of the admiralty seem to have paid off in maintaining facilities in Ireland to successfully repair and resupply the fleet there.

Even with a substantial guard on the coast making use of convoys and patrols the sheer volume of ships going to Ireland meant the navy could not protect every vessel. Naval officers also occasionally became lax about their duties guarding the coast. In 1651 the council of state received complaints that Captain Vessey remained with the *Truelove* in the harbour at Liverpool rather than patrolling the Irish Sea.²⁵ Privateers regularly seized ships travelling without any escort going to and from Irish ports. In March 1651 royalist privateers seized two barks carrying soldiers to Waterford. After pillaging the barks they let them and the passengers continue on their journey.²⁶ Parliamentary news books also described packs of frigates lying off the Lizard, Land's End and other ports in search of prizes. In March 1651 *A Perfect Diurnall* reported that 'Three men of war lie upon the Land's end and take many vessels to the great prejudice of Trade'. The same publication in 1652 reported news from Chester that described 'Our channel is so infested with Pirates; that hinders all trade and correspondence between us and Ireland'.²⁷ Despite the losses of merchant ships travelling without escorts and complaints in the parliamentary press the loss of shipping going to Ireland never became large enough to undermine the supply lines to the army. Through the use of patrols and convoys the navy ensured that most of the men, money, munitions and other supplies sent to parliamentary forces in Ireland reached its intended recipients.

DEALING WITH PRIVATEERS

The seas around Ireland became an increasingly dangerous hunting ground for Irish and other privateers as the parliamentary navy maintained a strong presence on the coast in the early 1650s. Parliamentary forces captured Irish men-of-war when they seized port towns. At Wexford in 1649

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

Cromwell noted the seizure of three frigates in the town- a thirty-four gun and a twenty gun frigate in the harbour and a twenty gun frigate on the stocks that he believed could be put to sea with little cost or effort.²⁸ English warships seized a number of Irish and other privateers on the coast. In late 1649 Captain Clarke intercepted a frigate with five pieces of ordnance owned by the earl of Antrim. In late 1652 Captain Sherwin in the *Primrose* seized Captain Green, a 'notorious French pirate' near Waterford. Parliamentary warships also re-took vessels that had been taken by Irish privateers and were being sent to ports like Waterford and Galway as prizes. The *President* retook the *Golden Wagon* after two Irish frigates seized the ship.²⁹

As the parliamentary naval presence in the seas around Ireland increased in the 1650s some Irish based privateers went further afield in search of prizes. Irish privateers sailed as far as the Canary Islands and Mediterranean to intercept English shipping.³⁰ Others preferred to attack English merchantmen, colliers and fishing vessels on the north east coast near towns like Newcastle, Scarborough and Whitby. In February 1650 the presence of two Irish frigates near Newcastle led one writer to lament that 'Trading here will be utterly spoyled'.³¹ Reports, especially in parliamentary news books, suggest these Irish privateers captured quite a large number of ships. By and large these prizes do not seem to have been sent for sale in Ireland to benefit the royalist cause there. Instead privateer captains preferred to bring their prizes into continental ports such as Dunkirk or Ostend to be disposed of there. This was contrary to the letters of marque issued to these officers in Ireland but there was little anyone could do to stop the practice. After his capture one captain, Daniel van Vooren of the *St John of Waterford*, stated that he no longer sent prizes to Ireland and instead he 'made his owne benefit thereof for himselfe and his company although by his commission he was bound to carry in his prizes thither'.³² While these losses damaged English trade and maritime communities they did not directly endanger the war effort in Ireland.

The navy alone could not completely remove the privateering threat on the Irish coast. So long as the royalists held ports in Ireland they could continue to set out frigates to attack English shipping either on the Irish coast or further away. The capture of the harbours from which Irish privateers operated would at least result in the end of the main privateering menace on

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

the coast. Parliamentary commentators recognised this long before Cromwell's arrival. In 1648 an English writer advised that 'the Irish piddling pirates need chastising by land souldiers'.³³ Irish privateering gradually declined in the 1650s. Each time a major port town capitulated to parliament privateers lost another base of operations. The storming of Wexford by Cromwell in October 1649 put the first major dent in Irish privateering. Some captains moved their frigates to other Irish harbours such as Waterford and Galway but others left the country. The surrender of Waterford in August 1650 removed the last privateering port from the east coast of Ireland. After this point most of the frigates that attacked English shipping in the Irish Sea and St George's Channel were identified as belonging to the Isle of Man, Scilly Isles or Jersey. The capture of these islands by parliamentary forces in late 1651 led to a further decline in the levels of royalist privateering on the coast.

Galway remained as the last major base of privateering operations against the parliament in Ireland. Galway's location on the west coast made it an ideal location for privateers sailing northward to attack shipping in the North Sea and the coast of Scotland. However, the arrival of the plague in the city in 1649 made it unpopular with many captains and sailors. Between August 1649 and February 1650 20,000 people reportedly died in Galway from the plague. Ships could be obtained cheaply there and frigates worth £400 could be purchased for £100 because of the prevalence of the disease.³⁴ Galway surrendered in April 1652. The fall of these outposts marked a decline in royalist privateering in seas around Ireland. Privateers still came from further afield in search of prey and coastal towns, merchants and sailors complained about their losses frigates sailing from ports in France, Flanders and later the Dutch republic.

SUPPORTING THE ARMY

In conjunction with providing logistical support the navy offered assistance to the army when it campaigned along the coast or navigable rivers. English sailors gained considerable experience in amphibious operations during the 1640s in Ireland. Throughout the 1640s parliamentary warships participated in military engagements at coastal garrisons. At the sieges of Duncannon fort in 1645 and Bunratty Castle in 1646 sailors from parliamentary men-of-war went ashore to help construct defences and man artillery positions. Parliamentary naval officers also tried to assist beleaguered garrisons by

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

positioning their ships to fire on enemy positions. This could prove dangerous if Irish guns came within range of their vessels. At Duncannon a confederate battery sank the *Great Lewis* in 1645. At the siege of Youghal in July of the same year an explosion in the powder room caused the *Duncannon frigate* to blow up in the harbour with the loss of eighteen lives. Lord Inchiquin, the military commander in Munster, gave a colourful account of the sinking in which he claimed that a shot from the confederate battery entered the powder room. There it hit and decapitated a woman holding a candle which then fell into the powder and caused the explosion.³⁵

In the autumn of 1649 Cromwell moved his forces along the east coast to take advantage of his naval superiority. The fleet transported the heavy artillery and provisions by sea to besiege Drogheda and Wexford which allowed Cromwell to move quickly against the towns. As in the 1640s seamen sometimes went ashore to participate in the storming of towns. In September 1649 some sailors from the fleet took part in the assault on Drogheda. Cromwell praised the bravery of Captain Brandley, the captain of the *Satisfaction*, who led a party of forty seamen in storming the fortifications.³⁶ Some naval officers showed a ruthless streak in their conduct of the war. Between March and May 1650 Captain William Penn commanded a flotilla of parliamentary ships that raided towns and villages along the River Shannon. Penn sent his sailors ashore to kill the enemy, take livestock, destroy boats and burn the towns of Kilrush and Tarbert.³⁷

Captains occasionally used their ships to attack royalist held towns or fortifications. After the capture of Drogheda, Cromwell sent Colonel Venables with part of the army and some ships northwards to capture the towns of Dundalk, Newry and Carlingford. In late September Venables and Captain Nathaniel Ferns in the *President* co-ordinated a simultaneous land and sea assault on Carlingford. As Venables led the attack against the landward defences the *President* sailed into the harbour and bombarded the defenders. In an exchange of fire with a blockhouse the *President* sustained damage to its mast. The joint attack proved successful and the garrison surrendered.³⁸ Sometimes naval officers seized an opportunity and joined in on a successful land attack.

In October 1649 an English man-of-war participated in the attack on Rosslare fort. This fort guarded the entrance to Wexford harbour. In order

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

to land his artillery at Wexford Cromwell needed to secure the fort to enable his ships to pass safely into the harbour. Cromwell sent Colonel Jones with a party of dragoons to advance on the fort. At his approach the defenders decided to flee to a nearby frigate rather than to fight. At the same time one of the parliamentary ships seeing the fleeing soldiers sailed up and opened fire on the Irish frigate and forced it to surrender.³⁹

Ships assigned to the parliamentary Irish guard played an important role in forcing the eventual surrender of royalist strongholds on the coast and keeping foreign military intervention out of Ireland. Men-of-war blockaded successfully Waterford, Limerick and Galway to prevent foreign relief reaching the beleaguered garrisons. At Waterford warships anchored near the entrance to the river or further up the Channel to seize ships that tried to pass to or from the city. They captured ships like the *Mary of St Nazaire* bringing salt from Nantes or the *St Nicholas of St Sebastian* bringing arms and passengers to Waterford.⁴⁰ The navy alone could not prevent every ship getting into Waterford. To hinder any shipping that got past the fleet the army set up an artillery battery at Passage fort to overlook the shipping lane. This battery proved to be very effective and hit a number of vessels that tried to pass. In January 1650 guns from the fort hit the *Angel Raphael* a number of times as it sailed by and the damage the ship sustained forced it into a parliamentary port. By February 1650 reports described Waterford as 'wholly stopped up'.⁴¹ Waterford finally surrendered in August 1650 with starvation and the lack of prospect of any relief playing a major part in the decision of the governor to yield the town.

Another important royalist stronghold at Limerick was blockade by a few ships as it was so far inland on the River Shannon. A contemporary report described it as 'being 60 miles distant from the Sea, and so easily guarded with a few ships of ours'. In 1650 and 1651 five men-of-war successfully blockaded the Shannon and cut Limerick off from relief by sea.⁴² Even with an effective naval blockade and the plague raging in Limerick the garrison did not surrender for over a year as the parliamentary army, commanded by General Ireton, failed to press the siege efficiently.

Galway, with its wide open bay, could not be closed off from external assistance as easily as Waterford or Limerick. Nevertheless, ships trying to get through to the city had to pass through parliamentary controlled waters

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

for much of their journey on the Irish coast. As the Cromwellian army besieged Galway in 1651 and 1652, parliamentary men-of-war patrolled the west coast from Cape Clear to Galway bay. Getting into Galway became a dangerous business for many ships. Some captains landed the supplies they carried for Galway elsewhere rather than risk going to the town. The *Mary and Anne of St Malo* landed its cargo at Inishbofin as the parliamentary stranglehold on the bay increased with the merchant stating 'they beinge not able to goe into Galloway because of the Parliaments ffriggats that lye before itt'.⁴³ The navy intercepted numerous ships en route to the town. For example in February 1652 Captain Robert Clarke in the *Reserve* seized a vessel carrying 200 tons of wheat and rye for Galway. An English news book reported on the seizure suggesting that the loss of the vessel would force the Irish to 'shortly to eate their Butter without Bread'.⁴⁴

The continuous presence of parliamentary ships on the coast also made foreign military intervention less likely. In 1650 the Irish royalists sought aid from Charles IV, duke of Lorraine. Lorraine agreed to provide £20,000 as well as 10,000 men, arms and thirty to fifty ships in return for being made protector of Ireland with the right to garrison a number of towns including Galway and Limerick. A small number of ships carrying arms from Lorraine arrived in Galway. A parliamentary fleet commanded by Colonel Popham stationed near Dunkirk prevented Lorraine from sending any large scale expedition to Ireland.⁴⁵ Without the navy overseas aid would have reached the remaining royalist strongholds in Ireland in much larger quantities and enabled and encouraged them to hold out for much longer. The importance of naval support in besieging coastal garrisons tends to be overlooked because the army undertook most of the dangerous, difficult and easily quantifiable siege work. The work of men-of-war in patrolling the coast and blockading port towns played a key role in forcing garrisons to yield.

CONCLUSION

Writing on the part played by the navy in parliament's victory in the 1640s, Bernard Capp noted that 'it is not easy to assess the navy's overall contribution'.⁴⁶ Assessing the contribution of the navy to the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland is equally difficult. Thinking about the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland purely in terms of the battles, sieges and skirmishes fought by Cromwell, and the generals who came after him, over simplifies the war. Ultimately, victory came about not just through the campaigns of

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND
1649-1653

the army but through the commitment of the Commonwealth regime to winning the war in Ireland. This commitment can be seen in the vast English economic, military and naval resources sent to Ireland. The parliamentary naval presence on the Irish coast was an important element in bringing the war to a conclusion.

