

## CROMWELLIANA

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‘promoting our understanding of the 17<sup>th</sup> century’

# Cromwelliana

The Journal of

The  
Cromwell Association

*Cromwelliana 2016*

*The Cromwell Association*



2016

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- offers, from time to time grants, awards and prizes to individuals and organisations working towards the objectives stated above.

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## The Cromwell Museum

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The Cromwell Museum is in the former Huntingdon Grammar School where Cromwell received his early education. The Cromwell Trust and Museum are dedicated to preserving and communicating the assets, legacy and times of Oliver Cromwell. In addition to the permanent collection the museum has a programme of changing temporary exhibitions and activities.

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# **CROMWELLIANA 2016**

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Editor: Dr Maxine Forshaw

## **CONTENTS**

Editor's Note	3
Cromwell Day Address (September 2015)	5
The Monarchical Republic of Oliver Cromwell	
By Dr David Smith	
Cromwell Study Day – Cromwell's Religion (October 2015)	14
'The public profession of the nation': Religious Liberty and the English Church under Oliver Cromwell	
By Prof Ann Hughes	
Cromwell Study Day – Cromwell's Religion (October 2015)	27
Was Cromwell an Independent or Congregationalist?	
By Dr Joel Halcomb	
'Our House of Lords' : Oliver Cromwell, the Nobility and the Other House.	44
By Dr Jon Fitzgibbons	
Monarchical Cromwellians and the Restoration	60
By Dr Miranda Malins	
Cromwellian Britain XXVI	80
Oxford	
By Vanessa Moir	

## CONTENTS (cont'd)

Book Reviews	92
<i>The Diary and Papers of Henry Townshend, 1640-1663</i> edited by S Porter, S K Roberts, I Roy	
<i>Reconstructing the New Model Army. Volume 1 – Regimental Lists April 1645 to May 1649</i> by Malcolm Wanklyn	
<i>Famous By My Sword: The Army of Montrose and the Military Revolution</i> by Charles Singleton	
<i>Cavalier Capital: Oxford in the English Civil War 1642-1646</i> by John Barratt	
<i>The King's Irishmen: the Irish in the Exiled Court of Charles II 1649-1660</i> by Mark Williams	
<i>An Alternative History of Britain: The English Civil War</i> by Timothy Venning	
Reviews by Prof Peter Gaunt, Vanessa Moir and Dr Patrick Little	
Bibliography of Books By Dr David Smith	105
Bibliography of Journals By Prof Peter Gaunt	109

## EDITOR'S NOTE

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Welcome to the 2016 edition of Cromwelliana. The theme of the study day at the City Temple, London in October 2015 was 'Cromwell's Religion', organised by the Cromwell Association in partnership with the Dissenting Histories Group. We have articles from two of the contributors to that day – Professor Ann Hughes and Dr Joel Halcomb. Other features include 'Our House of Lords' by Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons which looks at Cromwell's relationship with the Other House, whilst Dr Miranda Malins explores the issues surrounding monarchical Cromwellians at the Restoration. The city of Oxford provides the subject of 'Cromwellian Britain' in this edition of the journal. As Vanessa Moir comments in her article, Oxford is well known as an ancient university city but also played an important role as the Royalist capital during the first four years of the civil war.

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

If you are interested in contributing to future issues of the journal, please contact the Cromwell Association via the email address:  
[editor.jca@btinternet.com](mailto:editor.jca@btinternet.com)

Cover image:

Stained glass window at the White Church, Fairhaven, Lytham St Annes,  
Lancashire

Courtesy of The Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon.



CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

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*By Dr David L Smith*

The last time I gave the address on Cromwell Day was twenty-one years ago, back in 1994. On that occasion, I explored Cromwell's relationship with Parliaments, and considered how far he might be called 'a great Parliamentarian'. Today I want to turn to examine Cromwell's relationship with that other great institution of English government, the monarchy. My aim is not to discuss Cromwell's relationship with Charles I – a subject on which much has already been written – but rather to explore his views on monarchy itself and to look at how far the Protectorate came, in its trappings and ceremonial, to resemble a monarchy.

My title is a conscious allusion to Patrick Collinson's famous description of Elizabethan England as a 'monarchical republic'.<sup>1</sup> This is a term that has stimulated much interest and debate among historians of early modern England over the past couple of decades.<sup>2</sup> When applied to the Cromwellian period it opens up an interesting contrast. Whereas Elizabeth I's regime was a monarchy with traces of a republic, Cromwell's regime was a republic with traces of a monarchy. Indeed, in some ways the term might be regarded as more truly applicable to the Interregnum because, unlike Elizabethan England, it actually was a republic.

It seems that in the 1640s Cromwell's hostility was directed against Charles I personally rather than against the monarchy as an institution. John Morrill and Philip Baker have described him as 'a reluctant Regicide, and a firm monarchist': they have stressed the importance of distinguishing between 'Cromwell's attitude to Charles himself and his attitude towards monarchy', and also between 'his view of the role of that king and of the monarchy itself in the settlement of the nation'.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting that whereas Cromwell came to regard Charles I as a 'man against whom the Lord hath witnessed', and was the third signatory on Charles's death warrant, he was not appointed to the parliamentary committee that drew up the act for the abolition of the kingship.<sup>4</sup>

Cromwell's lack of hostility towards monarchy per se helps to explain why, during the Interregnum, he was so frequently willing to contemplate the possibility of a monarchical settlement. In the aftermath of the battle of Worcester, there was intense speculation that Cromwell might shortly

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

---

become king,<sup>5</sup> and in December 1651, if Bulstrode Whitelocke is to be believed, Cromwell argued that ‘if it may be done with safety and preservation of our rights, both as Englishmen and as Christians, that a settlement of somewhat with monarchical power in it would be very effectual’.<sup>6</sup> According to Whitelocke, nearly a year later, in November 1652, Cromwell asked him ‘What if a man should take upon him to be king?’; to which Whitelocke claimed he replied that ‘as to your own person the title of king would be of no advantage because you have the full kingly power in you already’.<sup>7</sup>

Contemporary speculation about whether Cromwell might assume the kingship was especially intense during the later weeks of Barebone’s Parliament. In November 1653, Edward Hyde wrote that he believed Cromwell would ‘speedily possesse himselfe either under the title of Protectour of the 3 kingdome[s], or of King, of the sole power’.<sup>8</sup> Shortly afterwards, the Venetian Secretary in London, Lorenzo Paulucci, reported that ‘some private persons and even preachers have suggested the nomination of a king’,<sup>9</sup> while another newsletter writer ‘heartily wish[ed] the noble general would take the absolute power and disposing of the kingdoms into his own hands; for until he doth so, and that he manage the business by the sole rule of his own judgment, there is no hope, that affairs will be in a better condition.’<sup>10</sup> There is evidence that the early drafts of the Instrument of Government would have made Cromwell king rather than Lord Protector.<sup>11</sup> It is possible that Cromwell was amenable to the idea, but that many of the Army officers opposed it.<sup>12</sup> According to Allart Pieter van Jongestall, one of the Dutch diplomats in London, ‘Cromwell would fain have the title of a king, but the officers of the army were against it.’<sup>13</sup>

Speculation continued throughout the Protectorate that Cromwell might shortly become king. In February 1654, a London newsletter reported that ‘our judges and great lawyers many of them having declared this protectorship not to be consistent with the law doeth make our councill now think of the necessity of crowning him; which I beleieve will certainly be done next parliament, if not afore.’<sup>14</sup> Certainly the possibility appears to have preoccupied Cromwell. In May 1655, Colonel Herbert Price reported that he had it ‘from a hand that professeth to know’ that ‘Cromwells common discourse is that the three Kingdomes cannot be governed any other way but by a King, and that he professeth to be very sorry for it, and it



CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

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is from that meere necessity which he seeth unavoidable that he must assume the power and title'.<sup>15</sup> The following month, the Swedish envoy Peter Julius Coyet composed a judicious assessment of the arguments for and against Cromwell's becoming king, and concluded that on balance those in favour outweighed those against.<sup>16</sup> Christer Bonde, the Swedish ambassador, expressed a similar view when he wrote in July 1656 that 'it seems likely that in the course of this Parliament his highness will become king'.<sup>17</sup>

Because Cromwell's fight in the Civil Wars had been against Charles I personally rather than against monarchy institutionally, he had little difficulty in contemplating the possibility of reviving the monarchy during the Interregnum. This in turn helps to explain why the second Protectorate Parliament's formal offer of the kingship in February 1657 presented him with such a difficult dilemma, and why he hesitated for over two months before declining it. It is possible that, as Jonathan Fitzgibbons has argued, Cromwell's dilemma was made greater by the omission from the offer of the hereditary principle, to which Cromwell was known to be averse.<sup>18</sup> As he contemplated the offer, Cromwell's concerns came to focus on the issue of whether it was 'necessary' for him to accept the kingship. By 13 April, he was coming to the view that 'there is nothing of necessity in your argument' and that 'all those arguments from the law are...not necessary, but are to be understood upon the account of conveniency'. He was 'ready to serve not as a king, but a constable'. He argued that 'the providence of God hath laid aside this title of king providentially *de facto*' and, after stating memorably that 'I will not seek to set up that, that providence hath destroyed, and laid in the dust; and I would not build Jericho again', he concluded that 'I do not think the thing necessary'.<sup>19</sup> When he finally declined the offer on 8 May, it was because he was 'not to be convinced of the necessity of that thing...to wit, the title of King, as in itself so necessary as it seems to be apprehended by yourselves'.<sup>20</sup>