- ¹ *A perfect diurnall of some passages in parliament, and from othe parts of this kingdome* (London) 27 Aug. – 3 Sep. 1649, 2736.
- ² W. C. Abbott (ed.), *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols., Cambridge, Massachuetts, 1937-47), II, 53-253.
- ³ For the outbreak and spread of the rebellion see Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001), 461-533; <http://1641.tcd.ie/>.
- ⁴ Elaine Murphy, *Ireland and the War at Sea, 1641-1653* (Woodbridge, 2012), 172-8, 201-18; Jane Ohlmeyer, 'The Dunkirk of Ireland: Wexford privateers during the 1640s', *Journal of the Wexford Historical Society* XII (1988-9), 23-49.
- ⁵ *A List of his Majesties Navie Royall, and Merchant Ships* (London, 1642), 1
- ⁶ Michael Baumber, 'Seizing the fleet in 1642', *Mariner's Mirror*, LXXVIII (1992), 227-34.
- ⁷ For naval activity during the 1640s see Bernard Capp, 'Naval operations' in Jane Ohlmeyer and John Kenyon (eds), *The Civil Wars: a military history of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998), 156-94.
- ⁸ Bernard Capp, *Cromwell's Navy: the fleet and the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1989), 18-29.
- ⁹ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* [hereafter CSPD], 1649-50, 38.
- ¹⁰ Capp, *Cromwell's navy*, 43-6; James Scott Wheeler, 'Prelude to power: the crisis of 1649 and the foundation of English naval power'. *Mariner's Mirror*, LXXXI (1995), 150-3.
- ¹¹ Michael Bolan to Ormond, 6 Aug. 1649, Bodleian Library [hereafter Bodl.], Carte MS 25, fos 165r-v.
- ¹² James Scott Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland* (Dublin, 1999), 71-5.
- ¹³ Historical Manuscripts Commission [hereafter HMC], *Report of the Manuscripts of F. W. Leyborne-Popham, Esq., of Littlecote, Co. Wilts* (London, 1899), 26, 34, 36, 38, 40-1.

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND
1649-1653

- ¹⁴ Jane Ohlmeyer, 'The civil wars in Ireland' in Jane Ohlmeyer and John Kenyon (eds), *The Civil Wars: a military history of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998), 98.
- ¹⁵ James Scott Wheeler, 'The logistics of conquest' in Pádraig Lenihan, *Conquest and resistance: war in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Leiden, 2001), 195-9; Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland*, 118-22.
- ¹⁶ CSPD, 1649-50, 367-8, 378-9.
- ¹⁷ *A perfect diurnall of some passages and proceedings of, and in relation to the armies in England, Ireland and Scotland* (London), 3 - 10 Mar. 1651, 871.
- ¹⁸ *Severall proceedings in parliament* (London), 12 - 19 June 1651, 1382.
- ¹⁹ *A perfect diurnall*, 4 -11 Feb. 1649, 78-9.
- ²⁰ Ibid, 78.
- ²¹ *Journals of the House of Commons* (London, 1802), VII, 31-3.
- ²² CSPD, 1649-50, 240, 259.
- ²³ Commissioners of the navy to John Chidleigh, 1 June 1647, British Library, Add MS 7306, fo. 104v; CSPD, 1651-2, 526, 536.
- ²⁴ Richard Meade to the commissioners of the navy, 4 Dec. 1652, The National Archives [hereafter TNA], SP 18/29, fo. 98r; CSPD, 1652-3, 495.
- ²⁵ CSPD, 1651, 125.
- ²⁶ *Severall proceedings in parliament*, 17 - 24 July 1651, 1463
- ²⁷ *A perfect diurnall*, 10 - 17 Mar. 1651, 898; *A perfect diurnall*, 20 - 27 Sep. 1652, 2189.
- ²⁸ Oliver Cromwell, *A letter from the lord lieutenant of Ireland, to the honourable William Lenthall Esq., speaker of the parliament of England* (London, 1649), 7-8
- ²⁹ A list of ships taken by Robert Clarke, 19 Nov. 1650, TNA HCA 13/123; *A Perfect diurnall*, 29 Nov. - 6 Dec. 1652, 2344; CSPD, 1651, 82-3.
- ³⁰ HMC, *Leyborne-Popham*, 48; *Perfect occurrences of every daies journal in parliament* (London), 5-12 Oct. 1649, 1343.
- ³¹ *A perfect diurnall*, 11 - 18 Feb. 1650, 81.
- ³² A particular of the prizes brought into Ostend and Newporte, 1649-51, Bodl., Carte MS 29, fos 110r-111v; examination of Daniel van Vooren, 25 July 1649, TNA, HCA 13/250, part ii.

THE CROMWELLIAN NAVY IN IRELAND 1649-1653

- ³³ *The moderate intelligencer: impartially communicating martial affaires to the kingdome of England* (London), 5 - 12 Oct. 1648, 1920.
- ³⁴ Ormond to an unnamed captain, 16 Jan. 1650, Bodl., Carte MS 142, fo 93r; John Bartlett to Ormond, 31 Jan. 1650, Bodl., Carte MS 26, fo 577r; Charles McNeill (ed), *The Tanner letters: original documents and notices of Irish affairs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Dublin, 1943), 325.
- ³⁵ Murphy, *Ireland and the war at sea*, 41-50.
- ³⁶ Oliver Cromwell, *Letters from Ireland, relating the several great successes it hath pleased God to give unto the parliaments forces* (London, 1649), 13.
- ³⁷ Granville Penn (ed), *Memorials of the professional life and times of Sir William Penn* (London, 1883), I, 306-8.
- ³⁸ Cromwell, *Letters from Ireland*, 13.
- ³⁹ Cromwell, *A letter from the lord lieutenant*, 4-7; HMC, *Leyborne-Popham*, 47.
- ⁴⁰ Examinations of John Barnard and Paulis Frankin, 19 and 30 Nov. 1649, TNA, HCA 13/251, part i.
- ⁴¹ McNeill, *Tanner letters*, 325; examination of Alred Johnson, 6 Jan. 1650, TNA, HCA, 30/851, fo. 690r; Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English affairs from the beginning of the reign of Charles I ...* (London, 1682), 430.
- ⁴² *A Perfect Diurnall*, 23-30 June and 14-21 Oct. 1650, 1126, 479; *CSPD*, 1651, 86.
- ⁴³ Examination of James Ballan, 17 Feb. 1652, TNA, HCA 13/252, part i.
- ⁴⁴ Examination of Peter Seddon, 15 Apr. 1652, TNA, HCA 13/65; *A perfect diurnall*, 23 Feb. – 1 Mar. 1652, 1709.
- ⁴⁵ Micheál Ó Siochrú, 'The duke of Lorraine and the international struggle for Ireland', *Historical Journal*, XLVIII (2005), 905-32; *A perfect diurnall*, 26 May-2 June and 2-9 June 1651, 1060, 1087.
- ⁴⁶ Capp, 'Naval operations', 175-6.

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CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

By Dr John Cunningham

In the 1650s Ireland witnessed a revolution in landholding. A number of scholars have offered differing figures for the precise extent of the transfer of land from Catholic to Protestant hands; all have agreed that it was substantial. According to one estimate, Catholics owned around three-fifths of the land of Ireland in 1641.¹ By 1659 the proportion of land held by Catholic proprietors can hardly have exceeded one-tenth of the total acreage, although the subsequent Restoration land settlement did permit a partial recovery in Catholic landholding.² The 1650s can consequently be viewed as a crucially important decade for the establishment of the Protestant Ascendancy that persisted in Ireland until the late nineteenth century.

In Ireland, in both popular and scholarly opinion, the 1650s are inseparably intertwined with Oliver Cromwell. He exists there as a historical personage, as a paragon of injustice and, for some, as a hero. Popular opinion of Cromwell is often strongly felt, but it is sometimes ill informed about the specifics of Cromwell's involvement with Ireland. In recent decades, historians have endeavoured to make sense of Cromwell's role in both the conquest and the settlement of the country. The monographs on the conquest of Ireland written by James Scott Wheeler and Micheál Ó Siochru have done a great deal to explain and to clarify the course of what was an enormously destructive war. Cromwell's controversial actions at Drogheda, at Wexford and elsewhere are now clearly set out for anybody who wishes to read about those episodes and to weigh the surviving evidence.³ The fact that the conquest was very far from being all about Cromwell has also been made readily apparent. After all, he spent only nine eventful months in Ireland and the war continued for almost three years after his departure.

Cromwell's involvement with the Irish land settlement is arguably more difficult to disentangle. It requires investigation of his role both while the settlement was being designed, between 1642 and 1653, and while it was being implemented, from 1653 onwards. It also necessitates exploration of his dealings with individuals from the various major groupings that made up the population of Ireland: the Catholic majority; the Protestants of the Church of Ireland; and the Presbyterian Ulster Scots. Moreover, it is essential to examine Cromwell's involvement in the complex politics that

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

surrounded the redistribution of confiscated Irish land to two new and substantial groups of proprietors: the adventurers; and the officers and soldiers of his own army. This article will first discuss Cromwell's involvement with the designing of the land settlement up to 1653. It will then explore some aspects of the role played by him while the settlement was being implemented. Because Cromwell's reputation in Ireland is firmly linked to perceptions of the land policies of the 1650s, it is vital that his responsibility for those policies be explored and understood to the full extent allowed by the surviving sources.

I

The Irish land settlement was based upon three acts of the English parliament. The first of these, the Adventurers' Act of 1642, offered for sale Irish land that was presumed forfeited as a result of the 1641 rebellion. Because Cromwell subscribed a substantial amount of money towards this fundraising scheme for the re-conquest of Ireland, it can be assumed that he, in common with many other MPs, sympathised with its aims.⁴ The second piece of legislation, the Act for the Settling of Ireland of 1652, outlined the range of penalties that were to be imposed on the English parliament's enemies there. In 1899 Samuel Gardiner claimed that there was 'no evidence to connect it with Cromwell', and some later historians have reaffirmed his findings.⁵ In fact, it is possible to see the germ of the Act for the Settling of Ireland in a declaration published by Cromwell during his time in Ireland. In his *Declaration for the undeceiving of deluded and seduced people*, published in January 1650, Cromwell loosely grouped the population of Ireland into different categories, promising appropriate degrees of mercy to those in arms who would submit, except of course the leaders of the rebellion, and protection to those who had played no part in the war. Aside from the fact that Cromwell's *Declaration* contradicted the insistence of the Catholic bishops that he was bent on the destruction of Irish Catholic lives and fortunes, there was nothing remarkable in his approach. It was Henry Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law, who in 1651 developed this approach into a detailed scheme of severe qualifications, nearly all of which survived in the final text of the Act for the Settling of Ireland.⁶ It is legitimate to ask the question, if impossible to answer it decisively, whether or not Cromwell, had he been still mired in the grind of Irish warfare in 1651, would have adopted a softer line than Ireton did?

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

The Act for the Settling of Ireland approved at Westminster in August 1652 exempted from pardon five categories of persons: all of those involved in the first year of the Irish rebellion; all Catholic clergy associated with the war effort; 106 named leaders; principals and accessories to murder; and persons who upon publication of the Act declined to submit within twenty-eight days. Landowners outside of those conditions who could not prove their constant good affection were to forfeit either one-third or two-thirds of their estates. Such persons were also made liable to transplantation.⁷ At a late stage, a concession was inserted for Protestants: if they had demonstrated good affection to the English parliament when the opportunity had presented itself, they would avoid confiscation. Failure by a Protestant to meet this standard would result in the loss of one-fifth of his estate at the least.⁸

The issue of whether or not Cromwell opposed the passing of the Act for the Settling of Ireland in August 1652 is complicated by the fact that the parliament was dealing concurrently with a number of intertwined Irish issues: the renewal, or not, of Cromwell's commission as lord lieutenant; the renewal of the commission authorising the work of the four commissioners who headed the civil government in Ireland; the appointment of a replacement for the lately deceased Ireton; the qualifications that would become the Act for the Settling of Ireland; and the terms of the land settlement that would eventually emerge as the Act for the Satisfaction of Adventurers, Soldiers and Others in September 1653. It is clear that there was conflict around Irish issues at Westminster in 1652-3. What is not so clear-cut is the matter of which specific Irish issues caused that conflict.⁹

In order better to understand what unfolded at Westminster, it is necessary to take account of the wider Irish political context. Of crucial importance here were the four commissioners of parliament who were dispatched to Ireland early in 1651 to oversee the reconstruction of civil government in Ireland. One of these four men in particular, the Republican MP John Weaver, was to generate enormous controversy both in Ireland and at Westminster in the early 1650s. In the twelve months following his arrival in Ireland, he clashed several times with leading officers of the army on a range of issues. After yet another run-in with army officers at Kilkenny in April 1652, Weaver opted to return to England. Back at Westminster, he was centrally involved in the blocking John Lambert's intended dispatch to

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

Ireland as lord deputy and commander of the army there. When parliament voted not to renew Cromwell's commission as lord lieutenant of Ireland, Lambert's subsidiary position was also undermined.¹⁰

Alongside this political manoeuvring, negotiations with the adventurers concerning their prospective plantation in Ireland were also ongoing at Westminster. By May 1652 it seemed likely that the adventurers would be permitted to take possession of a large amount of Irish land on very favourable terms.¹¹ Meanwhile, the officers of the army were still preoccupied with the war in Ireland and had not yet had opportunity to formulate their own demands concerning Irish land. This unbalanced approach, skewed in favour of the adventurers, was derailed on 20 May 1652 by yet another vote in parliament. Although no clear evidence exists of Cromwell's stance on that occasion, we can be reasonably sure that he was firmly on the side of the army. While the complex politics of May 1652 are intriguing, they do not necessarily reveal anything about Cromwell's attitude toward the aforementioned Act for the Settling of Ireland.¹² The divisive issue at that point was not the fate of the parliament's Irish enemies, but rather the manner in which its friends and servants, the adventurers and the army, ought to be rewarded. The resolution of this latter issue would not come about until 1653.