It is possible, however, that Cromwell had other motives as well. He may have sensed that he was more powerful as Lord Protector than he would become as king. According to the Venetian ambassador in Paris, Francesco Giustiniani, Cromwell's ambassador told him that 'they wanted his master to take the title of King, but he seemed reluctant to do this since he wields more authority in his present position than he would as King'.<sup>21</sup> It is also

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

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probable that the strong opposition of a number of senior Army officers strengthened Cromwell's feeling that it was not necessary for him to become king.<sup>22</sup>

Cromwell's decision came as a shock to many of his contemporaries. As late as 27 April, Francis Russell informed Henry Cromwell that his 'father begins to come out of the cloudes, and it appears to us that he will take the kingly power about him'.<sup>23</sup> Four days after Cromwell's decision, William Jephson reported that 'really his Highnesse's refusal of the parliament's petition and advise hath soe amaz'd his most reall servants, as I know not what to write or say concerning it'.<sup>24</sup> Jephson's surprise was shared by the French ambassador, Bordeaux, who wrote that even on the day before the announcement the general expectation was that Cromwell was about to become king.<sup>25</sup>

It may be that Cromwell himself did not regard the matter as closed. One Royalist agent wrote that Cromwell 'privately assured his monarchical friends that as soon as he can weed out those that opposed him he will then revive the business'.<sup>26</sup> James Waynwright reported in March 1658 that 'our state here is for a King, and none fitter then his Highness', and that 'perhaps in a very short time we shall crown his Highness King of Great Britain'.<sup>27</sup> The following month, the Venetian Resident, Francesco Giavarina, believed that a Parliament would shortly be summoned 'expressly to raise the Protector to the throne'.<sup>28</sup> A newsletter of May 1658 recorded that 'the two capps of crimson and purple velvet, worne onely by princes, and now making up by order of the M[aste]r of the Wardrobe, make the people talke largely of Kingship'.<sup>29</sup>

That newsletter account illustrates how far Cromwell had come to be surrounded by ceremonial, iconography, and other trappings that were quasi-monarchical. Roy Sherwood and Laura Knoppers, and more recently Paul Hunneyball, Andrew Barclay and Kevin Sharpe, have shown how the Protectoral Court resembled the court of a monarch.<sup>30</sup> As Barclay has written, 'Cromwell did not need to be king to have a court and, even without the formal title of king, he could still rule like one'.<sup>31</sup> This was apparent from the start of the Protectorate in the ceremonial that accompanied the reception of foreign diplomats. When the Venetian Secretary, Paulucci, had his first formal audience with the Lord Protector in

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

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January 1654, he wrote that Cromwell ‘may be said to assume additional state and majesty daily, and lacks nothing of royalty but the name, which he is generally expected to assume when he wants to’.<sup>32</sup>

The ceremonial that attended the opening of Parliament likewise became steadily grander and more reminiscent of the monarchy. For example, in January 1658, when Cromwell opened the second session of the second Protectorate Parliament, he went to the newly created Other House where ‘he took his place under a superb canopy, all the lords and judges being arranged there according to the ancient custom of that house’. Cromwell ‘proceeded from Whitehall to Westminster by water and thence by coach to the palace in great pomp’.<sup>33</sup> By the later years of the Protectorate, the opening of Parliament had become almost indistinguishable from its traditional form.

A similar trend was evident in the two ceremonies that marked Cromwell’s inauguration as Lord Protector. Whereas in the first, in December 1653, he wore ‘a black suit and cloake’, and took an oath in the Court of Chancery, sitting on a ‘chair of state’,<sup>34</sup> Laura Knoppers has written that ‘the second Cromwellian inauguration appropriated and revised monarchical forms, transforming a sacred rite into a civil ceremony’.<sup>35</sup> For this ceremony, in June 1657, ‘a large place’ was ‘raised and prepared at the upper end of Westminster Hall’, ‘in the midst’ of which, ‘under the great window, a rich cloth of estate [was] set up, and under it a chair of state’ – Edward I’s coronation chair – ‘placed upon an ascent of two degrees’. Cromwell was invested with ‘a robe of purple velvet, lined with ermine, being the habit anciently used at the solemn investiture of princes’, together with a Bible, a sword and ‘a scepter, being of massie gold’.<sup>36</sup> Giavarina observed that in receiving these ‘royal ornaments’, Cromwell ‘lacked nothing but the crown to appear a veritable king’.<sup>37</sup>

That missing crown finally appeared posthumously in Cromwell’s state funeral, based on that of James VI and I in 1625.<sup>38</sup> His effigy was ‘vested with royal robes, a scepter in one hand, a globe in the other, and a crown on the head’.<sup>39</sup> Giavarina reported that ‘the effigy of the late Protector...was borne on a car, wearing a crown on its head and holding the sceptre and orb in its hands, with every other token of royalty’.<sup>40</sup> In Knoppers’ words, ‘the Cromwellian funeral procession’ drew ‘upon the full visual resources of

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

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monarchical ceremony...Ceremony, effigy, and funeral hearse clearly imitated previous monarchical forms'.<sup>41</sup>

How, in conclusion, should we interpret all of this evidence? Is it a case of Cromwell being willing to meet monarchy half-way? Can we discern symptoms of Cromwell's continuing lack of hostility towards monarchy per se? Or are we seeing a clever Cromwellian compromise that was intended to underline his acceptance of traditional forms and so broaden support for his regime? Or was he simply seeking to live up to contemporary expectations about the kind of trappings that should attend a head of state, whether republican or royal? As Jason Peacey has recently suggested, the Cromwellian regime's attempts to achieve 'grandeur' should not necessarily be equated with the monarchical.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps characteristically of Cromwell, it may well have been a complex blend of all of these things. As so often with Cromwell, a 'both...and' approach generally proves more fruitful than an 'either...or' one. In the evidence I have been considering this afternoon, we can see the multi-layered quality of Cromwell's thinking and his political behaviour: his capacity to kill several birds with one stone and to fulfill a number of objectives through the same action. To adapt his own words, no man rises so high as he who knows how to pursue several agendas simultaneously. Perhaps nowhere was this more evident than in Cromwell's willingness to embrace the apparent paradox of ruling over what can justly be called a monarchical republic.

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays* (London, 1994), chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> See especially John F. McDiarmid (ed.), *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson* (Aldershot, 2007); and Peter Lake, 'The "Political Thought" of the "Monarchical Republic of Elizabeth I," Discovered and Anatomized', *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), 257-87.

<sup>3</sup> John Morrill and Philip Baker, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Sons of Zeruiah', reprinted in David L. Smith (ed.), *Cromwell and the Interregnum* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 17-36, at pp. 17, 19.

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

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- <sup>4</sup> S.C. Lomas (ed.), *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, with Elucidations by Thomas Carlyle* (3 vols., London, 1904) (hereafter cited as Lomas-Carlyle), 1:399; *Commons Journal*, 6:132-3.
- <sup>5</sup> C.H. Firth (ed.), *The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow* (2 vols., Oxford, 1894), 2:9; Leo Miller (ed.), *John Milton and the Oldenburg Safeguard* (New York, 1985), p. 49.
- <sup>6</sup> Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs* (4 vols., Oxford, 1853), 3:374 (10 December 1651).
- <sup>7</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, 3:471 (November 1652); Ruth Spalding (ed.), *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke, 1605-1675* (British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, new series, 13, Oxford, 1990), p. 281.
- <sup>8</sup> Bodleian, MS Clarendon 47, fo. 115r (Edward Hyde to Henry Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, 25 November 1653).
- <sup>9</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (1653-4), p. 155 (Lorenzo Paulucci to Giovanni Sagredo, 2/12 December 1653).
- <sup>10</sup> Thomas Birch (ed.), *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esq.* (7 vols., London, 1742) (hereafter cited as *TSP*), 1:628 (newsletter, 9/19 December 1653).
- <sup>11</sup> Lomas-Carlyle, 3:487-8 (Cromwell to the Army officers, 27 February 1657).
- <sup>12</sup> The National Archives, PRO 31/3/92, fo. 104r (Bordeaux to Brienne, 19/29 December 1653).
- <sup>13</sup> *TSP*, 1:644 (Jongestall's despatch, 23 December 1653/2 January 1654).
- <sup>14</sup> *TSP*, 2:64 (newsletter, 2 February 1654).
- <sup>15</sup> G.F. Warner (ed.), *The Nicholas Papers*, 2 (Camden 2nd series, 50, 1893), 295 (Herbert Price to Edward Nicholas, 10/20 May 1654).
- <sup>16</sup> Michael Roberts (ed.), *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell's Court, 1655-1656* (Camden 4th series, 36, 1988), pp. 75-7.
- <sup>17</sup> Roberts (ed.), *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell's Court*, pp. 317-18.
- <sup>18</sup> Jonathan Fitzgibbons, 'Hereditary Succession and the Cromwellian Protectorate: the Offer of the Crown Reconsidered', *English Historical Review*, 128 (2013), 1095-1128; Lomas-Carlyle, 2:422-3 (Cromwell to the first Protectorate Parliament, 22 January 1655).
- <sup>19</sup> Lomas-Carlyle, 3:57-8, 63, 70-1 (Cromwell to representatives of the second Protectorate Parliament, 13 April 1657).