The political circumstances in which the Act for the Settling of Ireland was finally approved on 12 August 1652 were also rather complicated. The bill relating to the adventurers and the army had been revived a week earlier, but once again no substantial progress was made. There was also some division around the selection of the team of commissioners that was charged with governing Ireland alongside the new commander-in-chief for Ireland, Cromwell's son-in-law Charles Fleetwood.¹³ While the Act for the Settling of Ireland was approved by parliament in the midst of all these machinations, the content of that legislation does not appear to have been at the centre of the ongoing conflict. Two issues were altogether more important: the balancing of civil and military power in Ireland; and the redistribution of millions of acres of confiscated Irish land.¹⁴

All of this brings us back again to Gardiner's conclusion from 1899 that there was no evidence to connect the Act for the Settling of Ireland with Cromwell.¹⁵ Once it is recognised that the qualifications were Ireton's

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

creation and that other issues drove the intense political manoeuvrings of 1652, then Gardiner's conclusion would appear to stand up. Nonetheless, there are some loose ends. For example, the circumstances that guided the council of state's decision early in August 1652 to moderate the impact on the Irish Protestant community of one of Ireton's qualifications remain clouded in mystery. In the preceding months, Dr Henry Jones, an Irish Protestant bishop and scoutmaster-general of the English army in Ireland, had led a campaign to publicise the alleged massacres with which the 1641 rebellion was believed to have begun. Although by 1652 most Irish Protestants were seen as tainted by their recent support for the royalist cause, Jones was determined to re-establish their credentials as innocent victims of brutal Catholic aggression. Jones's campaign may have influenced the decision to soften the punishments aimed at Protestants under the terms of the Act for the Settling of Ireland.¹⁶ The tone of Cromwell's dealings with Irish Protestants in 1649-50 and again later in the decade certainly leave open the possibility that he sympathised with their plight in 1652 and that he might well have helped to lighten the legislative penalties intended for them. In the absence of evidence, however, it is not possible to go beyond speculation on this important point.¹⁷

Towards the end of 1652 and in the opening months of the following year, the land question remained central to English politics concerning Ireland. Again, the sparseness of the available evidence means that it is not possible to chart in any detail the individual course taken by Cromwell through the resulting debates and controversies. It seems inevitable, however, that Cromwell would have backed the interests of the army in Ireland and supported their demands for full satisfaction of their arrears with grants of Irish land. In this context, it can be concluded that Cromwell did influence the political process around the designing of the land settlement, but the extent and precise manner of his involvement remain hidden from us.¹⁸

In September 1653, the Nominated parliament eventually passed the Act for the Satisfaction of Adventurers, Soldiers and Others. Aside from authorising a joint ten-county adventurer-soldier plantation, this legislation also finalised the details of the transplantation to Connacht. In 1899 Gardiner linked the policy of transplantation firmly to Cromwell, making much of the fact that the scheme was announced by the council of state just before the first sitting of the Nominated parliament. In those weeks, according to Gardiner,

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

‘Cromwell held a virtual dictatorship.’¹⁹ In contrast to the situation concerning army arrears, there is no evidence of disagreement at Westminster in 1653 on the policy of transplanting Catholics. In many ways, the transplantation was a logical follow-on from Ireton’s qualifications, the terms of which had left the way open for just such a scheme. Although the transplantation was not Cromwell’s invention, and there is no contemporary evidence that he ever uttered anything resembling the notorious phrase ‘go to hell or to Connacht’, it seems reasonable to conclude that he was not opposed in principle to the scheme announced in July 1653. After all, the transplantation was widely seen as essential to enabling the success of the land settlement as a whole.²⁰

II

The implementation of the land settlement from 1653 onwards is a vast and complex subject. The remainder of this article will concentrate on some of the evidence for Cromwell’s engagement with it. The task of directly overseeing the land settlement was entrusted to the government in Ireland, led by Charles Fleetwood. Fleetwood was generally hostile towards the country’s inhabitants and determined to press ahead with confiscation and transplantation. However, he soon met with opposition from many existing landowners, both Protestant and Catholic, who believed that the terms of various articles of surrender negotiated during the conquest entitled them to retain all or at least part of their original estates. On top of this, some individuals had obtained personal promises regarding their lands. Analysis of Cromwell’s responses to appeals from Irish proprietors is crucial to understanding his involvement with the land settlement.²¹

Cromwell was all too familiar from his English experience with the tensions (and even contradictions) that could exist between terms conceded at the point of surrender by army officers and the policies proposed thereafter by parliament. Late in 1652 parliament bowed to army pressure and renewed a lapsed commission that had previously adjudicated on claims arising from articles of surrender.²² Irish landowners were quick to seize this opportunity, but Fleetwood’s government proved determined to resist the orders of what it saw as an ill-informed and interfering committee. In response, Irish landowners began their attempts to enlist additional support from a figure of growing authority, Oliver Cromwell.²³

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

Cromwell's first major attempt to influence the execution of the land settlement occurred in reaction to the Irish government's decision in May 1653 to transplant over 250 Ulster Scots proprietors to the south of the country. The Ulster Scots, headed by their former commanding officer Hugh Montgomery, Viscount Ardes and James Hamilton, earl of Clanbrassil, immediately opposed the transplantation scheme by pleading the protection of articles of surrender dating from April 1650. On that occasion Cromwell had undertaken that, upon payment of composition fines similar to those levied on English royalists, the surrendering Irish Protestants would be allowed to enjoy their estates. Early in 1653, Ardes went to London where, backed by a letter of recommendation from Cromwell, he secured from the committee for articles an order for possession of his estate. Upon his return to Ireland, however, he discovered that the government intended to transplant him and his neighbours to Co. Waterford. Ardes elected to return to London, taking Clanbrassil with him. There, with Cromwell's support, they secured a fresh order in their favour from the committee of articles. Cromwell also sent two letters over to Fleetwood demanding that Clanbrassil be left in possession of his estate.²⁴

Cromwell's ability to moderate the impact of the settlement on existing Irish landowners was enhanced by his elevation to the office of lord protector in December 1653. Significantly, the Instrument of Government empowered Cromwell and his council to make laws and ordinances as necessary until the next meeting of parliament, scheduled for 3 September 1654. In this interval, the Protestants of Munster were able to secure an ordinance granting them full indemnity for their involvement in the royalist war effort in the 1640s. This outcome confirmed a promise made to them by Cromwell upon their surrender to him late in 1649.²⁵ A few days short of the meeting of parliament and the expiration of Cromwell's legislative powers, another ordinance followed, which permitted the remainder of the Irish Protestants to compound for their estates. These developments meant that by September 1654 much of the uncertainty surrounding continued Irish Protestant proprietorship had been resolved. The planned 'Iretonian' schemes of confiscation and transplantation had been subverted by a far more lenient 'Cromwellian' arrangement.²⁶

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

III

Ireland's Catholics were held responsible for rebellion, massacre and a decade of war. Despite this background, the channels successfully exploited by the Protestants, namely recourse to Cromwell and the committee for articles, were also open to some Catholic proprietors. Among the most determined were the Leinster officers, whose articles of surrender dating from May 1652 had held out the prospect 'that they may enjoy such moderate part [of their] estates as may make their lives comfortable'.²⁷ In March 1654 the Leinster officers, led by their former commanding officer Richard Nugent, earl of Westmeath, took their case to the committee for articles. It ruled that they should enjoy their estates until a future parliament had given its verdict on the case. However, as Cromwell enjoyed legislative power in those months, the Leinster officers must have hoped imitate their Protestant counterparts by securing an ordinance from the lord protector.²⁸

It was not to be. The arrival in Dublin in April 1654 of a letter from Cromwell in favour of the earl of Westmeath spurred Fleetwood into action.²⁹ A lengthy and defiant letter of protest was dispatched to Cromwell, and this was followed by two well-briefed agents who were sent to London to present the case against the Leinster officers and to criticise the perceived meddling of the committee for articles. Fleetwood and the other commissioners depicted the success of the entire land settlement as hinging on the case of the Leinster officers, as exempting them from transplantation risked setting a precedent for many other Catholics to remain *in situ*. On top of this, Fleetwood commenced a smear campaign against Irish Catholics then in London.³⁰ Taking advantage of the discovery of John Gerard's assassination plot, he sought to persuade John Thurloe that no Irishman should be given access to Cromwell and that they should be expelled from the city.³¹ Fleetwood's letter may have contributed to the backlash that followed, as many Irish Catholics were among the large numbers arrested in London in June 1654 on suspicion of conspiracy.³² Fleetwood had evidently identified Cromwell as a weak link, one whose sympathetic ear for claims resting on articles of surrender posed a fundamental threat to the progress of the land settlement. Even if Cromwell did not ultimately intend to rescue the Leinster officers, his responsiveness to their pleas gave them hope and thus helped to retard the transplantation.

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

Although the Leinster officers failed in their ambitions in mid-1654, several other Catholics then in London did win real concessions from Cromwell. In August he ignored sustained protests from Dublin to approve an ordinance in favour of Lady Eleanor Fitzwilliam, securing the Co. Dublin estate of her husband Colonel Oliver Fitzwilliam. Fitzwilliam had fought on the king's side at Naseby and in the army of the Catholic Confederation. Crucially perhaps, he was able to draw upon the support of influential English-in-laws, as his wife was sister to Denzil Holles and John, earl of Clare.³³

Shortly before surrendering his legislative power, Cromwell approved yet another ordinance in favour of a Catholic, John Grace of Courtstown, Co. Kilkenny. In this case, Cromwell's lenience was inspired by the fact that Grace had been promised favour by Ireton in return for services rendered during the conquest, in particular carrying a message from Ireton to an assembly of Catholic leaders in the west of Ireland in the winter of 1650-1. Grace secured an ordinance on 30 August 1654 and upon his eventual return to Ireland in 1655 he carried a letter of favour from Cromwell. Two more letters followed, enabling Grace to recover his land from out the hands of the army and lightening the burden of his composition fine. Unlike Fitzwilliam, Grace could not draw upon the support of influential English relatives. Instead, his success can be attributed to Cromwell's resolution to fulfil a promise made by his deceased son-in-law, regardless of the fact that it was made to an Irish Catholic.³⁴

In September 1654 attention turned to the first protectoral parliament, but that body proved a disappointment and it was dissolved by Cromwell at the earliest opportunity the following January. At first, the dissolution appeared to be a major setback for the Irish Catholics, as they had hoped that parliament would heed the pleas of landowners such as the Leinster officers. Fleetwood, however, was alarmed at the possibility that Cromwell might now be able to take back legislative powers into his own hands, and resume the granting of concessions over the head of the Dublin government.³⁵ In an effort to preclude such a development, he repeated his tactics of the previous year, informing Thurloe that Irish Catholics were involved in yet another recently discovered royalist conspiracy, that of the grouping known as the Action Party. He identified six individuals whom he deemed to merit close scrutiny, including Sir Robert Talbot, agent for the Leinster officers, and the aforementioned John Grace.³⁶ By the end of February 1655

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

Fleetwood could afford to relax a little, as it had become clear that Cromwell would not resume his legislative powers. In another letter to Thurloe, Fleetwood concluded triumphantly that ‘those things which we heare are attempted to be done in England concerninge Ireland, will be prevented through the want of that power’.³⁷ He could now press ahead more confidently with the transplantation. One of the major obstacles to the success of the land settlement, the uncertainty created by Cromwell’s evident sympathy for the Leinster officers, had been surmounted.

Although by mid-1655 it had become clear that the transplantation would go ahead, Cromwell none the less continued to intervene frequently on behalf of Catholics. These interventions were sometimes related to articles of surrender, as in August 1655 when Cromwell ordered that the generous terms that he had granted to the town of Fethard in 1650 should be fully observed.³⁸ This helped to ensure that its mostly Catholic population would avoid transplantation. On other occasions he responded favourably to pleas from individual Catholics concerning their reduced circumstances, their poor health or their inoffensive behaviour during the war.³⁹ Unfortunately for the Catholics concerned, Cromwell’s intercession was sometimes not enough to ensure that they would be spared transplantation. A notable case in this category was that of Edmund Spenser’s grandson William. Although eventually transplanted, Spenser fared better than most, securing more than 1,000 acres around Ballinasloe and marrying the daughter of a Cromwellian colonel.⁴⁰

How should we read Cromwell’s letters in favour of various individuals from Ireland? Some of his letters in favour of Catholics would appear to indicate that Cromwell thought the laws governing the transplantation scheme to be too harsh. Apart from those who placed their hopes in promises secured during the conquest, Catholic landowners wishing to avoid confiscation and transplantation were required by law to demonstrate conclusive evidence of constant good affection to the English interest. Very few Catholics who resided in Ireland in the 1640s could fulfil these criteria. Cromwell’s letters seem to suggest that he viewed this rule as draconian. For example, in a letter written on behalf of Patrick Courcy, Baron Kingsale, he declared his conviction that the punishment of persons such as Kingsale who had for the most part behaved themselves well was ‘not the intention of the law which enjoins the transplantation’. He went on: ‘it would be a

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

most unmerciful and ungodly thing to put him to such an extremity'.⁴¹ These words are filled with pity concerning the treatment of Irish Catholic landowners.

Should such pity-filled words be treated as the sympathetic voice of the 'personal Cromwell'?⁴² It seems instead most likely that some of the words used were simply copied from the original petition of the landowner concerned.⁴³ While we can assume that Cromwell would not have signed letters whose sentiments he disagreed with, there is a need for caution in handling such sources and in attaching appropriate weight to the precise words and phrases employed. Andrew Hadfield has recently concluded from a reading of Cromwell's letter in favour of William Spenser that the lord protector had a high regard for Spenser the poet and that he had read his *View of the present state of Ireland* in preparation for his Irish expedition.⁴⁴ Rather it is likely that the relevant passage of Cromwell's letter was simply a recycling of the content of William Spenser's petition, and it does not constitute evidence that he had read Edmund Spenser's *View*. This is an aspect that perhaps merits further exploration.

IV

Overall the available evidence shows that Cromwell's primary contribution to the execution of the land settlement consisted of a sustained and sometimes successful endeavour to lessen its impact on sections of Ireland's existing landowning communities, both Protestant and Catholic. His behaviour appears all the more remarkable in the light of persistent resistance from Dublin. From 1653, the Irish government recognised that Cromwell posed a major threat to the entire land settlement, and Fleetwood in particular expended considerable energy in an attempt to curtail his father-in-law's involvement. Nonetheless, Cromwell secured Irish Protestants in their estates and worked with some success to aid Catholic landowners. Moreover his attitude and actions fuelled Catholic hopes that the land settlement might be greatly altered, and the uncertainty which surrounded Cromwell's intentions helped temporarily to paralyse the enforcement of the transplantation to Connacht.

Yet the stain of Drogheda remains. If anything, Cromwell's honourable and lenient treatment of Irish landowners puts that episode even more starkly in relief. Many of Cromwell's recent biographers have sought to explain his

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

actions at Drogheda by reference to the laws of war, noting that a garrison that refused to surrender thereby forfeited its right to quarter.⁴⁵ Those same laws of war also required that articles of surrender be properly observed and that promises made be honestly kept. Much of his behaviour in the course of the settlement can be viewed as a continuing adherence to that principle. It was a principle that could be fulfilled as the situation was seen to demand, whether by the sword in the street or the pen in the council chamber.

- ¹ J.G. Simms, 'Land owned by Catholics in Ireland in 1688', *Irish Historical Studies*, vii (1951), p. 189. See also Kevin McKenny, 'The Restoration land settlement in Ireland: a statistical analysis', in Coleman Dennehy (ed.), *Restoration Ireland* (Aldershot, 2008), pp 53-68, and the figures offered by the Down Survey of Ireland project at www.downsurvey.tcd.ie.
- ² John Cunningham, *Conquest and land in Ireland: the transplantation to Connacht, 1649-1680* (Woodbridge, 2011), p. 100.
- ³ James Scott Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland* (New York and Dublin, 1999); Micheál Ó Siochrú, *God's executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the conquest of Ireland* (London, 2008).
- ⁴ Patrick Little, 'Cromwell and Ireland before 1649', in idem., ed., *Oliver Cromwell: new perspectives* (London, 2009), pp 118-19.
- ⁵ Samuel Gardiner, 'The transplantation to Connaught', *English Historical Review*, xiv (1899), p. 707; John Morrill, *Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford, 2007), p. 70.
- ⁶ Cunningham, *Conquest and land*, pp 12-22.
- ⁷ Ibid., pp 19-22.
- ⁸ Idem, '1641 and the shaping of Cromwellian Ireland', in Eamon Darcy, Annaleigh Margey and Elaine Murphy (eds), *The 1641 depositions and the Irish rebellion* (London, 2012), pp 165-6.
- ⁹ These issues are discussed at length in John Cunningham 'Divided conquerors: Cromwell's army, the Rump parliament and Ireland, 1649-1653', *English Historical Review* (forthcoming, 2014).
- ¹⁰ Cunningham, 'Divided conquerors' (forthcoming).
- ¹¹ Cunningham, *Conquest and land*, pp 27-8.

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

- ¹² Cunningham, 'Divided conquerors' (forthcoming). For an insightful analysis into the complex politics of 1652, see John Morrill, 'Cromwell, parliament, Ireland and a Commonwealth in crisis: 1652 revisited', *Parliamentary History*, xxx (2001), pp 193-214.
- ¹³ Morrill, 'Cromwell, parliament, Ireland', pp 206-9.
- ¹⁴ Cunningham, 'Divided conquerors' (forthcoming).
- ¹⁵ Gardiner, 'The transplantation', p. 707.
- ¹⁶ Cunningham, '1641 and the shaping of Cromwellian Ireland', pp 165-6.
- ¹⁷ Idem, 'Oliver Cromwell and the "Cromwellian" settlement of Ireland', *Historical Journal*, liii (2010), pp 919-37.
- ¹⁸ See idem, 'Divided conquerors' (forthcoming).
- ¹⁹ Gardiner, 'The transplantation', p. 708; Cunningham, 'Cromwell and the "Cromwellian" settlement', p. 922.
- ²⁰ Cunningham, *Conquest and land*, pp 37-40.
- ²¹ For a more detailed discussion, see idem, 'Cromwell and the "Cromwellian" settlement'.
- ²² Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Scotland and Ireland, 1645-1653* (Oxford, 1992), pp 421-2.
- ²³ Cunningham, *Conquest and land*, chap. 3.
- ²⁴ Idem, 'Cromwell and the "Cromwellian" settlement', pp 924-5.
- ²⁵ S.C. Lomas, (ed.), *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (3 vols., London, 1904), iii, 416-17.
- ²⁶ Ibid., pp 925-6.
- ²⁷ Robert Dunlop, (ed.), *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, (2 vols, Manchester, 1913), i, 202.
- ²⁸ Ibid., ii, 421; Cunningham, 'Cromwell and the "Cromwellian" settlement', p. 927.
- ²⁹ Dunlop, (ed.), *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, ii, 414.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 419-21; Instructions to Captain Richard Kingdon and William Rowe, Dublin, 18 May 1654, Bodl., Carte MS 63, fos. 632-6; Cunningham, 'Cromwell and the "Cromwellian" settlement', pp 927-8.
- ³¹ Thomas Birch, (ed.), *A collection of the state papers of John Thurloe* (7 vols, London, 1742), ii, 343.

CROMWELL AND THE IRISH LAND SETTLEMENT

- ³² Patrick Moran, *Historical sketch of the persecutions suffered by the Catholics of Ireland under the rule of Cromwell and the puritans* (2nd edn, Dublin, 1884), pp. 297-8; HMC, *Egmont MSS*, i, 542-3.
- ³³ Cunningham, 'Cromwell and the "Cromwellian" settlement', pp 929-30.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 930-1.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 932-3.
- ³⁶ Birch, (ed.), *Thurloe state papers*, iii, 139.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.
- ³⁸ Order of the lord protector on the humble petition of the inhabitants of the Towne of Fethard, Whitehall, 7 Aug. 1655, NLI, MS D 7,404.
- ³⁹ Cunningham, 'Cromwell and the "Cromwellian" settlement', p. 933.
- ⁴⁰ *Idem*, *Conquest and land*, p. 104.
- ⁴¹ Lomas, (ed.), *Letter and speeches*, iii, 465.
- ⁴² Martyn Bennett, *Oliver Cromwell* (London, 2006), p. 221.
- ⁴³ I am grateful to Dr Joel Halcomb for discussing this issue with me.
- ⁴⁴ Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: a life* (Oxford, 2012), pp 410-11.
- ⁴⁵ Barry Coward, *Oliver Cromwell* (Harlow, 1991), p. 73; Ivan Roots, 'Union and disunion in the British Isles, in *idem*, (ed.), *Into another mould: aspects of the interregnum* (Exeter, 1998), p. 16; Christopher Hill, *Collected essays* (3 vols., Brighton, 1985), iii, 87; John Gillingham, *Cromwell: portrait of a soldier* (London, 1976), p. 113; Simon Robins, *God's general: Cromwell the soldier* (Stroud, 2003), p. 139.

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WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

By Dr Joel Halcomb and Dr Patrick Little

I

Henry Cromwell, the Lord Protector's younger son, arrived at Dublin as commander of the army in Ireland in July 1655. He did not, however, become the civilian governor, or 'lord deputy', until November 1657, and in the meantime the administration remained under the control of his brother-in-law, Charles Fleetwood. Fleetwood remained in post as lord deputy even after his departure for England in September 1655.¹ This arrangement, described by Toby Barnard as one of Oliver's 'least happy compromises', left Henry, in Peter Gaunt's words, with a role that was 'somewhat ambiguous and his position often rather uncomfortable'.² The root of the problem was not personal but religious and political, for Fleetwood was more religiously radical than his brother-in-law, favouring in particular the Baptists within the army, and he also sought to impose a much harsher political settlement in Ireland. Henry, by contrast, wanted to broaden the regime's support in Ireland by incorporating Congregationalists, Presbyterians and even former Anglicans within a broad church, and by encouraging the political participation of the existing Protestant community in Ireland, known as the 'Old Protestants', who were naturally wary of military rule. Yet, as champions of very different policies, the two men found it difficult preventing their disagreements from becoming personal. As Gaunt puts it,

Henry and Fleetwood were kept informed of, or became parties to, bickering, allegations, and counter-allegations; disputes about letters that had allegedly been written and were being circulated; and accusations concerning groundless and scurrilous rumours being concocted or spread by one side to blacken the other. Even allowing for a degree of exaggeration and for the rather prickly, thin-skinned, and over-sensitive nature of the two antagonists, things clearly became very fraught and unpleasant at times.³

The two men were united by one thing: their allegiance to Oliver Cromwell. Charles Fleetwood was very much Oliver's protégé. He had been promoted by Oliver in the New Model Army, had married to the lord general's recently-widowed daughter Bridget Ireton in 1652, and in the same year had been sent to Ireland as commander-in-chief. Their relationship was,

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

however, not entirely straightforward. Although Oliver continued to support Fleetwood, and to value his advice, by the summer of 1655 he was aware that Fleetwood considered some of the policies of the protectorate, especially moves to broaden support among its former enemies, to be misguided. Oliver was also on the defensive when it came to charges of promoting the Cromwell family. As he insisted to Fleetwood in a letter of June 1655, written at the time of Henry Cromwell's preparations to travel to Ireland,

The Lord knows, my desire was for him and his brother [Richard] to have lived private lives in the country: and Harry knows this very well, and how difficultly I was persuaded to give him his commission for his present place. This I say as from a simple and sincere heart. The noise of my being crowned etc are like malicious figments.⁴

Oliver's relationship with Henry was, on the surface at least, a lot less complicated. Henry's marriage to Elizabeth Russell, the daughter of a family friend, was accompanied by a financial settlement that was lavish for a younger son. Oliver always spoke of Henry with pride. In February 1657, for example, Henry was told by his Irish friend, Vincent Gookin, that

His highness, Friday night last, before [Secretary] Thurloe, Sir [Gilbert] Pickering and R[ichard], took occasion to speak of the L[ord] H[enry]; and gave him the highest and well grounded applauses imaginable, with tears of joy on his cheeks... I cannot but smile to think what a simple owl's game your enemies have played, to make lies to such a father, upon such a son.

Gookin was aware of the tensions between Henry and Fleetwood, however, adding: 'Pray take notice, that these words were spoken before Sir Gilbert, who, his highness well knows, tells all to L[ord] D[eputy]; and therefore be assured it was spoken that it might be noted'.⁵

Seven of Oliver's letters to Henry survive in a more-or-less complete state, and all are to be included in the forthcoming edition of Cromwell's letters and speeches edited by John Morrill for Oxford University Press. Some of the seven letters are holograph, signed and sometimes written by Oliver himself; others are drafts or copies. They fall into two categories: personal

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

letters and more official communications, although there are hybrids, such as the letter of August 1656 which starts informally, but uses the impersonal (and regal) 'Wee' form in most of the text, before reverting to 'I doe not doubt' in the final sentence, and 'your loving Father' at the end. Superficially, these letters are very affectionate. The letters routinely begin with 'Sonne' or 'Harrye' or 'Sonne Harry', and, once 'Harry Cromwell'; and end with 'Your affectionate Father' or 'Your loving Father'. Oliver was also fond of personal postscripts, in April 1656 signing off with 'My love to my deere Daughter (whom I frequently pray for) and to all my freindes'; in October 1657 (despite the frosty tone of the rest of the letter), he ended with 'my love to your wife and children'; and in June 1658 he sent 'My love to your deare wife and to the two babes'. In April 1656 Oliver gave Henry the fatherly advice not to be too eager 'to lay for your selfe the foundation of a great estate', pointing out the suspicion that landed wealth had brought him during his own career – and perhaps hinting at a recent satirical attack on himself. In June 1658 Oliver asked for a favour to the son of 'my deare Cousin', Edward Whalley, but also acknowledged Henry's own interest in the matter, as one 'soe nearly related to us as you know'. There are thus hints in these letters of the strong personal relationship between the lord protector and his younger son, and of a sense of loving fellowship within the wider Cromwell family, which has been explored elsewhere.⁶ This may also explain – in part, at least – Oliver's frustration at Henry's continued suspicion of the motives of his 'B[rother] Fleetwood' in the letter of October 1657.