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

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- <sup>20</sup> Lomas-Carlyle, 3:127 (Cromwell to representatives of the second Protectorate Parliament, 8 May 1657).
- <sup>21</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (1657-9), p. 32 (Francesco Giustiniani to the Doge and Senate, 17/27 March 1657).
- <sup>22</sup> TSP, 6:281 (John Thurloe to Henry Cromwell, 12 May 1657).
- <sup>23</sup> Peter Gaunt (ed.), *The Correspondence of Henry Cromwell, 1655-1659* (Camden 5th series, 31, 2007), p. 264 (Francis Russell to Henry Cromwell, 27 April 1657).
- <sup>24</sup> Gaunt (ed.), *Correspondence of Henry Cromwell*, p. 269 (William Jephson to Henry Cromwell, 12 May 1657).
- <sup>25</sup> The National Archives, PRO 31/3/101, fos. 207-13 (Bordeaux to Brienne, 10/20 May 1657).
- <sup>26</sup> Bodleian, MS Clarendon 55, fo. 6r (William Rumbold to George Langley, 25 May 1657).
- <sup>27</sup> Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Sixth Report* (London, 1877), p. 443 (James Waynwright to Richard Bradshaw, 12, 19 March 1658).
- <sup>28</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (1657-9), p. 189 (Giavarina to the Doge and Senate, 16/26 April 1658).
- <sup>29</sup> C.H. Firth (ed.), *The Clarke Papers*, 3 (Camden 2nd series, 61 [recte 60], 1899), 150 (newsletter, 15 May 1658).
- <sup>30</sup> Roy Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell* (Willingham, 1977); Roy Sherwood, *Oliver Cromwell: King in all but name, 1653-1658* (Stroud, 1997); Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645-1661* (Cambridge, 2000); Paul Hunneyball, 'Cromwellian Style: The Architectural Trappings of the Protectorate Regime', in Patrick Little (ed.), *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 53-81; Andrew Barclay, 'The Lord Protector and his Court', in Patrick Little (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell: New Perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 195-215; Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven and London, 2010), chapters 16-19.
- <sup>31</sup> Barclay, 'The Lord Protector and his Court', p. 210.
- <sup>32</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (1653-4), p. 177 (Paulucci to Sagredo, 21/31 January 1654).
- <sup>33</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (1657-9), pp. 157-8 (Giavarina to the Doge and Senate, 22 January/1 February 1658).

CROMWELL DAY ADDRESS 2015  
THE MONARCHICAL REPUBLIC OF OLIVER CROMWELL

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- <sup>34</sup> *Severall proceedings of state affaires*, 221 (15-22 December 1653), pp. 3498-500; *Mercurius Politicus*, 184 (6-22 December 1653), p. 3053.
- <sup>35</sup> Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, p. 123. Cf. Sharpe, *Image Wars*, pp. 518-19.
- <sup>36</sup> *Mercurius Publicus*, 369 (25 June – 2 July 1657), pp. 7881-2.
- <sup>37</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (1657-9), p. 82 (Giavarina to the Doge and Senate, 3/13 July 1657).
- <sup>38</sup> Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, pp. 133-6; Sharpe, *Image Wars*, pp. 520-1.
- <sup>39</sup> *Mercurius Politicus*, 443 (18-25 November 1658), p. 30.
- <sup>40</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (1657-9), p. 269 (Giavarina to the Doge and Senate, 26 November/6 December 1658).
- <sup>41</sup> Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, pp. 143, 145.
- <sup>42</sup> Jason Peacey, 'The Street Theatre of State: The Ceremonial Opening of Parliament, 1603-60', in Chris R. Kyle (ed.), *Managing Tudor and Stuart Parliaments: Essays in Memory of Michael Graves* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 155-72, at pp. 165-72.

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CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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‘THE PUBLIC PROFESSION OF THE NATION’: RELIGIOUS  
LIBERTY AND THE ENGLISH CHURCH UNDER OLIVER  
CROMWELL

*By Prof Ann Hughes*

Oliver Cromwell's career amply illustrates the tensions within Puritanism between liberty and national reformation. A good place to start is with the controversy over the printing of his letter to parliament following the royalist surrender of Bristol in September 1645. In a postscript, Cromwell praised the unity of the godly in the city as an example to the nation:

Presbiterians, Independents, all had here the same spirit of faith and prayer ... they agree here, know no names of difference; pitty it is, it should be otherwise any where: All that beleeeve have the reall unity which is most glorious, because inward and spirituall in the body and to the head.

As for a unity of external ‘formes (commonly called uniformity)’, Cromwell offered a pious, but limited hope for the future, that ‘every Christian will for Peace sake, study and doe as far as Conscience will permit’, but there should be no compulsion forcing people to accept particular models of church government or worship: ‘from brethren in things of the mind, we looke for no compulsion, but that of Light and reason’. For general issues of morality and order, Cromwell clearly accepted the authority of the civil power:

In other things God hath put the sword into the Parliaments hand, for the terrour of Evill doers, and the praise of them that doe well, if any plead exemption from it, he knows not the Gospel.

But authority over tender consciences should be limited, although in his reference to ‘brethren’ Cromwell indicated this was not a call for complete religious ‘toleration’, but for ‘liberty of conscience’ for those who agreed on some (undefined) fundamentals of faith.

All this may seem unremarkable to modern readers, but in the autumn of 1645 Cromwell's intervention was partisan and deeply controversial, in a



## CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015

### CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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context where religious matters were increasingly dividing parliamentarians. The House of Commons did not print Cromwell's postscript along with his account of the city's surrender, so its subsequent circulation was unauthorised. 'Presbyterian' sympathisers in the Commons, committed to a reformed national or comprehensive church, feared support for religious liberty (frequently denounced as disorderly 'toleration') would sabotage their plans, while Cromwell was associated with their 'Independent' rivals. On his copy of the postscript, the bookseller George Thomason, a Presbyterian, had written indignantly that it had been printed by the 'Independent partie and scattered up and downe the streets last night but expressly ommitted by order of the house'.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the Protectorate, we can discern a search for balance between Cromwell's instinct for unity, and his undoubted sympathies for those who supported liberty for tender consciences alongside, or outside a national church. Without discussing all the conflicts and divisions of the 1640s, it is worth providing a brief outline of developments before 1653. For most opponents of Charles I in the early 1640s, a reformed national church was a clear priority. The civil war offered an opportunity, at last, to complete the reformation of a church that was 'but halfly reformed', retaining too many remnants of 'popery' in its ceremonial liturgy, and its lack of an effective structure for religious and moral transformation of the people. Initially, many opponents of the king would have accepted a modified episcopal structure, but dissatisfaction with current bishops, and rising expectations of more radical change, made such a solution rapidly unfeasible. Historians are divided over the strength of support in England for a Presbyterian church of classes and synods before 1640 but it was the obvious alternative within reformed Protestantism, despite the frequent practice amongst English Puritans of various forms of 'voluntary religion', particularly meetings of the godly for prayer, fasting and discussion of sermons. Relatively orthodox Puritans came to disagree over many issues, including the role of secular authority in ecclesiastical affairs, the relationship between individual congregations and broader, national structures, and the balance of power within congregations between officers (elders and ministers) and the people as a whole. By the mid-1640s parliamentary Puritans were bitterly divided over the nature of the national church, and the degree of liberty to be afforded alongside it. The collapse of episcopal government and the exhilarating freedom of the 1640s encouraged a range of religious

## CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015

### CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

experimentation and speculation, as significant numbers in London and in parliament's New Model Army came to reject any national church, and to challenge many positions previously taken for granted through attacks on infant baptism, Calvinist predestinarianism and the need for an educated, ordained clergy. For many, anxiety about error, heresy and separatism intensified support for an effective and compulsory national church on Presbyterian lines, but relatively respectable Puritans came to worry more about the potential for authoritarian Presbyterian clericalism. The Congregationalists or 'Independents', with whom Cromwell was most closely associated, were mostly conventionally Calvinist in doctrine, and their leaders were highly educated clerics; they did not believe in total separation from a national church, but worked for more autonomy for their gathered congregations alongside parochial structures. In the mid-1640s, however, they were more worried by Presbyterian aggression than by the more radical separatist sects. Simply put, it proved easier to unite against aggressive episcopalianism, dubbed 'prelacy', than to agree on a structure or framework to replace it.

Thus the Westminster Assembly, the synod called by parliament to draw up plans for religious reformation, worked very slowly to establish a broadly Presbyterian church structure. It was hampered by its own divisions, by the growth of radical separatism, and increasingly by anxiety within the parliament itself about clerical dominance over lay people and lay authority. By the summer of 1648 a Presbyterian church settlement, albeit one under ultimate lay control, had been enacted by parliamentary legislation, but it had only been practically (and partially) implemented in London and Lancashire. The drive for extensive liberty of conscience had become associated particularly with the New Model Army, so that Pride's purge of the parliament in December 1648 not only paved the way for the trial and execution of the king, but also marked the defeat (ultimately to prove final) of a compulsory Presbyterian church. The legislation was never repealed but no government after 1648 gave a Presbyterian church effective backing so that classes and regional associations operated only on a voluntary basis in a few committed areas.

Shortly after Pride's Purge, representatives of the more radical wings of the victorious 'Independent' coalition met at Whitehall to debate religious policy. Army officers, civilian radicals or Levellers, and their ministerial allies

## CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015

### CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

disagreed in particular over the magistrate's power in religion: some would allow none at all, some allotted to civil authority a 'negative' power to combat error and heresy, but others had a more positive understanding that the magistrate's role was also to encourage true religion, as well as broader moral and social reformation. It is with this more generous approach that Cromwell's regime is most effectively understood. In early 1649 it was summed up in the religious clauses of the *Officers' Agreement of the People* (a compromise between the Leveller and the Army programme) delivered to the Commonwealth or 'Rump' parliament. As David Smith has shown, the *Officers' Agreement* is the crucial model for the religious clauses of the 1653 *Instrument of Government* that established the Protectorate. The *Officers' Agreement* accepted the need for some national church, or, as they deemed it, a public profession, with a maintained clergy, albeit that they argued for further reformation:

It is intended that the Christian religion be held forth and recommended as the public profession in this nation, which we desire may, by the grace of God be reformed to the greatest purity in doctrine, worship and discipline according to the word of God; the instructing the people thereunto in a public way, so it be not compulsive; as also the maintaining of able teachers to that end ...is allowed to be provided ...the maintenance of which teachers may be out of a public treasury and we desire, not by tithes.

The *Instrument of Government*, similarly, declared:<sup>2</sup>

That the Christian religion, as contained in the scriptures, be held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations; and that, as soon as may be, a provision, less subject to scruple and contention, and more certain than the present, be made for the encouragement and maintenance of able and painful teachers, for the instructing the people, and for discovery and confutation of error, heresy and whatever is contrary to sound doctrine; and until such provision be made, the present maintenance shall not be taken away or impeached.

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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In both 1649 and 1653 a 'public profession' was thus held to be important, but in neither programme was it to be compulsory. The *Officers' Agreement* laid down:

That to the public profession so held forth none be compelled by penalties or otherwise; but only may be endeavoured to be won by sound doctrine, and the example of a good conversation.

Consequently, there would be broad religious liberty for Protestants: 'such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ ... shall be protected in the profession of their faith and exercise of their religion ... in any place except such as shall be set apart for the public worship'. This was a very open definition of acceptable doctrine, although the simple phrase 'faith in God by Jesus Christ' was presumed to exclude Socinianism and other unorthodox positions on the Trinity and the divinity of Christ.

The parallel clauses in the *Instrument* were virtually the same: no one was to be compelled to follow the public profession, by penalties or otherwise; but 'endeavours' were 'to be used to win them by sound doctrine, and the example of a good conversation'. Those who professed 'faith in God by Jesus Christ' were to be protected in the exercise of their religion. The *Instrument*, again following the *Officers' Agreement*, excluded popery and prelacy from protection. In practice, as we shall see, prelacy seems to have a more precise meaning than simple support for episcopacy, probably involving an exclusive belief in episcopal government and ordination, and a denial of the validity of alternative arrangements.<sup>3</sup>

The *Instrument of Government* perhaps demonstrates slightly less confidence in religious reformation than the 1649 Agreement which, of course, was never enacted. There is less emphasis on positive endeavours for reformation, although both documents stressed the duty to combat heresy. And by 1653 the prospect of replacing the compulsory maintenance of the public ministry through tithes had become a very distant hope. The drafters of the *Instrument* worried that a voluntary system would be unable to support a learned preaching ministry, and they had been influenced by the arguments used against the moves in the Barebones parliament to abolish tithes, alleging that this would threaten property rights in general.

## CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015

### CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

How would we describe the 'public profession' at the point when Cromwell became Lord Protector? The basic organisation by parish had survived the civil war and the abolition of episcopacy, as had, amongst a majority of Puritans, a commitment to a distinct and qualified ministry, maintained, for good or ill, by tithes. Perhaps more surprisingly, lay patronage arrangements for the presentation of clergy to parish livings, remained in place, although the extensive patronage rights of the crown, the bishops and convicted royalists had fallen to the 'state', and hence, effectively, to the Protector. The vast majority of the population still attended their parish church, even though the Rump parliament had revoked the laws requiring such attendance. In most areas, however, there were formal congregations gathered around educated, ordained clergy, and more separatist groups including a variety of Baptist churches. Itinerant preachers, known as Quakers, were just beginning to gather supporters into radically distinctive congregations. The Congregational churches had a complicated, perhaps even contradictory relationship with a national church. Full membership of such churches was confined to 'visible saints' who had made a formal declaration of their faith and assurance, but most Congregationalists regarded their churches as beacons to encourage reformation of the general population. As many as 80% of the pastors of Congregational churches were willing to take public or state money (usually derived ultimately from tithes), some as salaried lecturers, but many through simultaneous service as parish ministers. The Suffolk minister John Philip emigrated to New England but returned to his parish living in 1641, gathering a congregation there in 1650 while continuing to serve his broader flock until his death in 1660. Ministers like Philip saw the gathered church as an exemplar for reformation in their wider parish community.<sup>4</sup>

As already suggested, no uniform organisation beyond the parish church had survived the disputes of the 1640s, although avowedly Presbyterian classes and other less specific voluntary associations of ministers operated in several cities and counties. This meant that there was no official national body for approving and ordaining new ministers, or organising their appointment to specific livings. Royalist and religiously offensive clerics had been largely removed in the 1640s so there was unprecedented upheaval in parish personnel. In the 1640s and early 1650s a variety of measures had been passed to augment (improve) ministers' livings using confiscated church and royalist property; ambitious in theory, these measures were

## CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015

### CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

disorganised or even chaotic in practice. The Commonwealth regime had conducted thorough surveys of parishes and their clergy, but little had been done in practice to combine small parishes or divide large ones in order to improve the pastoral effectiveness of the church, or to reduce clerical poverty. John Owen, a leading Congregationalist, close to Cromwell, had led discussions in the Rump parliament to sort all this out, but nothing had yet been legislated or implemented. As far as doctrine was concerned, the Westminster Assembly's 'Confession of Faith' and its associated catechisms had the best claim to represent orthodoxy, but Owen had also worked with Presbyterian and Congregational colleagues to formulate a more minimalist set of 'fundamentals' that all who profited from religious liberty could assent to. These discussions had foundered on resistance from those, particularly Baptists, who feared that a definitive list of agreed doctrines might prove too restrictive. A 'Blasphemy' Act of August 1650 directed against 'atheistical, blasphemous and execrable opinions' was inconsistently and patchily enforced.

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In the early months of the Protectorate, Cromwell and his Council of State passed three crucial ordinances on religion that brought a degree of clarity to the public profession. An ordinance establishing 'Trustees for the Maintenance of Ministers' dealt with the tangled confusion surrounding augmentation of livings. They succeeded in organising more secure and regular payments, albeit to fewer clergymen, and made progress on dividing and uniting parishes. Two further measures dealt with the quality of the clergy. A national committee of 'Triers', more properly commissioners 'for the Approbation of Public Preachers', was established to approve new ministers and those appointed to new livings in parishes or to lectureships maintained out of public funds. Finally 'Ejectors', local lay committees, advised by ministers, were set up at county level to eject unsatisfactory or 'scandalous' ministers. These two measures were based on Owen's proposals discussed under the Rump, but they reversed his initial plans which were for national 'ejectors' and county-based 'Triers'. Cromwell was justifiably proud of his ecclesiastical legislation; as he declared to his first parliament in September 1654, in particular reference to the 'Triers':

It hath endeavoured to put a stop to that heady way, touched of likewise this day, of every man making himself a minister and a

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

preacher. It hath endeavoured to settle a way for the approbation of men of piety and ability for the discharge of that work. And I think I may say, it hath committed that work to the trust of persons, both of the Presbyterian and Independent judgments, men of as known ability, piety, and integrity, as I believe any this nation hath ... they go upon such a character as the Scripture warrants to put men into that great employment; and to approve men for it, who are men who have received gifts from Him that ascended up on high.<sup>5</sup>

Cromwell's own flexible and open-minded approach to the 'public profession' facilitated participation by godly ministers across a broad spectrum of opinion – Congregationalists close to Cromwell were prominent amongst the thirty-eight 'Triers': Thomas Goodwin, John Owen, Hugh Peters, William Greenhill and Philip Nye were all nominated. But the moderate Stephen Marshall also served alongside the Presbyterians Thomas Manton, Obadiah Sedgwick and Anthony Tuckney, with Henry Jessey and John Tombes representing respectable (Calvinist and non-separating) Baptists. A similar pattern is seen in the local ministers who advised the committees for scandalous ministers. The London representatives, for example, included Presbyterians Roger Drake and Lazarus Seaman, as well as Congregationalists such as Philip Nye and Matthew Barker. By 1657 Cromwell, surely exaggerating, claimed of the 'Triers', that, 'there hath not been such a service ... since the Christian religion was professed in England'. They had not relied merely on humane learning, but would not:

admit a man unless they be able to discern some of the grace of God in him .... Such a man, whose good life and conversation they could have a very good testimony of, from four or five of the neighbour ministers who knew him ... if man be of any of these judgements [Presbyterian, Independent, Anabaptist], if he have the root of the matter in him, he may be admitted.<sup>6</sup>

The testimonials referred to by Cromwell provide further evidence of the broad participation by English ministers in the work of the national church. In many cases long friendship was more important than more recent divisions over church government or 'toleration'. The Presbyterian Edmund Calamy signed a testimonial for William Greenhill, minister of a Congregational church in Stepney; early in his career Greenhill had been