The remainder of this paper will concentrate on the two most 'personal' letters – those of 21 April 1656 and 13 October 1657 – which will be subjected to more detailed analysis, concentrating on Oliver's use of religious language, and reveal more about his relationship with Henry and Fleetwood.

II

Oliver's letter of 21 April 1656 is the most overtly religious of this set, yet to understand it properly it is necessary to refer back to Henry's recent correspondence with Oliver concerning his difficulties with the Baptists in Ireland, and specifically those who held senior posts in the army. In his battle with Irish Baptists, Henry clearly tried to act out – or was at least very keen to be seen to be acting out – Oliver's consistent advice to be tolerant

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

towards the godly. His earlier letters to the protector and his secretary, John Thurloe, are filled with strained emphases of his moderation, evenhandedness, integrity, and reliance on the 'sober' and 'honest' godly. His earliest letters from Ireland promoted 'ane equallitie helde out to all', yet he also recognised the imbalance of power that had developed under Fleetwood. 'It is good to use tenderness towarde them [the Baptists]', he wrote to Thurloe in December 1655, 'I have done it, and shall still doe it; but shall withall be carefull to keep them from power, whoe, if they hade it in their power, would express little tenderness to those, that would not submitt to their way.' He bore opposition 'with patience', and when he sensed that his opponents were filling 'his highness with feares concerninge me', he 'bless[ed] God, through his grace, I have comforte in my own integritie'.⁷ This was Henry at his most pietistic. Yet some of these professions hint at Henry's anxieties about his father's approval. When Henry sent news to Oliver concerning his arrest of some troublesome officers in Wexford, he quickly defended the 'justice' of his behavior, and slipped into an extended profession of humiliation:

I hope the Lord will enable me to be faithfull to the trust reposed in me..., and that without giving any just occasion of offence to any of the people of God; which I may say through his grace have endeavoured to avoide.... Your highness cannot but be sensible, that by reason of my youthe and inabilitie, that my tryalls and temptations are too greate for me, as well as my employment. The Lord keep my harte low under the sence of it, that my dependance may be wholly uppon hime for strength and wisdom, and that I may be allwayes founde faithfull to his interest and the interest of those, whome he hath owned, and by which your highness family enjoy the present mercyes.⁸

So Henry knew his father well: such religious glosses on his own behavior emerged in his letters to London long before Oliver's extended religious and pastoral meditations of 21 April 1656. But equally Oliver also paid close attention to his son's letters. Not only does he explicitly set this context for Henry in his opening line ('I have received your letters and have alsoe seene some from you to others'), he also echoes or reacts to Henry's own words. There are, therefore, a number ways we can read this letter. First, and most basically, the religious language that dominates this letter is entirely

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

consistent with John Morrill's description of Oliver's use of the Bible: citations from numerous books are set next to each other in a seamless thread of thought, quotes are paraphrased rather than exact, and many of his statements touch on broader themes that cannot easily be pinned down to specific biblical verses.⁹ The letter presents fully internalised biblical language, seemingly written from memory and adapted fluidly to the context of his message.

Yet, secondly, the uniqueness of this letter in comparison to the rest suggests something deeper at play than the mere projection of Oliver's piety or the natural emergence of 'Cromwell the preacher' within a pastoral context. Why does such language emerge at this time, in this letter? In part Oliver is merely reinforcing and amplifying statements found in Henry's correspondence about bearing burdens, relying on God, remaining innocent, showing moderation, and making the 'glory of the Lord, your ayme'. These comforting messages are combined with reassurances of Henry's description of the politics in Ireland: Oliver is 'sufficiently satisfied' of his burden, is 'glad to heare, what I have heard, of your carriage', and thinks 'the Anabaptists are too blame in not beinge pleased with you'. He even singles out the rigid Baptist propensity to label other godly sects as 'antichristian', despite assurances from one of Henry's main opponents, Colonel John Hewson, to the contrary.¹⁰ This letter is therefore a reassuring continuation of a common discourse between Henry and his father. But it also serves as a warning. Through series of punctuating 'take heeds', Oliver dwells on temptations and Henry's own limitations: 'Take heede of beinge over jealous'; 'Take heede of professinge religion without the power'; 'Take \Care/ of makinge it a businesse to bee too hard for the men whoe contest with you'; and 'take heede of studyinge to lay for your selfe the foundation of a great estate'. The message being sent was decidedly mixed, and Henry must have read this letter with as much disquiet as reassurance.

Finally, it is possible that some of Oliver's biblical references point towards a more studied approach, though the evidence here is as tantalising as it is ambiguous. Psalms are prominent in much of Oliver's religious expression and the psalms referenced here speak volumes about Henry's condition. The most curious quote of the letter – 'rowle your selfe upon God' – puzzled Sophia Lomas, Carlyle's editor, who, without seeing the original letter, speculated that it was one of Carlyle's silent textual emendations.¹¹ No

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

verse from the King James or Geneva bibles contains a similar phrase. It does, however, paraphrase 'rolle thy way upon the Lord', a marginal note in the 1611 King James Bible providing the literal Hebrew translation for Psalm 37:5. Cromwell's paraphrasing suggests that he had either read the margin note at some point, or that it was part of popular religious discourse (the phrase would later be popularised by Matthew Henry's famous commentaries). Yet, if Henry used this reference to find his way to Psalm 37 he would have discovered a larger, powerful pastoral message: 'Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity' (verse 1); 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass' (verse 5); 'Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off' (verses 8-9); 'For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off' (verse 28). Similarly, Oliver's more obvious paraphrasing of Psalm 25:21 points to a psalm promoting confidence in God in the face of affliction. Perhaps these references are instinctive, but Cromwell often turned to biblical language to make sense of difficult situations and his letter of 21 November 1655 shows that he was entirely capable of giving similar advice without strong biblical overtones. If they are indicative of Oliver viewing Henry's politics through a wider biblical framework then Henry could take real comfort in his father's understanding of the situation.

While it is possible to read some aspects of the 21 April 1656 letter in a positive light, it is difficult to see the letter of October 1657 as anything other than a rebuke: 'I am sorrie you wrote me some sad apprehensions of some enimies of yours to bee about mee; truly none dare appeare soe', and in particular Oliver bridled at the personal attack on Fleetwood: 'if you thinke your B[rother] Fleetwood to be soe, you are mistaken, it were dangerous for you to thinke soe, and hee not bee soe'. There was little warmth in the injunction that followed: 'bee you humble, and patient', and again 'I am afraid you have erred in this'. From sympathising with Henry over his difficulties in 1655-6, by the autumn of 1657 Oliver comes across as impatient, if not angry, with his son's behaviour. One explanation for this is that Oliver's rebuke centres on exactly the issues of leniency towards radical opponents that he had been promoting to Henry since his arrival in Ireland in July 1655. Around the start of September 1657, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Brayfield, governor of Athlone, was cashiered by court

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

martial, for (according to Henry's account) spreading disaffection to the government.¹² The timing of this move is interesting, and it is possible that Henry waited until Fleetwood's commission as lord deputy expired before moving against such a high-profile officer. The details of the case are far from clear, but there are a number of consistent points debated in the correspondence between Ireland and London from September to November which emerge in Oliver's letter of 13 October. First, Brayfield denied the charges and professed loyalty to the protectorate and to Henry's rule in Ireland, both at his trial and afterwards. Second, Henry defensively claimed the trial was 'called not onely by advice of several chief officers, but at his [Brayfield's] owne instance', yet Thurloe hinted at criticisms of Henry's personal involvement;¹³ Oliver said the trial should not have taken place. Third, there were also questions about the witnesses used. Henry defended the trial as 'a court of the best reputation for number, quallitie, and temper (as being composed of all parties) that hath been knowne', but others were less sure. Advocate-general Dr Philip Carteret was censured 'for his gross partiallitie in the case' (his involvement is unclear). Thurloe stressed that Brayfield was 'a sober independent' who was well spoken of 'by noe ill-minded men';¹⁴ but Oliver was blunt: 'I would not beleive 2 carnall men, against one such protestinge inocency'. Considering these ambiguities, Thurloe, Broghill and Oliver all pushed for leniency. On 6 October, in a letter that Broghill saw and agreed with, Thurloe gently asked Henry why he could not 'oblige' Brayfield 'by passinge by his offence as a matter of grace'.¹⁵ Oliver was again far more blunt in his language: 'I am afraid you have erred in this'.

Despite this unified advice, Henry dug in his heels and it seems that honour was at the heart of his resistance. The charges against Brayfield included seditious words against Henry himself and the advice of Oliver, Thurloe and Broghill all called Henry's judgment into question. In early November, for example, in the last account we have of the case, Thurloe was still clearly responding to injured, defensive and resistant letters from Henry.¹⁶ Against Henry, his advisors saw the personal nature of the case as a fitting opportunity to (in Thurloe's words), 'shew mercye towards a person, who would take it as an act of your favour and goodnes, and lay a certeyne obligation upon him and others'.¹⁷ This had been Oliver's advice all along. Time and patience would reconcile his opponents, 'espetially if they shall see your moderation and love towards them, whilst they are found in other

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

ways towards you' (21 November 1655). Henry had broken with the very advice that he had been so keen to acknowledge and employ in his battles with Baptists in 1655-6.

There are other signs that the relationship between Oliver and Henry had become strained by October 1657. The reference to 'secret' correspondence between father and son, mentioned early in the letter, suggests intimacy, but that suggestion is subverted by Fleetwood's letter of the same date, evidently sent in the same packet, which indicated that he had been told everything. Fleetwood's tone towards his brother-in-law was conciliatory, if not positively oily: 'Dear brother', he began, 'It much troubles me that you should still be disapoynted in the buysnes of Ireland, it not being settled'. He then made it clear that he was privy to the protector's secret business: 'His Highnes indended [sic] as yesterday to have given some resolution therin, but was prevented by other ocations'. This bordered on the patronising, as did his subsequent sympathetic noises, 'I know it must needs prove very inconvenient to your affayres', and his disclaimer dripped with insincerity: 'I have wholly declined my concerning myself therin to avoyde suspitions, though when I am called I shall, I hope, give my opinion with honesty and with a due respect to yourself'.¹⁸ This does not fit with Oliver's own denial that 'some enemies of yours' were 'about mee'. Perhaps Henry was right to be alarmed. Having said that, Fleetwood's letter reads like an apology forced from a recalcitrant schoolboy, full of snide remarks and insincerities. Perhaps Oliver even made him write it? We know that Oliver and Fleetwood met in council on 13 October, the day that both of their letters were written.¹⁹

Earlier letters certainly suggest that Oliver did not always play straight with Henry. In November 1655 he mentions, almost in passing, that he was considering 'sending over to you a fit person who may command the north of Ireland' and suppress potential royalist trouble-makers. What he naturally did not mention was that the chosen man, the Baptist, Colonel Thomas Cooper, had been sent to Ireland to keep an eye on Henry, almost certainly at Fleetwood's instigation. A later letter to Henry by Vincent Gookin (dated 21 October 1656) recounted a conversation with Oliver in which he had admitted that 'hee had received some complaints against you, and that hee confessed hee sent colonel Cooper over to spy'.²⁰ If Henry had looked back at his correspondence file, he would have found numerous letters from

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

Fleetwood praising Cooper, including one of 24 December 1655, presented to Henry on the colonel's arrival in Dublin, which recommended him without reservation as a 'worthy good person', adding, 'I hope he will prove a person as a healing mercy, which indeed is the great business wee should mind this day wherein our divisions are like to produce such sad effects, as to lay us naked and bare to a common enemy and there [sic] continuall designs'.²¹ Nor was Oliver always entirely helpful to Henry in other respects. Despite repeated promises that he send him 'some further addition to the Councell' in November 1655, and reassurances in April 1656 that the new councillors would be 'consideringe men', there was only one new councillor appointed from then until the end of the protectorate, leaving Henry with a council finely balanced between his opponents and supporters.²² This may have also been a deliberate decision by the lord protector, designed to limit his son's freedom of action, to make him more dependent on Whitehall. Also suspicious is Oliver's delay in appointing Henry as Fleetwood successor. Even though the latter's commission expired in early September 1657, the appointment was not confirmed until November, and it was during this period that Henry wrote the exasperated letter that elicited the angry letter of 13 October, that was about so much more than the sacking of Lieutenant-Colonel Brayfield.

As a group these letters highlight the complex relationship between the protector and his son, a relationship made all the more complicated by the presence in the background of Charles Fleetwood, Oliver's son-in-law and Henry's political rival. Oliver clearly found his dual role as both father and ruler uncomfortable, and his sensitivity to accusations of favouritism may have made him less forgiving of his son's weaknesses than he was of those of the saints in the army. One might even suggest that this 'tough love' – whether towards the army officers, MPs, or his own family – was an essential characteristic of the man, and the basis for his authority as lord protector.