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

Calamy's assistant at Bury St Edmonds, and was one of the ministers who lobbied, unsuccessfully, to save the life of Calamy's friend, the Presbyterian minister Christopher Love (executed for royalist plotting in August 1651); but Greenhill was also a radical millenarian, with ties to 'fifth monarchist' congregations in the mid-1650s. In another remarkable example, Robert Skinner, the titular Bishop of Oxford, active as a secret ordainer of ministers throughout the interregnum, also signed a testimonial for one minister examined by the 'Triers', albeit in his less controversial guise as a provincial parish minister.<sup>7</sup>

That significant numbers of aspirant ministers were episcopally ordained throughout the interregnum by an energetic minority of bishops, suggests again the breadth of the Cromwellian church settlement and reinforces the view that Cromwell did not identify 'prelacy' with episcopalianism as such. Fincham and Taylor believe that John Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary of state, must have known what was going on. Yet no one was ever prosecuted. This might have been a simple by-product of religious liberty, or a conscious reaching out to former political enemies, or, most intriguingly, a deliberate policy to balance Presbyterian influence within the national church. As Cromwell complained to the Corporation of London in 1654, 'I have had boxes and rebukes on one hand and on the other, some envying me for Presbytery, others as an in-letter to all the sects and heresies in the nation'. Throughout his Protectorate Oliver Cromwell exercised his own vast religious patronage, and dealt with claims for augmentations to livings and changes to parish boundaries mostly through open-minded responses to local lobbying and petitioning. He could be as sympathetic to Presbyterians, or even Episcopalians, as he was to Congregationalists. Certainly the ex-royalist Earl of Bridgewater thought it worthwhile seeking Cromwell's approval for his presentation of the episcopalian Nicholas Bernard (and protege of James Ussher) to a Shropshire living through an attack on the Presbyterian incumbent Robert Porter as a Scottish-sympathiser and enemy of the Protectorate. Cromwell responded that he was willing to leave the nomination to Bridgewater as long as he intended the 'real good of the people' although in the end Porter survived until the Restoration.<sup>8</sup> Such an openness to local and personal networks was at the heart of all effective early modern governance. Alongside the involvement of a wide range of people in the practical functioning of Cromwell's church, we could also point to the importance of campaigns for broader moral and social



CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

reformation. Again, people who had very diverse views on theology or church government could agree on the need for the civil power to crack down on sexual misbehaviour, swearing and alehouses.<sup>9</sup>

There were, of course, limits to the success of Cromwell's church. Attempts to define the 'fundamentals of the faith' continued after 1653 but were never successful. In the first Protectorate parliament, Owen proposed a rather more restrictive version of Calvinist orthodoxy than he had advocated during the Rump; in recent months he had become more anxious about 'Arminian' tendencies challenging predestinarian theology through an enlarged stress on human agency. Richard Baxter, just becoming prominent in national debates, was one of Owen's fiercest critics and discussions were still going on when the parliament was dissolved. While more separatist and radical groups welcomed indeterminacy, the lack of a defined public confession intensified the anxieties of orthodox people worried about the rise of the Quakers or the persistence of Socinian views.<sup>10</sup> A second consequence of religious liberty, seen by some as a weakness, was the inability of congregations, whether gathered churches or in parishes, to discipline refractory members. Many 'Presbyterian' classes or voluntary associations of ministers, as pioneered by Baxter, supported individual pastors in catechizing their flock and in excluding the ignorant or the immoral from the sacrament of the Lord's supper. But in a religious marketplace there were ultimately no effective sanctions if someone rejected the authority of the minister, elders or church. The Cheshire minister Adam Martindale explained how a young man in his parish, facing discipline for pre-marital sex, simply went and joined the local Quakers. Similarly, the gathered church at Stepney where William Greenhill was the pastor, initiated disciplinary proceedings against one Mrs Browne of Limehouse for her 'disorderly walking', in attending John Goodwin's church, apparently because she shared his unorthodox views on salvation. The Stepney members were unsure how to proceed against her, and, in any case, in the context of religious liberty they had no power to prevent her leaving. In 1657 a former member who had become a Quaker 'disturbed' the church, but again little could be done about it.<sup>11</sup>

In Cromwell's second parliament, the conservative moves to amend the constitution on monarchical lines, also modified the religious settlement. Many had been outraged by an apparently blasphemous re-enactment of

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

Christ's entry into Jerusalem by the young Quaker James Nayler, and disturbed by the uncertainty of how such behaviour could be dealt with. The old soldier Philip Skippon argued that failure of the parliament to act would mean that 'sin and judgement' would lie at the parliament's doors:

These Quakers, Ranters, Levellers, Socinians, and all sorts, bolster themselves under thirty-seven and thirty-eight of Government which, at one breath, repeals all the acts and ordinances against them. I heard the supreme magistrate say, 'It was never his intention to indulge such things', yet we see the issue of this liberty of conscience. It sits hard upon my conscience; and I choose rather to venture my discretion, than betray conscience by my silence.<sup>12</sup>

Nayler suffered severe corporal punishment and imprisonment, while the 'Humble Petition and Advice' was a significant rewriting of the *Instrument*:

That the true Protestant Christian Religion, as it is contained in the Holy Scriptures ... be held forth and asserted for the public profession of these nations; and that a Confession of Faith, to be agreed by your Highness and the Parliament ... be asserted, held forth and recommended to the people of these nations, that none may be suffered or permitted, by opprobrious words or writing, maliciously or contemptuously to revile or reproach the Confession of Faith.

Only ministers who agreed with the doctrine defined in any future 'Confession' were to receive public money, but dissent from the worship or government of the church would not disbar them. Religious liberty was now to be clearly restricted to those Protestants who believed in the Trinity: 'in Jesus Christ his eternal Son, the true God, and in the Holy Spirit, God co-equal with the Father and the Son, one God blessed for ever'. For these orthodox Protestants, however, there was still to be no compulsion to adhere to the 'public profession', provided, (in a reference particularly to the Quakers) that, 'they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others, or the disturbance of the peace'. An additional clause, also aimed at the Quakers, called for punishment on those who disturbed ministers in their congregation, and for new laws to be made if the existing ones were ineffective.<sup>13</sup> Again, no 'Confession of Faith' was agreed, although

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

Congregationalists developed one for themselves at the 1658 Savoy Conference; this was perhaps intended to have a broader influence on a national church. The provisions of the 'Humble Petition', in any case, preserved a remarkably flexible 'public profession' and a wide degree of religious liberty. This loose, but functional and functioning settlement, did not long survive the Protectorate. As the Restoration approached, Presbyterians experienced a false dawn when the Convention of 1660 confirmed the 1640s legislation establishing their national church two days before its dissolution. Between 1660 and 1662 a 'prelatical' episcopal church was constructed excluding many former Presbyterians as well as Congregationalists, Quakers and other sects. As John Coffey has written: 'during the quarter century after 1660 England witnessed a persecution of Protestants by Protestants without parallel in seventeenth-century England'.<sup>14</sup> Presbyterians as well as more radical Protestants had reason to regret the passing of the Cromwellian 'public profession'.

- <sup>1</sup> For the printed postscript: BL. 669 f. 10 (38), Thomason's copy.
- <sup>2</sup> For the 'Officers' Agreement' and the 'Instrument', see S.R. Gardiner, ed. *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, revised, 1962), pp. 369-70, 416; David L. Smith, 'Oliver Cromwell, the first Protectorate Parliament and religious reform', *Parliamentary History*, 19 (2000), pp. 38-48.
- <sup>3</sup> I owe this last point to Elliot Vernon.
- <sup>4</sup> Joel Halcomb, 'A Social History of Congregational Practice during the Puritan Revolution', Ph. D (Cambridge University, 2009).
- <sup>5</sup> W.C. Abbott (ed.) *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1937-47), vol. 3, p. 440.
- <sup>6</sup> Abbott, ed. *Writings and Speeches*, vol. 4 p. 495.
- <sup>7</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, MS Comm III/3, register of admissions to livings by the Triers, 138; Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor, 'Vital statistics: episcopal ordination and ordinands in England, 1646 -60', *English Historical Review* 126 (2011).
- <sup>8</sup> Fincham and Taylor, 'Vital statistics'; for the Bernard example, and many others, see Hughes, 'Public Profession'.

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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- <sup>9</sup> See especially Bernard Capp, *England's Culture Wars: Puritan Reformation and its Enemies in the Interregnum 1649-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- <sup>10</sup> See particularly here: Tim Cooper, *John Owen, Richard Baxter and the Formation of Nonconformity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).
- <sup>11</sup> Hughes, 'Public Profession'; Stepney Church Book, Tower Hamlets Local History Library, W/SMH/A/1/1 ff. 192r, 193r.
- <sup>12</sup> J.T. Rutt, ed, *Diary of Thomas Burton*, 4 vols. (London, 1828), 1, pp. 24-5.
- <sup>13</sup> Gardiner, ed. *Constitutional Documents*, pp. 454-5
- <sup>14</sup> John Coffey, 'The Toleration Controversy during the English Revolution', in Durston and Maltby, eds. *Religion in Revolutionary England*, pp.42-68, at p. 60.

This essay was originally given as an informal lecture at a day school organised by the Cromwell Association in October 2015, and retains much of its original character. Material has been drawn from my chapter "The public profession of these nations": the national Church in Interregnum England' in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby, editors, *Religion in Revolutionary England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006) pp. 93-114, where more specific references can be found.

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## CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015

### CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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#### WAS CROMWELL AN INDEPENDENT OR CONGREGATIONALIST?

*By Dr Joel Halcomb*

Colin Davis's groundbreaking 1990 article on 'Cromwell's religion' was, like so much of his work, brilliantly historiographic. Historians from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were confident that Cromwell was a puritan, an Independent, the leader and defender of the civil war sects. And it was confidence, Davis explained, that helps us understand why Cromwell's religious beliefs remained comparatively understudied up until the 1980s. There were, of course, warning signs that things might be more complicated. The great Samuel Gardiner was able to describe Cromwell as 'the foremost Independent of the day', and then within a few pages of that assertion point out that 'in the sectarian sense indeed, Cromwell never attached himself to the Independent or any other religious body'.<sup>1</sup> During the second half of the twentieth century, historians shifted from the first of Gardiner's assertions towards the second. Thus, for Christopher Hill, 'Cromwell [could] be identified with no sect'.<sup>2</sup> This shift was made possible by the emergence of a more nuanced and complex picture of revolutionary religion. By 1990, 'puritanism' had become contested as a useful term.<sup>3</sup> 'Independency' was deemed confusing and problematic.<sup>4</sup> And leading historians like Hill forcefully argued that religious denominations were a later development; religious affiliation was fluid during the revolution.<sup>5</sup> Davis appropriated these historiographic developments and 'reclaimed Cromwell from the denominational straightjacket into which well-meaning Victorians had placed him'.<sup>6</sup>

Part of the reason Davis's chapter proved so powerful was the way in which he connected the brutal realities of the surviving evidence of Cromwell's faith and practices with this new picture of revolutionary religion:

Cromwell left no programmatic statements, no credos on which we can base a description of his faith and its personal or social meaning. There are...no confessional records. ... Cromwell left no journal, no diary revealing the nature of his spiritual self-examination. No records of his reading nor of the contents of his library.<sup>7</sup>

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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We are simply incapable of answering basic questions about how he worshipped. But for Davis, this is not an anomaly. Cromwell was an anti-formalist. Just as political constitutions were 'dross and dung' in comparison to Christ, just as he was not 'wedded and glued to forms of government', so too he sought to transcend earthly churches and religious forms for a higher, more pure spirituality and submission to God's revealed providence.<sup>8</sup> Others were quick to pick up Davis's thesis. John Morrill later recalled the chapter having a 'stunning' impact when it appeared.<sup>9</sup> David Smith republished Davis's chapter in an important edited collection on Cromwell.<sup>10</sup> Most importantly, perhaps, Davis's arguments found wholesale acceptance by Morrill, who has stressed in his work Cromwell's 'antiformalism, his liturgical informality, his unsystematic soteriology, his lack of doctrinal coherence'.<sup>11</sup>

Accurate though this picture may be, it remains inherently muddy. It reduces his religious beliefs down to a core, fundamental Trinitarianism and a powerful and dynamic providentialism.<sup>12</sup> Yet Cromwell was a puritan, a preacher, a pastor (or at least pastoral in his letters), and a leader of the Church (as Protector). This is hardly the normal résumé of someone ill-defined in their beliefs. This article is a small attempt to further contextualize some of Cromwell's beliefs. By returning again to the question of whether or not Cromwell was an Independent we can, I hope, explore how we might better understand his ecclesiastical position. We can also offer up a potential, less spiritual, explanation for his apparent ecclesiastical anti-formalism.

I

We should start with the last historian to argue forthrightly that Cromwell was an Independent: Robert Paul. In his 1955 biography, *The Lord Protector*, Paul had already grasped some of the problems that Davis and others would later flag up. Paul admitted we have no clear evidence that Cromwell was ever a member of any Independent church, and he recognized the importance of Cromwell's participation in the Church of England before the civil wars. Nonetheless, Paul went on to claim that Cromwell's identity as an Independent could be drawn from his army experience (where, he claims, his troops formed a gathered church), from his associations, and by his ideas of toleration. According to Paul, Independency was the only

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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ecclesiastical option of the period that 'could embrace in equality all shades of Puritan opinion'.<sup>13</sup> Working from Paul's arguments, this article will re-examine the evidence for Cromwell's church membership and then attempt to contextualize his statements on the church and church polity. As a note on terms, Independency is used here interchangeably with congregationalism. Congregationalism was a democratic gathered church movement, similar to baptists and separatists, where membership was restricted to 'visible saints', those who were deemed likely to be of God's elect.

To what extent then was Cromwell's formative religious experience and strongest religious connections with the gathered churches? Cromwell's pre-civil war puritanism is iconic, but while the evidence we have of his pre-civil war faith is suggestive of a preference for gathered church style religion, it remains inconclusive. His 1638 letter to Mrs St John is a classic example of a puritan conversion narrative (or, more accurately, a relation of religious 'experiences'): 'Oh, I lived in and loved darkness, and hated the light; I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true', but now 'my soul is with the congregation of the firstborn, my body rests in hope, and if here I may honour my God either by doing or by suffering, I shall be most glad'.<sup>14</sup> This is one of the single most important sources we have for Cromwell's personal beliefs and it has been used to explain his self-confidence, his dynamism, and his great rise to power. However, it is worth pointing out that this, the earliest description we have by Cromwell of his own faith, expresses his salvation, his sainthood, within the context of a congregation of saints: 'my soul is with the congregation of the firstborn'. This is paraphrasing the Geneva version of Hebrews 12:23. In a letter full of quotations taken from both the Geneva and King James bibles, it is instructive that 'congregation of the first borne' resonated more with Cromwell than the King James version of this text: 'the general assembly and church of the firstborn'.<sup>15</sup> The Geneva translation is more democratic and local in its tone, the King James translation is more institutional and ecclesiastical. Cromwell, instinctively or not, preferred the former.

Turning to Cromwell's actions, John Morrill has pressed the real possibility that Cromwell was planning to emigrate to the 'howling wilderness' (as Cromwell later called it) of New England in the 1630s, where congregationalism was establishing itself as a permanent fixture of Anglo-

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

American protestantism. When Cromwell sold up his properties in Huntingdon in 1631 he moved to St Ives where he became a tenant of Henry Lawrence, who had just become a patentee of the Saybrook venture that established the Connecticut colony. We know that by 1635 Lawrence was planning to move imminently and it is very possible that Cromwell was part of a group of godly émigrés that Lawrence was organizing for that colony.<sup>16</sup> As intriguing and suggestive as this possibility is, there is very little evidence that lay puritan exiles in either Holland or New England arrived with firm views on congregationalism. Most, it seems, encountered congregational practices for the first time upon arrival.<sup>17</sup>

Further compelling but inconclusive evidence comes from Andrew Barclay's recent re-examination of evidence pertaining to Cromwell's early life. Barclay uncovered a handful of different sources which claimed that on the eve of the civil war Cromwell participated in puritan 'conventicles', entertained preachers at his house, and even preached himself. All of these stories were given long after the fact, and from hearsay, but Barclay has shown that enough details can be verified to suggest some kernel of truth behind them.<sup>18</sup> What might we make of this evidence? Paul, aware of some of this evidence, was too quick to conflate pre- civil war conventicles with separatism or a gathered church.<sup>19</sup> 'Conventicle' was often used as a hostile description of extra-parochial puritan 'conferencing'. These meetings brought together local godly men and women for religious fellowship, including discussing sermons, prayer, sharing religious experiences, and occasionally preaching.<sup>20</sup> On the eve of the civil wars, conventicles and godly conferences were common throughout the country; gathered churches, on the other hand, were rare.

None of the pre- civil war evidence, therefore, can be used to confidently claim that Cromwell was a congregationalist or separatist before the civil wars. But, we can at least argue that Cromwell was a convinced puritan, that he placed a high value on lay spirituality, and that he probably supported more lay involvement in the church. He was hardly a separatist. He promoted godly lectureships within the Church and he baptized his children within the Church. He is, therefore, probably best described as a puritan nonconformist prior to the English civil wars.



CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

During the civil wars Cromwell's life as a soldier was more nomadic and this was bound to have had an impact on the types of engagement he could have with a church. Nonetheless, it is here that we find the most direct evidence for Cromwell being involved in a gathered church. Richard Baxter, the famous pastor from Kidderminster, claimed in his extensive memoirs that Cromwell's troops gathered themselves into a church. At some point at the start of the war – Baxter is not clear – he was invited to be a pastor over Cromwell's troops. Baxter's account of this invitation appears within the context of his first visit to the New Model Army in Leicester after the battle of Naseby. At Leicester, he found the army in a shocking state. While many of the soldiers and officers were 'honest, sober, Orthodox Men, and others tractable ready to hear the Truth, and of upright Intentions', 'a few proud, self-conceited, hot-headed Sectaries had got into the highest places, and were Cromwell's chief Favourites, and by their very heat and activity bore down the rest, or carried them along with them, and were the Soul of the Army'.<sup>21</sup> Baxter blames himself for this situation:

And I reprehended my self also, who had before rejected an Invitation from Cromwell: When he lay at Cambridge long before with that famous Troop which he began his Army with, his Officers purposed to make their Troop a gathered Church, and they all subscribed an Invitation to me to be their Pastor, and sent it me to Coventry: I sent them a Denial, reproving their Attempt, and told them wherein my Judgment was against the Lawfulness and Convenience of their way, and so I heard no more from them: And afterward meeting Cromwell at Leicester he expostulated with me for denying them. These very men that then invited me to be their Pastor, were the Men that afterwards headed much of the Army, and some of them were the forwardest in all our Changes; which made me wish that I had gone among them.<sup>22</sup>

This is, as far as I am aware, the only known reference for Cromwell's troops (or any troops) organizing themselves into a gathered church. For Robert Paul, this passage was crucial: 'It is reliable evidence that he [Cromwell] not only embraced the Independents' ecclesiastical position early in the Civil War, but also set about the curious task of forming his troop of horse into an Independent Church – a kind of militant congregation'.<sup>23</sup> Paul even cites the index of Baxter's *Reliquiae* for confirmation of the point: 'he

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

[Cromwell] invites Mr Baxter to be Chaplain and Pastour to his Regiment when he was forming it into a Church'.<sup>24</sup> Although this is clearly a very important passage, there are some problems with Paul's particular conclusions.