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

21 November 1655: Letter from Oliver Cromwell to Henry Cromwell

Source: British Library, RP 1595 (holograph)

Sonne,

I have seene your letter²³ writt unto Mr Secretary Thurloe, and am glad to \doe/ finde thereby, that you are very apprehensive of the carriage of some persons with you, towards your selfe, & the publique affaires, I doe beleeeve there may be some perticuler person[s]²⁴ who are not very well pleased with the present condition of thinges, and may be apt to shew their discontents as they have opportunitie, but this should not make too great impressions in you, tyme and patience may []²⁵ worke them to a better frame of spirit, & bringe them to see tha[t]²⁶ which for the present seemes to be hid from them; espetially if they shall see your moderation and love towards them, whilst they are found in other wayes towards you; which I earnestly desire you to studye \& endeavor/, & that you carry towards them & all men an equall hand, & all that lyes in you, wherof both you & I too shall have the Comfort whatsoev[er]²⁷ the issue & event thereof be; For what you write of more help, I have longe endeavoured it, & shall not be wantinge to send you some further addition to the Councell,²⁸ assoone as men can be found out, who are²⁹ fitt for that trust, I am alsoe thinkinge of sendinge over to you a fitt person who may comaund the north of Ireland,³⁰ which I beleeeve stands in great need of one, and am of your oppinion, that Trevor³¹ Ards³² morgan &c. \Audley Mervin/³³ are very dangerous persons & may be made the heads of a new Rebellion, And therfore I would have you move the Councell that they be secured in some very safe place, & the further out of their owne Countryes the better, I commend you to the Lord & rest.

Your affectionate Father.
Oliver P.

21 Nov. 1655.

[verso] For my sonne Henry Cromwell at Dublyn. Ireland.³⁴

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

21 April 1656: Letter from Oliver Cromwell to Henry Cromwell

Source: British Library, RP 2996 (holograph)³⁵

Harrye,

I have receaved your letters and have alsoe seene some from you to others, and am sufficiently satisfied of your burthen, and that if the Lord bee not with you, to inable you to beare it, you are in a very sad condition. I am glad to heare, what I have heard, of your carriage, studye still to bee innocent; and to answer everye occasion rowle your selfe upon God,³⁶ which to doe, needes much grace. Crye to the Lord to give you a plaine, single heart. Take heede of beinge over jealous, least, least your apprehensions of others, cause you to offend, knowe that uprightnesse will preserve you,³⁷ in this bee confident against men. I thinke the Anabaptists are too blame in not beinge pleased with you, thats their fault, it will not reach you whilst you with singlenesse of heart,³⁸ make [p. 2] the glory of the Lord, your ayme. Take heede of professinge religion without the power, that will teach you to love all whoe are after the similitude of Christ. Take \Care/³⁹ of makinge it a businesse to bee too hard for the men whoe contest with you, beinge over concerned may trayne you into a snare. I have to doe with these poor men and am not without my exercise, I knowe they are weake \#/⁴⁰ because they are soe peremptorie in judginge others, I quarrell not with them but in their seekinge to supplant others, which is done by some in, First \by/ brandinge \them/ with Antichristianisme, and then takinge away their maintenance. Bee not troubled about the late businesse, wee understand the men. Doe not feare the sendinge of any over to you, but such as wilbe consideringe men, lovinge all godly interests, and men wilbe⁴¹ freindes to justice[.]⁴² [p. 3] Lastlye. take heede of studyinge to lay for your selfe the foundation of a great estate. it wilbe a snare to you, they will watch you, bad men wilbe confirmed in coveteousnesse, the thinge is an evil which God abhorrs, I pray you thinke of mee in this. If the Lord did not sustaine mee I were undone, but I live, and I shall live, to the good pleasure of his grace, I finde mercy att need⁴³[.]⁴⁴ The God of all grace keepe you,⁴⁵ I rest

Your lovinge Father
Oliver P.

Aprill the 21th 1656.

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

My love to my deere Daughter (whome I frequently pray for), and to all freindes.⁴⁶

[p. 4] [seal]

For my Sonn Harry Cromwell⁴⁷

26 August 1656: Letter from Oliver Cromwell to Henry Cromwell

Source: British Library, Add. MS 4157, fol. 88r–9v (draft in Thurloe's hand)⁴⁸

Sonne Harry.

Wee are informed from severall hands That the Enemye hath are old Enemye are formeinge designes to invade Ireland aswell as other parts of the nation, Comonwealth, & the \that/ they⁴⁹ have very he⁵⁰ & Spayne have very great Correspondencies with some Cheife men in Ireland, that nation, []⁵¹ \for/ raising a suddeine Rebellion there,⁵² to which we hope whereof we have given notice to our Counsell of Ireland & Therefore \wherefore/ wee judge it very necessary that you take all possible Care to put the forces into such a Condition, as may answere any thinge which may fall out of this kinde, And to that end that you contract the severall Garrisons in Ireland as much as may be, & get a considerable [] marchinge Armye into the Field, in [] \two/ or three bodyes to be layd in such place as may the most proper & Advantagious places for service, as occasion shall require; takeinge alsoe in all other thinges the best care you can to breake the Cavali & prevent the designes & combinations of the Enemye, & a very perticuler regaurd is to be had to the north, where without question buissie & discontented persons are at workeinge towards new⁵³ disturbances; & desire you will herein I doe not doubt but you will comunicate these thinges to Colonel Cowper⁵⁴ to the ende he may be the more watchfull & diligent in lookeinge to his Charge. I rest.

your loveing Father.

[fo. 89r] To my Lord Henry Cromwell for draweing his Army into the Feild. 26 August 1656.

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

10 February 1657: Letter from Oliver Cromwell to Henry Cromwell

Source: The National Archives, SP 25/77, p. 963 (copy recorded in the protectorate's council order books)

<His Highness Lettere to the Lord Harry about Colonel Rugeley.>⁵⁵

Sonne Harry, Colonell Symon Rugeley the bearer hereof haveing beene very active in the Cause of this Commonwealth To the neere Ruine of his Estate as We are enformed and being not so happy as \to/ gett the same repaired by satisfaccion of a very Considerable debt oweing him by the State for his personall services and disbursements: Though the same hath beene much endeavored by him, and something determined in order thereunto by US and Our Councell, Wee doe therefore recommend him to your knowledge, and kindnesse, (as a very deserving Gentleman) for some imployment in Ireland, Which his former services and education (as Wee are also enformed) doe well qualifie him for, whether in a Military or Civill way, And if it shall not bee speedily in your power soe to dispose of him, yet to procure him a Lease of some Convenient Lands in Ireland whereon he may be encouraged to sitt downe with his family, his Condition not admitteing of his Long attendance without being put into a way of action, on which Latter if you shall at present resolve (yet let it be noe prejudice to him) as to the other proposall for an Emloyment soe soone as a vacancy shall give you the advantage I pray be Specially carefull of him as to one to whome a very Good respect is borne by

Your affectionate father
Oliver P:

Whitehall 10 February 1657

13 October 1657: Letter from Oliver Cromwell to Henry Cromwell

Source: British Library, Add. MS 36,652, fos 1r-2v (holograph)

Harry Cromwell /

I have seriously thought of your leatter,⁵⁶ and thanke you for your care expressed in the businesse which I imparted to you under the caution of secrecy; of which I suppose you will heere more heereafter. I am sorrie you

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

wrote me some sad apprehensions of some enimies of yours to bee about mee, truly none dare appeare soe, and I am perswaded if you thinke your B. Fleetwood to be soe, you are mistaken, it were dangerous for you to thinke soe, and Hee not bee soe, and safer for you to be mistaken, for indeed none (I hope) can wronge you with mee, and though all thinges answer not, bee you humble, and patient, place vaw where it truly lyes, viz. in the favor of God, in knowinge him, or rather in beinge knowne of him. if your heart bee truly heere you cannott miscarie[.] I am sorrie you gave mee not one word about Leiftenant Collonel Brafeilds businesse.⁵⁷ I did see my Lord Broghills account therof,⁵⁸ it was as farre, as I beleive the businesse would beare, but yett, though Hee sollicitd a tryall Hee sh[ou]ld⁵⁹ not have had itt. I would not have putt him upon those \men/, or I would have after restored him, I would not beleive 2 carnall men, against one such protestinge inocency, it <minde this>⁶⁰ beinge in a case concerninge my selfe, where it is in my power to pardon without injustice. I am afraid you have erred in this, if you can, I pray you, give a remedie for my sake, and lett the poore man bee handsomly restored[.]⁶¹ my love to your wife and children. I rest,

your loving Father
Oliver P.

October the 13th 1657.

[fo. 2v] For the Lord Harry Cromwell att Dublin theise

[His Highness 13 October 57 Mis-apprehensions Lieutenant Colonel Brayfield]⁶²

1 June 1658: Letter from Oliver Cromwell to Henry Cromwell

Source: *Notes and Queries*, no. 78 (26 June 1869), pp. 591–2 (original missing)

Harry Cromwell – I write not often to you. Now I thinke my selfe ingaged to my deare Cousin Whaley⁶³ to lay my comands upon you that you shew all lovinge respect to his eldest sonn, by his present Ladye,⁶⁴ whom you are to receive in the room of his eldest brother⁶⁵ both into his comand and into your affection. I assure you, though hee bee soe neerly related to us as you know, yett I could not importune on his behalfe soe heartily as now I can

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

upon the scoare of his owne worth, which indeed is as remarkable as I believe in any of ten thousand of his yeares. Hee is excellent in the Latine, French, and Italiane tounge, of good other learninge with partes suitable, and (which compleates this testimonie) is hopefully seasoned with religious principles. lett him bee much with you, and use him as your owne. being most serious in this desire, and expecting a suitable returne there unto,

I rest your lovinge Father,
Oliver P.

My love to your deare wife and to the two babes.

For the Deputy of Ireland.
(Endorsed), 1 June 58. His Highness conserninge Capt. Whaly.

16 July 1658: Letter from Oliver Cromwell to Henry Cromwell
Source: Thomas Carlyle, *The letters and speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. S.C. Lomas (1904), 3:516 (original missing)⁶⁶

For our Dear Son the Lord Henry Cromwell, our Deputy of Ireland

Hampton Court, July 16, 1658.

Son [Harry],
I have received a Petition from Lieut.-Col. Nelson⁶⁷ touching his transporting Irish into Spain, desiring thereby that he may have some satisfaction for his losses sustained in that business out of lands in Ireland. I do believe he hath been a very great sufferer, and that his sufferings have been of some advantage to Ireland, by carrying away those people thence. And I know and so do you, the services of the said Lieut.-Colonel performed in his own person, and how well he hath deserved for the same of the Commonwealth. For those considerations I was, and am, exceeding willing and indeed desirous, that something might be done for him, which might not only repair his losses but be a mark of favour to him. And therefore, although I have not done the thing he desires, as judging it not to be within my power, yet I do most earnestly recommend him unto you, desiring that you and the Council would take him and his case into

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

consideration, and put him in some way that may answer his said losses, without which I believe he and his family will be in a very ill condition. And if you shall agree of any thing to be done by me therein you shall find me most ready to do it. And so I rest,

Your affectionate father,
Oliver P.

- ¹ P. Gaunt (ed.), *The Correspondence of Henry Cromwell, 1655-1659* (Camden Society 5th series, vol. 31, 2007), 14-15.
- ² T.C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland* (Oxford, 1975), 20; Gaunt, 15.
- ³ Gaunt, 16-17.
- ⁴ S.C. Lomas, *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, with elucidations by Thomas Carlyle* (3 vols., 1904), ii. 451.
- ⁵ T. Birch (ed), *State Papers of John Thurloe* (7 vols., 1742)[TSP] vi. 37.
- ⁶ P. Little, 'Cromwell and Sons: Oliver Cromwell's *intended* legacy?', in J. Mills (ed.), *Cromwell's Legacy* (Manchester, 2012).
- ⁷ TSP iv. 348.
- ⁸ TSP iv. 74.
- ⁹ J. Morrill, 'Textualizing and Contextualizing Cromwell', *Historical Journal* xxxiii (1990).
- ¹⁰ TSP iv. 422. For the use of the label 'antichristian' by Baptists in Ireland and England, see C. Gribben, *God's Irishmen: Theological Debates in Cromwellian Ireland* (Oxford, 2007); J. Halcomb, 'A social history of congregational religious practice during the puritan revolution', (PhD thesis, Cambridge Univ., 2010), chapter 5.
- ¹¹ Lomas, ii. 485.
- ¹² C.H. Firth, 'A letter from Oliver Cromwell to his son Henry', *English Historical Review* xvi (1901), 346-7; TSP vi. 505.
- ¹³ TSP vi. 527.
- ¹⁴ TSP vi. 552, 599.
- ¹⁵ TSP vi. 552, 563-4.
- ¹⁶ TSP vi. 599.
- ¹⁷ TSP vi. 599.
- ¹⁸ Gaunt, 331.

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

- ¹⁹ The National Archives (hereafter TNA), SP 25/78, pp. 210, 212.
- ²⁰ Ibid, 182-3.
- ²¹ Ibid, 87-8.
- ²² P. Little, 'The Irish and Scottish Councils and the Dislocation of the Protectoral Union', in Little (ed.), *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (Woodbridge, 2007), 130-5.
- ²³ Letter lost, but perhaps that sent to Thurloe on 31 Oct., which Thurloe mentioned passing on to Cromwell. *TSP*, iv. 190.
- ²⁴ Text lost in margin.
- ²⁵ Illegible deleted word. Perhaps 'inly' or 'july'?
- ²⁶ Text lost in margin.
- ²⁷ Text lost in margin.
- ²⁸ Henry Cromwell's consistent pleas for additions to the Irish council were not met till 1656, when William Bury replaced Robert Hammond, who had died in 1654.
- ²⁹ Hereafter the text is written down the side margin.
- ³⁰ In December 1655 Col. Thomas Cooper was appointed to replace General Robert Venables as commander of the forces in Ulster. He took up his post by the end of January. Gaunt, 87-8; *TSP* iv. 376, 408, 422-3, 433.
- ³¹ Marcus Trevor, later first Viscount Dungannon (1618–1670); *Oxford DNB*.
- ³² Hugh Montgomery, third Viscount Montgomery of the Ards, later first earl of Mount-Alexander (b. in or before 1626, d. 1663); *Oxford DNB*. His case was discussed before the English council throughout November and he was imprisoned from January to April 1656; TNA, SP 25/76, pp. 371-2, 377, 390; SP 63/286, fo. 93; *Calendar of State Papers Ireland 1647-60*, pp. 580-1; Gaunt, 97; R. Dunlop, *Ireland under the Commonwealth* (2 vols., Manchester, 1913) ii. 290-1.
- ³³ Sir Audley Mervin (1603?–1675); *Oxford DNB*.
- ³⁴ In addition to this address from Cromwell, there are three other handwritings on this verso. One, written by one of Henry Cromwell's sons, reads '\21 Nov/ 1655 My grand Fathr to my Fathr'. Below this reads 'Must mean the Ld Lieut. of Ireland. OCromwell 1816', written by Oliver Cromwell (c.1742–1821), later biographer of the protector and his

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

two sons; *Oxford DNB*. After the address a probable third, unknown, hands adds '21 ~~Mar~~ \Nov/ 1655 a Letter fm Ol: Cromwell to his Son Henry Cromwell'.

- ³⁵ Foliation unclear. Here pp. 1–4 indicate the photocopy pages.
- ³⁶ Paraphrase of 'rolle thy way upon the Lord', a marginal note in the 1611 King James Bible providing a literal translation of the original Hebrew for Psalm 37:5.
- ³⁷ Psalm 25:21: 'Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.'
- ³⁸ 'singleness of heart': a new testament phrase found in Acts 2:46, Ephesians 6:5, and Colossians 3:22.
- ³⁹ It is unclear whether this insertion is in Cromwell's hand.
- ⁴⁰ It is unclear whether this insertion is Cromwell's.
- ⁴¹ Read 'that will be'.
- ⁴² i.e., additions to the Irish council. See *TSP* iv. 606, 629, 672.
- ⁴³ Read 'when needed'.
- ⁴⁴ Page torn.
- ⁴⁵ This benediction is a paraphrase of 1 Peter 5:10.
- ⁴⁶ News of the birth of Henry Cromwell's son Oliver had not yet reached London when Cromwell wrote this letter. *TSP* iv. 742-3.
- ⁴⁷ Notes from two later hands follow: 'Ld Protector / (Me) / 21 Aprill / 1656'; and a second calculating the years between 1656 and 1760, 1766, and 1755 respectively, with the final reading '99 years next April'.
- ⁴⁸ Cromwell sent a similar letter of the same date to the Lord Deputy and council of Ireland; Dunlop ii. 618-19.
- ⁴⁹ Or perhaps 'Esp-'.
- ⁵⁰ Charles Stuart.
- ⁵¹ Perhaps 'for'.
- ⁵² For a fuller account of these threats, see Thurloe's letter to Henry Cromwell of the same day: *TSP* v. 349-50.
- ⁵³ Hereafter the text is written down the side margin.
- ⁵⁴ Thomas Cooper, commander of the forces in Ulster. A detailed order was sent to Cooper to secure Ulster on 2 Sept., along with more general orders sent to governors throughout Ireland. See Dunlop ii. 620-3.

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

- ⁵⁵ Simon Rudgeley, parliamentary army officer and administrator from Staffordshire; D.H. Pennington and I.A. Roots (eds), *The Committee at Stafford, 1643-1645: The order book of the Staffordshire County Committee* (Manchester, 1957), *passim*. For similar letters of recommendation for Rudgeley, see, Gaunt, 199; TNA, SP 25/77, p. 693. Rudgeley, along with John Rudgeley and four servants, were granted a pass into Ireland on 19 Feb.; TNA, SP 25/114, p. 65.
- ⁵⁶ Letter missing.
- ⁵⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Brayfield was court marshalled, probably around early September 1657.
- ⁵⁸ Account missing, but mentioned in *TSP* vi. 516, 552, 563, 599.
- ⁵⁹ Worn manuscript.
- ⁶⁰ Written in a later hand.
- ⁶¹ Hereafter the text is written down the side margin.
- ⁶² Written in a later hand, including square brackets.
- ⁶³ Edward Whalley, d. 1674/5, appointed Lord Whalley in 1657, was Cromwell's cousin through his father Richard's marriage to Frances Cromwell, daughter of Sir Henry Cromwell; *Oxford DNB*.
- ⁶⁴ Edward Whalley married twice. Henry Whalley was the eldest son of Edward's second wife, Mary Middleton.
- ⁶⁵ John Whalley, eldest son to Edward's first wife, Judith Duffell, had recently been arrested for duelling with Philip Stanhope, second Earl of Chesterfield. See Edward Whalley's letter to Henry Cromwell on 7 June 1658; Gaunt, 379-80.
- ⁶⁶ A second transcription of the missing original is provided in Dunlop, 2:685. While Carlyle's copy contains more of the letter, Dunlop's punctuation is probably more representative of the original.
- ⁶⁷ John Nelson, appointed lieutenant colonel under William Reeve while in Ireland, governor of Kilmallock and then Ross. In 1652-1653, as governor of Kerry and Desmond, Nelson incurred losses of £2,700 when the king of Spain failed to honour a scheme to transport Irish soldiers to Spain. The English council took up Nelson's case on 22 July 1658 and approved orders for the Lord Deputy and Council to repay Nelson through the estates of delinquent Irish protestants; Dunlop ii. 308-9; TNA, SP 25/78, pp. 761, 779, 788-9; SP 63/287, fo. 195; Gaunt, 274.

WRITINGS AND SOURCES XVI : 'YOUR LOVING FATHER'
LETTERS FROM OLIVER TO HENRY CROMWELL, 1655-1658

Henry Cromwell listed Nelson among Ireland's 'anabaptist' army officers but Nelson does not seem to have caused Henry any problems; *TSP* vii. 21, 115.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Henry Reece, *The Army in Cromwellian England, 1649-1660*. Oxford University Press, 2013. 267 + xvi pp. ISBN 978-0-19-820063-5. Price £63 Hardback.

Reviewed by Dr Patrick Little

There are a small number of important doctoral theses that have not been published as books, and until now Henry Reece's 1981 Oxford DPhil thesis on the army in the 1650s was one of them. After a successful career in publishing, Dr Reece has, on retirement, at last been able to return to his academic researches, and this book is the result. There are two key questions addressed in it: what was 'the character of the army' during the interregnum, as it changed from 'the pressure group politics of 1647 to the institutionalization of its power after 1653?'; and 'how and why did the army that had achieved so much in 1647-9 fail so humiliatingly when it came to defending the cause' in 1660? (pp. 2, 6, 11) In exploring these, and other related topics, the book is divided into three unequal parts. The first considers the 'character' of the army: how it operated, how the soldiers saw themselves, who controlled promotion, and how the internal tensions within it were successfully resolved. The second part looks at the interaction between the army and society more generally: the impact of garrisons and quartering, the regularity of pay and the levying of taxes, the degree of military lawlessness, the way in which garrisons protected religious radicals, and how military rule influenced local government. The final part looks at the collapse of the republic after the death of Oliver Cromwell: the role of the army in dissolving the protectorate and then the disruptive influence of the army in politics in the year before the restoration. It is argued that the army's complete failure to confront George Monck or prevent the return of the king, was caused by the purge of many of its experienced officers in the summer of 1659, and the hopelessness of leaders such as John Lambert, Charles Fleetwood and John Disbrowe, in the face of a political crisis.

Before the death of Oliver, we are told, the army was not a disruptive influence. Natural wastage – retirement and death – meant that many of the firebrands of the 1640s officer corps were no longer involved in the military a decade later. There was an overriding concern to maintain the unity of the army that ran throughout the organisation, and many officers who disagreed with the foundation of the protectorate in 1653 bit their tongues rather than rebel. The dispersed nature of the army, into garrisons across England and

BOOK REVIEWS

Wales, made concerted action more difficult in any case. The benign nature of the army can also be seen in local politics, as officers became JPs and assessment commissioners, and even, in some cases, landowners in their own right. Military rule was low-key and 'best seen as interference rather than centralization' (p. 138), and this made the notorious rule of the Major Generals in 1655-6 less of a burden than is sometimes thought. The Major Generals were a short-lived intensification of a military presence that had become an accepted part of local life since 1649 if not before, and many saw it as a price worth paying for political stability. There were tensions, but these were caused by issues other than resentment of military rule *per se*. The Major Generals were controversial because of the way their rule was funded: 'It was the divisive and highly ineffectual decimation tax that was the innovation, and that caused so much comment' at the time (p. 165). The biggest tension between garrisons and townspeople was not over political interference, disorder or free quarter but over religion, as sects were supported by the military against the conservative Presbyterian ministry favoured by many provincial towns and cities. When it came to the soldiers, what turned them against Richard Cromwell and his parliament in 1659 was fear that they would lose their immunity from prosecution in the law courts, and that Richard, unlike Oliver, was not prepared to curb his parliament's hostility towards the military.

The argument that the army was not a hated burden on the population before 1659 is a compelling one, and it makes sense of other research that is already suggesting that the protectorate, in particular, was a much more stable polity than traditionally thought. It is curious, therefore, that Dr Reece emphasises from the start that his is not a study of 'the army's role in the key political dramas of the interregnum' (p.2), and that he therefore omits a chapter on such matters as the dissolution of the Rump, the foundation of the protectorate and the kingship debates, which would have drawn all these other threads together. The lacuna is all the more obvious as the final part of the book – on the demise of the army and its inability to prevent the crisis of 1659-60 – is in effect a narrative treatment of precisely those 'political dramas' eschewed in the earlier period. As a result, the reader is left with a series of unanswered questions. Why, if the Major Generals were not generally loathed, were the elections in 1656 so contentious, and so many opponents of the army subsequently excluded from parliament? Why, during the kingship debates, were the officer-MPs opposing it routinely

BOOK REVIEWS

characterised as the ‘Major Generals’? Did Lambert really resign, or was he forced out by Oliver Cromwell? What was the personal dynamic between Oliver and men like Fleetwood and Disbrowe – if they were so ineffectual, why did he promote them? Why (as Andrew Barclay has pointed out) were there hardly any serving officers in the protectoral household? And (picking up a point made by Blair Worden) how far did the military dominate the protectoral council, and thus the central government? Perhaps there is a second volume in the pipeline. I do hope so!

Nicole Greenspan, *Selling Cromwell's Wars: Media, Empire and Godly Warfare, 1650-1658*. Pickering and Chatto, London, 2012. 247 + viii pp. ISBN 978-1-848932210. Price £60 Hardback.

Reviewed by Dr Patrick Little

The importance of printed newsbooks and pamphlets in the politics of the civil wars and interregnum is now well-established, with historians talking in terms of ‘image wars’ between competing interests, or debating whether the protectorate was a ‘propaganda state’. Control of the printing presses certainly gave successive regimes an immensely powerful tool with which to influence the general population. In this book, Nicole Greenspan sets out to explore ‘the ways in which the media shaped and marketed war, empire and political policies in the 1650s’ (p. 1). Instead of looking at more obvious, and already well-mined, topics such as the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland or the Anglo-Dutch war of 1652-4, she has taken her examples from less well covered events: the invasion of Scotland 1650-1, the ‘Western Design’ in the Caribbean from 1655, the Anglo-Spanish war that started in the same year, and reactions to events further afield, including the massacre of the Vaudois in northern Italy and the conflict between Sweden and Poland. All these conflicts ‘shared a common thread: all were framed as godly Protestant wars’ (p.8) by the regime itself. For England to be secure, it was argued, the nation needed to unite against the twin threats of Popery and tyranny, not least because the Catholic powers on the continent were supporting the exiled Stuarts. This led to some tortuous logic: monarchy was equated with idolatry, and the Presbyterian Scots were, like the Dutch, seen by republicans as ‘Popish Protestants’ because of their resistance to the English state. Success brought an increased apocalyptic fervour which was in turn challenged by the distinctly patchy record during the protectorate,

BOOK REVIEWS

where the 'Western Design' received a humiliating reverse at Hispaniola, and the Spanish war proved deeply unpopular in England, provoking numerous printed attacks questioning the motives of the regime. In response, there were restrictions placed on the presses, with only the two official newsbooks being allowed after October 1655, and the emphasis changed to 'shaping the news' (p. 98), glossing over defeats and talking up the benefits of an aggressive foreign policy. Thus there developed a process of 'promoting and marketing empire' (p.70) aimed at potential settlers in the Caribbean, as well as celebrations in print and otherwise of the victories of Stainer and Blake against the treasure fleets – even though the benefits were not as great as was claimed. The context of this policy was the wider sectarian strife afflicting Europe, with religious wars in the Baltic and Flanders, and persecution in the Alps, and these received extensive coverage in the newsbooks and pamphlet literature, which again called for strong measures against the threat of Catholic tyranny. Such rallying cries could not disguise the fact that the government's control of the press was incomplete, and it could not hope to begin to suppress public debate and the printing of views hostile to the party line.