First and most obviously, the index entry and Paul's interpretation do not agree with Baxter's account. The phrasing in the index is not Baxter's, it is that of Matthew Sylvester, the editor who published Baxter's memoirs after his death.<sup>25</sup> Baxter's own words are clear: '*his Officers* purposed to make their Troops a gathered Church' (my emphasis). The impetus to gather a church was coming from the officers, not from Cromwell, according to Baxter. This is an important distinction, which both Paul and Sylvester overlooked. Baxter, as we shall see below, was writing precisely. Secondly, to what extent can we trust Baxter's account? Most of the surrounding contextual information in Baxter's account is accurate.<sup>26</sup> But Cromwell is the villain in Baxter's *Reliquiae*. He is repeatedly described by Baxter as the leader of the sectarian party. Perhaps it is too much to accuse Baxter of blatantly fabricating a first-hand account, but he does have a tendency to misinterpret, misunderstand, and to bend the truth – this is exactly the sort of story we might expect to emerge from Baxter's narrative bias.

Is there any corroborating evidence? This is the only known explicit reference to troops gathering a church in the army. This should make us suspicious. Nonetheless, similarly ambiguous evidence exists from around the time of Baxter's story. In October 1643, for instance, the presbyterian Colonel Edward King in Boston 'imprisoned divers of his [own] officers, and diverse of the townspeople, and some of Lieut. Gen. Cromwell's troopers for assembling together at a private meeting'.<sup>27</sup> John Lilburne described these as private meetings; Thomas Edwards, the presbyterian heresiographer, described them as 'an unlawful conventicle at an unseasonable time in the night'.<sup>28</sup> Neither account describes these meetings as a church gathering. A congregational church had been gathered in the town at some point before August 1645, when they wrote to the congregational church in Great Yarmouth, but it is unclear when this church first formed.<sup>29</sup> Many within the Eastern Association army may have been aware of church gatherings taking place in 1641–1643.<sup>30</sup> The congregational minister William Bridge travelled with Colonel Miles Hobart's troops in the summer of 1643.<sup>31</sup> Bridge had been pastor to the exiled congregational

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

church in Rotterdam, which had close ties with the congregational church in Arnhem, where Henry Lawrence was a member after he left St Ives.<sup>32</sup> Between November 1642 and June 1643, Bridge was involved in gathering a church of returned exiles in Norwich and Great Yarmouth. One of the Norwich congregationalists enlisted in Captain Thomas Ashwell's company in October 1642.<sup>33</sup> All this information lends plausibility to the notion that some within the Eastern Association army were aware of church gatherings, but Baxter's story still stands alone in claiming troops gathered their own churches.

Paul also implies that Cromwell's recruitment policies were in line with gathered church membership policies.<sup>34</sup> Most of his evidence will be familiar to any student of Cromwell. In August 1643, Cromwell instructed members of the Suffolk committee 'If you choose godly honest men to bee captains of Horse, honest men will follow them'.<sup>35</sup> Later, in 1657 he recounted a conversation with John Hampden, probably dating from after the battle of Edgehill: 'your Troops said I, are most of them old decayed Servingmen and Tapsters, and such kind of Fellows; and said I, their Troops are Gentlemens Sons, younger Sons, and persons of qualitie ... truly I did tell him, you must get men of a spirit... of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as a Gentlemen will go'. For Cromwell these were 'such men as had the fear of God before them, and made some Conscience of what they did, and from that day forward I must say to you, they were never beaten'.<sup>36</sup> Cromwell clearly preferred godly officers, but godliness was not the exclusive criteria, nor was this policy exclusively Cromwell's, as Clive Holmes has shown. It was part of the wider recruiting activities of the Eastern Association under the earl of Manchester. Their vision of godly officers was ecumenical. It comprehended, as Manchester explained, all who 'love Christ in sincerity' though 'differing in judgement to what I profess'.<sup>37</sup> But they also sought men who could and would serve the cause. Experienced soldiers were sought, but not at the expense of immoral behaviour. Dedication to the cause was valued above specific religious beliefs. Cromwell told Major-General Crawford, 'Sir, the State, in choosing men to serve them, takes no notice of their opinions, if they be willing faithfully to serve them, that satisfies'.<sup>38</sup> Experience, dedication, and godliness were the core, for the ultimate purpose was to create an effective army.<sup>39</sup> The emphasis on military ability and political dedication moved a significant step away from the test for visible sainthood found in most gathered churches. These recruitment

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

policies were explicitly pan-denominational: presbyterians, independents, and baptists can all be found within the Association's ranks. And, crucially, as mentioned above, we have no evidence other than from Baxter that the army organized itself into any ecclesiastical form.

The army's reputation for Independency was polemical. Manchester's reputation for employing godly officers and enforcing strict discipline hit the London press in the autumn of 1643. Early on this was presented positively: 'The best meanes to have a growing...Army, is to appoint...Commanders of godly and religious lives, ... and such more eminently are the...Officers under this Noble Earle'.<sup>40</sup> But this reputation quickly became a liability. When Cromwell mentioned his 'lovely cumpanie' to Oliver St John in September 1643, he was defending them from accusations of Anabaptism.<sup>41</sup> By September 1644 Cromwell was complaining to Valentine Walton:

[we] desier to referr the many slaunders heaped upon us by false tongues, to God, whoe will in due tyme make itt appeare to the world, that wee studye the Glory of God, the honor, and libertye of the Parliament, for which wee unannimously fight ... wee are sayd to bee factious, to seeke to maintaine our opinions \in Religion/ by force, which we detest, and abhor, I professe I could never Satisfie my selfe of the justnesse of this warr but from the Authority of the Parliament to maintaine itt.<sup>42</sup>

Here we see the stress on honest godliness, broadly defined as studying the glory of God, and fighting for the liberty and authority of parliament, but these traits are mobilized against growing accusations that the army was Independent or sectarian.

Such accusations only increased. Sir John Hotham described Cromwell's troops as being 'a company of Brownists, Anabaptists, Factious, inferiour persons'.<sup>43</sup> Robert Baillie, a Scottish Presbyterian, wrote that 'all sectaries who pleased to be soujors, for a long time casting themselfe from all other [armies], arrive under [Manchester's] command'.<sup>44</sup> In the dispute with Crawford and Manchester after Marston Moor, deponents mocked Cromwell's defence of his officers as 'godly' men, 'having the name of a godly man', and 'the title of godly pretious men'; ... 'If you looke upon his

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

owne regiment of horse see what a swarme ther is of thos that call themselves the godly; some of them profess they have sene vissions and had revellations'; the regiments of Russell, Montigue, Pickering, Rainsborough – 'all of them professed Independents'.<sup>45</sup> Accusations of religious radicalism invariably came from Cromwell's opponents.

Baxter also believed these accusations. Baxter was quick to draw a correlation between the success of the army and its godly soldiers, for he ultimately saw religious extremism within the army as the downfall of the nation. Writing of his encounter in Leicester after Naseby, he declared: 'They most honoured the Separatists, Anabaptists, and Antinomians; but Cromwell and his Council took on them to joyn themselves to no Party, but to be for the Liberty of all'.<sup>46</sup> This quote brings us back to Baxter's story of Cromwell's troops gathering a church. Both quotations appear on the same page of Baxter's *Reliquiae*. Baxter claimed that Cromwell and the council refrained from joining themselves to any party, then blamed Cromwell's officers for gathering their troops into a church. While his comments about gathering a church remain striking in context, this policy of withholding affiliation fits well with what we know of army recruitment. Surely non-affiliation was essential for leading a wide diversity of men, and the resultant culture helps explain Cromwell's emphasis on liberty of conscience throughout his career.

We see the result of these policies most clearly, perhaps, in Cromwell's famous letters to parliament after Naseby and the fall of Bristol. 'Honest men served you faythfully in this action', he wrote to speaker Lenthall in June 1645, 'Sir they are trustye, I beseech you in the name of God not to discorage them ... Hee that venters his life for the libertye of his cuntrie, I wish Hee trust God for the libertye of his conscience, and you for the libertye Hee fights for'.<sup>47</sup> And after Bristol, 'Presbiterians Independentes all had here the same spiritt of faith & prayer, the same pretence & answer, they agree here, know no names of difference'.<sup>48</sup> Contemporaries did know the difference, of course, but differences could be overlooked when fighting against a common enemy. Cromwell consistently and passionately insisted on liberty for tender consciences, but this should not distract us from the pragmatic value or necessity of this position.