This is a well-researched and convincingly argued book, but it is aimed at the specialist and thus assumes a degree of knowledge, both about the historiography of 'print culture' and the intricacies of foreign affairs in this period – which can be arcana for the uninitiated. It might, after all, have been more helpful to include chapters on both Ireland and the Dutch wars to complete the picture, and perhaps to challenge some of what has been said by historians on both subjects.

John F. Barry, *John Hewson: Cromwell's Enforcer*. Melrose Books, Ely, 2013. 265 + x pp. ISBN 978-1-908645-07-04. Price £15.99 Paperback.

Reviewed by Dr Patrick Little

This is a lively, narrative account of the career of one of Oliver Cromwell's less well-known subordinates, Colonel John Hewson. Mr Barry has trawled through all the printed primary sources and has read much of the relevant literature. His delight is obviously the military side of Hewson's career. We are told in loving detail about Hewson's role in the civil wars of the 1640s

BOOK REVIEWS

and the invasion and conquest of Ireland from 1649, which provided the colonel with considerable estates on that island. Ireland was the focus of Hewson's career throughout the protectorate, and his opposition to Henry Cromwell's regime is notorious. After the restoration, Hewson fled to the continent, where he died a fugitive in 1664. The concluding chapters briefly examine Hewson's personality, his family, coat of arms and landed estates. It is interesting, and perhaps reassuring, to note that Mr Barry has not succumbed to the biographer's weakness of falling in love with his subject. Far from it. Hewson is seen as having 'a deeply repulsive side' (p. 199), especially in Ireland; he could be 'extraordinarily rude' to others (p. 201); and 'it is difficult indeed to find any unselfish or generous actions' throughout his career' (p. 201). Hewson, who did not court popularity, might have appreciated the honesty behind these statements, at least!

J.J. Platt and A.K. Platt, *The English Civil Wars: medals, historical commentary and personalities*. 2 vols Spink and Co. 2013 (vol. 1 i-xxxii + 384, vol. 2 i-viii + 424 pp.), ISBN 978-1-907427-15-2 Price £175.00.

Reviewed by John Goldsmith

These two very handsomely produced, slip-cased volumes are a weighty, and expensive, addition to the literature on civil war medals, but they attempt to be far more. As the preface points out there is no modern guide to collecting medals of the period. Interest in coins and medals of the Commonwealth and Protectorate was almost instant as Pepys noted, and George Vertue's notebooks were published in the 18th century, with Henfrey's *Numismata Cromwelliana* being published in 1877. For those seeking a comprehensive catalogue of medals relating to the mid-17th century, Hawkin's *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland* (2 volumes 1885) has previously been, and to some extent remains, the most reliable source, and a constant source of reference for the authors of this work.

Jerome Platt is a collector who became hooked on the period after buying a Dunbar medal forty years ago. It was purchased in the belief that it was an original striking, but research proved that not only to be untrue, but also the extraordinary rarity of the "original" Dunbar medals.

BOOK REVIEWS

This work is not intended for the civil war historians or specialists, rather it attempts to provide a context for collectors of medals of the period. It falls into several principal parts spread over the two volumes, a history of the background to and the progress of the civil wars up to 1651; the medals of Charles 1 from 1625; medals of Oliver Cromwell and family together with biographical commentary; medals of other personalities of the English Civil wars and concludes with a commentary on other civil war personalities for whom no medals exist.

The historical commentaries by Arlen Platt attempt to provide the background historical information for collectors, which is a huge task, gamely tackled. It will fail to satisfy the specialist in 17th century, but it was not intended for that audience. Synthesising a wide range of disparate sources to pull together a readable narrative is a task which has defeated many and hopefully the non- specialist collector will be interested enough to pursue further reading. As the authors are American the book's references can be misleading, for example Antonia Fraser's *Cromwell our chief of men* is cited under the American title, and although Dictionary of National Biography is frequently referred to, it is the older print version which has been used, not the more recent online edition.

For those who may be more familiar with the background history, but are not familiar with the medals of the period, the book is a genuinely valuable addition to the literature. The whole of the story of the Civil War and its aftermath, can, to a significant degree, be illustrated by the medals. Here the boot is on the other foot, and the non- collector could perhaps have been helped a little more to understand the language and methods of those who do collect, but it is far from impenetrable.

Each medal is illustrated, fully described in all its variants divided by its location with a note on its rarity, and a commentary. Although the initial ambition was for the work to be comprehensive, that proved impossible, so *Medallic Illustrations* (which comprises two text volumes and a volume of illustrations) still has the edge, and for some more obscure pieces the researcher has to rely on Hawkins. For Cromwellians the most intriguing medal of the period is the one which sparked this all off, the Dunbar medal, which is discussed in great detail by Platt, and very well illustrated. The commentary pays due regard to the key article on the medal by Marven

BOOK REVIEWS

Lesser in *British Numismatic Journal* (the archive of which is now freely available online) but with illustrations and other related information. Platt's entry extends to well over twenty pages. The catalogue of medals relating to Cromwell and his family is not extensive, but the discussion of each of the known medals is thorough.

The Platts have produced a work which is directed to a particular audience, but in doing so have produced a work of interest to other specialist groups, albeit something that is a bit of a curate's egg.

John Goldsmith is curator of the Cromwell Museum and Press Officer and Trustee of the Association.

Benjamin Woodford, *Perceptions of a Monarchy Without a King. Reactions to Oliver Cromwell's Power*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 243. Price £72.

Reviewed by Prof Peter Gaunt

This thoughtful volume, the author's first book and springing from his doctoral thesis, explores contemporary printed evaluations of and responses to Oliver Cromwell's seemingly monarchical power during the Protectorate and to the monarchical appearance of his Protectoral regime; in particular, it focuses on the kingship question and on the so-called kingship crisis of spring 1657, triggered by parliament's offer of the crown as a key part of its revised written constitution. Although there have been plenty of earlier studies of this kingship crisis, drawing on a range of archival and printed sources, this volume breaks genuinely new ground in its focussed and sustained engagement with printed sources alone, in the process exploring the print culture of the era and the progressive reimposition of state censorship and the regime's control over the presses during the 1650s. Thus the volume not only examines the identity and role of various printers and the circulation of their output during the Protectorate but also reassesses the activities of Secretary of State John Thurloe and the achievements of the security and intelligence service he ran. The volume ranges over both supporters and opponents of the Protectoral regime in general and of kingship in particular and it encompasses both very familiar authors, the 'usual subjects' of the Protectoral era, such as James Harrington, Andrew

BOOK REVIEWS

Marvell, John Milton and Marchamont Nedham, and also less familiar and less studied writers, such as Michael Hawke, Mary Howgill, Walter Goselo and John Lineall.

The opening chapters examine the issue from the regime's perspective, beginning with Cromwell's own speeches pertaining to his title and to kingship and the various speeches and contributions of the delegation or committee of MPs which conferred with him during spring 1657 in the hope of allaying his doubts and persuading him to accept the crown, most of them gathered together and printed three years later, in 1660, as *Monarchy Asserted, to be the Best, Most Ancient and Legall Form of Government*. Subsequent chapters run through the printed views on kingship found in regime's propaganda, including such declarations and speeches of the Protector which it chose to put out at the time, in the government's pet newspaper, *Mercurius Politicus*, edited by Nedham, and in various works of prose or poetry written by authors either seeking employment by the regime or already in its pay. Several broader conclusions emerge from this, some of them found in earlier studies of the Protectorate, others new or newly evidenced here. Thus on the one hand, we are given an image of a controlled and controlling regime, one which ensured that very little directly on the kingship question, including Cromwell's speeches on the matter, appeared in print and so reached wider and perhaps disruptive public attention at the time, either in pamphlet form or via the newspapers, so that most of the speeches and other exchanges between the Protector and MPs did not appear in print until 1660, in *Monarchy Asserted*; Dr Woodford is cautious in his comments on the authorship or editorship of that key work, noting earlier attributions to Bulstrode Whitelocke and Nathaniel Fiennes, but concluding that the evidence is too weak to permit an identification. On the other hand, Dr Woodford explores how the government's message was not always clearly or consistently annunciated. Thus, while largely toeing the official keep-shtoom line on the kingship crisis, Nedham sometimes went a little off-message in *Mercurius Politicus* and Thurloe and his office either did not notice or decided not to intervene, while Nedham in his other printed writings and Milton occasionally let slip veiled criticism of the Protector and his regime.

The remaining chapters, which this reviewer found a little less interesting, go on to explore printed responses to the monarchical nature of the regime

BOOK REVIEWS

and to the kingship issue and controversy of some external and non-regime publications, particularly of three authors or groups of authors: firstly, the pro-Cromwellian monarchists and the supporters of the traditional Stuart monarchy, who generally took different lines on the perceived monarchical nature and drift of the regime and on the possibility of the enthronement of King Oliver; secondly, various religious radicals and authors drawn from the sects of the 1650s, especially Fifth Monarchists such as John Rogers, John Spittlehouse and Anna Trapnel, who were generally outspoken and sometimes vicious in attacking Cromwell, already viewed by them in a dim light and blacker still were he to snatch the crown and so restore an institution which God Himself had destroyed – a view Cromwell shared and which in the end was probably central to his rejection of the new title; and thirdly, the political philosopher James Harrington and his views, as expounded in a slightly disguised and semi-fictionalised manner in *Oceana*, as well as of some non-official responses which Harrington's work attracted at the time.

Overall, this volume provides a detailed and often fresh perspective on contemporary printed views of the Protectorate's monarchical character and the kingship question, as well as on the regime's response to them – a mixture of censoring, supporting or simply ignoring various outputs. En route, it throws valuable light on various aspects of Cromwell, his Protectorate and the print culture of the day. In particular, it assesses some of the complexities of the printing and dissemination of speeches and declarations by Protector Cromwell, exploring when and why texts were printed and the textual variations which sometimes arose between different published versions, all matters which in due course will be taken a lot further and deeper when the new multi-volume edition of Cromwell's writings and speeches appears. In the meantime, while this study offers few revelations and some of its arguments either confirm earlier detailed work – after all, quite a few of the contemporary writers assessed here have attracted a great deal of historical and literary attention – or flesh out existing interpretations, this is a rich, informative and valuable study.

However, there are also a trio of niggles. Firstly, within the introductory chapter Dr Woodford acknowledges that there were important differences between on the one hand the question of whether the Protectorship should remain an elective office (as in the Instrument of Government which

BOOK REVIEWS

established the Protectorate in December 1653) or become hereditary and on the other hand the issue of whether the title of king should be restored and bestowed upon Cromwell – a key difference which, since the appearance of this book, Jonathan Fitzgibbons has stressed even more heavily in an important article on this matter, listed in the bibliography of recent publications found elsewhere in this journal. However, in the ensuing chapters the author tends to blur this distinction and to explore more broadly the questions of and responses to ‘monarchical power’, which becomes something of an umbrella term, itself blurring into the kingship crisis or controversy which in reality lasted for just a few weeks during late winter and early spring 1657. As this volume draws on works published at various stages of the Protectorate, some from 1654, 1655 and 1656 as well as from 1657, a greater subtlety in examining how they related to the changing phases and priorities of the Protectoral regime, including its changing supposedly monarchical overtones, and to the differing manifestations of both the kingship question and the elective versus hereditary debate, would have strengthened the analysis. Secondly, although Dr Woodford is again usually careful to stress at the outset that certain sources, such as Marvell’s ‘First Anniversary’ and ‘Horatian Ode’, Walton’s *Compleat Angler* and Harrington’s *Oceana*, are subtle and complex texts which can be read in different ways and from which a range of meanings can be sought and taken, the ensuing discussion of them sometimes adopts a more limited reading, interpreting parts of the text somewhat narrowly as reflections on Cromwell’s monarchical power, ignoring possible or intended ambiguities, textual uncertainties and mixed messages. Thirdly, the price-tag cannot be ignored. This is not a big book, with just 186 pages of unillustrated text from the beginning of the introductory chapter to the end of the concluding chapter. At a list price of a whopping £72 – though in fact it can be found a little cheaper on certain well-known on-line book sites – readers are being asked to pay for the main text at a rate of nearly 40p per page. It is a shame that this will probably deter many potential purchasers and also limit the sales, accessibility and readership of this interesting and informative study.

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