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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II

Compelling evidence, therefore, consistently aligns Cromwell closer with Independent, congregational, or at least democratic forms of puritan nonconformity. But the evidence for Cromwell being a member of a gathered church is ultimately never forthcoming. And, throughout the civil wars he probably came to see the value, even necessity, of not publicly aligning himself with one church movement. If the evidence (or Cromwell) refuses to confirm his 'Independency', to what extent did he express himself in line with congregational or independent ideas?

We can begin with Cromwell's ideas about sainthood, for it was the foundation of his vision for liberty of conscience and the most fundamental principle behind congregational ecclesiology. Writing to Lord Wharton on 2 September 1648 Cromwell exclaimed, 'When we think of our God, what are we. Oh, His mercy to the whole society of saints, despised, jeered saints! Let them mock on. Would we were all saints. The best of us are (God knows) poor weak saints, yet saints; if not sheep, yet lambs, and must be fed'.<sup>49</sup> Cromwell valued saints, honest godly men, poor Christians more than other humans. He spoke of saints as a 'whole society', as set apart from, and in conflict with – they were 'despised, jeered' – the rest of the world. This tendency is, and should surely be understood as, essentially puritan, but Cromwell's language resonates very strongly with congregational writings on church membership. For example, in the *Apologitcall Narration*, the most famous publication by the congregational 'dissenting brethren' in the Westminster Assembly, congregational members were described as 'such as all the Churches in the world would ... acknowledge faithfull' and faithfulness was judged by 'that latitude as would take in any member of Christ, the meanest, in whom there may be supposed to be the least of Christ'.<sup>50</sup> Cromwell could also express sainthood in a fundamentally Reformed, or Calvinist, formula. Speaking before parliament on 17 September 1656 Cromwell claimed that it was faith in Jesus Christ and 'walking in a profession answerable to that faith' that made you one of the people of God.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, most congregationalists argued that visible sainthood, and therefore entrance into the church, could only be measured by an orthodox profession of faith, evidence of repentance from known sins, and continuing godly behaviour. Cromwell's vision of the 'people of God' merely restated this basic Reformed theological position. Perhaps

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

most importantly, by the early mid-1650s this expression of church membership had become a cornerstone of arguments promoting accommodation and unity between presbyterians and congregationalists.<sup>52</sup>

Cromwell's statements on the church and the godly were also clearly rooted in the universal invisible church, as Davis has pointed out,<sup>53</sup> and they were often set as an ideal against the bitter realities of Britain and Ireland's divisive visible church denominations. This tendency can be found in Cromwell's writings and speeches throughout the interregnum. His impulse was always aimed at unity and purity. In his speech before the Nominated Assembly in July 1653, a speech that John Morrill thinks is one of Cromwell's most authentic and honest statements, Cromwell instructs the assembly to 'be faithfull with the saints', 'be pittifull & tender towards all, all, though of different Judgements ... I beseech yow (but I thinke I need not) have a care of the whole flocke; Love the Sheep, Love the Lambs, love all, Tender all, cherish and countenance all'. And in another section, 'I mean when I say the people of God, I meane the large Comprehencion of them under the severall Formes of Godlines in this Nacion'.<sup>54</sup>

Such quotations could be multiplied ad nauseam. For Cromwell, the godly were spread throughout the several forms of the civil war puritan church movements. 'Be they those under Baptism, be they those of the Independent judgment simply, and of the Presbyterian judgment', he instructed parliament in 1656, 'in the name of God, encourage them, countenance them'.<sup>55</sup> And again, 'whoever hath this Faith [in Christ], let his Form be what it will; he walking peaceably, without the prejudicing of others under another Form'.<sup>56</sup> In these statements, Cromwell consistently values the universal invisible church of Christians, that is the heavenly unity of all saints through the spirit, above any particular visible church on earth. He was not against these visible churches, these 'forms'; rather he focused on a higher, more spiritual form, one more attached to the universal invisible church. In that sense he was not 'anti-formal', if by that we mean against ecclesiastical forms: 'Who ever hath this Faith, let his forme be what it will'. Ultimately, such forms, or visible churches, were united through the spirit. The congregational position could be considered similar to this. For congregationalists, there was no universal visible church on earth. There were only particular visible churches, who were united to Christ through the spirit. These particular visible churches might even be reformed parish

## CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015

### CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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churches, presbyterian congregations, or even some tolerant baptist churches.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, what can we say about Cromwell's expression of religious toleration?<sup>58</sup> Cromwell's ideas of liberty of conscience developed through his army experience, yet they were also expressed through Reformed pneumatology, that is in the Spirit's guidance of Christians towards truth, though godly fellowship and spiritual growth. Honest, poor weak Christians strove towards truth and understanding, but never fully reached it in their earthly life. 'We are very apt, all of us,' he claimed at Putney, 'to call that faith, that perhaps may be but carnal imagination, and carnal reasoning'.<sup>59</sup> But 'God is not the author of contradictions. The contradictions are not so much in the end as in the way'.<sup>60</sup> Divisions and contradictions were overcome through humility, and being 'pittifull & tender towards all ... though of different Judgements'.<sup>61</sup> The Spirit must be given time to work on the hearts of men. Pity was earned through peaceable living and charity towards other saints. Writing after the fall of Bristol, Cromwell stressed that, 'As for being united in formes (commonly called uniformity) every Christian will for Peace sake, study and doe as far as Conscience will permit'.<sup>62</sup> Peaceable charity towards others was a hallmark of Cromwell's statements on liberty of conscience, and he reacted angrily to those who disrupted the peace.<sup>63</sup> When dissolving his first Protectoral parliament, Cromwell singled out 'Prophane Persons, Blasphemers, such as preach Sedition, the Contentious Railers, Evil Speakers' for punishment by the civil magistrate: 'because, if these pretend Conscience, yet walking disorderly, and not according, but contrary to the Gospel, and even to natural light, they are judged of all, and their Sins being open, makes them subjects of the Magistrates Sword, who ought not to bear it in vain'.<sup>64</sup>

As John Coffey has shown, Cromwell's understanding of toleration and the role of the civil magistrate align most comfortably with moderate congregationalists like the dissenting brethren.<sup>65</sup> Much of his language, however, finds its greatest resonance with congregational pleas for unity during the 1650s. The language and theology of unity between presbyterians and congregationalists has been mentioned above, but we can also consider debates over communion and fellowship between congregationalists and baptists. When dealing with errant members, one Welsh church was advised to 'Let love be the load-stone to draw saints rather than the law to drive



CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

---

them', for believers were not under the law, but grace, and 'by blessed experience' they should know 'that till the Lord perswades a heart none can'.<sup>66</sup> Congregational communion was based on visible sainthood, and in battles with rigid baptists, liberty of conscience became an ecclesiastical policy of congregationalists. A church in Netherton, Gloucestershire, advised walking 'with all tendernes even as the Lord Christ did towards us before our soules were perswaded and as we would have had others caried themselves towards us'.<sup>67</sup> Henry Jessey, one of Cromwell's 'triers', worked tirelessly throughout the 1650s to preserve unity among the nation's gathered churches. In a sermon published after his death by John Bunyan, one arguing against 'rigid' baptists who refused communion to congregationalists, Jessey developed his toleration from Romans 14:1: 'Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye'. Jessey argued that God put no limitation on receiving saints weak in faith, whether within or without of the church. Tolerating tender consciences was not simply charitable, it was a command from God to his church.<sup>68</sup> For Cromwell, it was his command to the nation at large.

III

Contextualizing Cromwell's statements on sainthood, the church, and liberty of conscience is unlikely to produce any firm conclusions about his denominational preferences. Puritans of all forms could find areas of agreement on these issues. His tireless quest for godly unity encouraged him to choose language that resonated with all the godly. At no point can we easily pin him down as an 'Independent' or congregationalist. Nor can we show that he was a member of any gathered church. But there are good reasons to think that Cromwell resisted any formal denominational association. Davis has rightly pointed us towards Cromwell's anti-formalism and desire for godly unity. We should also add politics to our analysis, for Cromwell was the greatest politician of the revolution. Liberty of conscience and godly unity were political necessities from his earliest days in the army to his time as Lord Protector. They developed from the realities of puritan divisions and the necessities of war. Cromwell's ability to appear to be all things to all men was equally studied and no doubt sprang from the same imperatives.

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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So, was Cromwell an Independent? He was far too much the politician to admit that to contemporaries or to us. Would he have been an Independent had he not rose to power? That's a moot point, for Cromwell sounded most like an Independent when he was working for godly unity and the preservation of the parliamentary cause. He sounded most like an Independent when he was acting most publicly as a leader.

- <sup>1</sup> J.C. Davis, 'Cromwell's religion', in J. Morrill (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (Harlow, 1990), 181-7; S.R. Gardiner, *Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1899), 28-9. See also, J.C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell* (London, 2001), chapter 6.
- <sup>2</sup> Cited in Davis, 'Cromwell's religion', 184.
- <sup>3</sup> The starting point for puritanism is now J. Coffey and P.C.H. Lim (eds), *The Cambridge companion to puritanism* (Cambridge, 2008).
- <sup>4</sup> Davis, 'Cromwell's religion', 184.
- <sup>5</sup> C. Hill, 'History and denominational history', *Baptist Quarterly*, 22:2 (1967), 65-71.
- <sup>6</sup> J. Morrill, 'How Oliver Cromwell thought', in J. Morrow and J. Scott (eds), *Liberty, authority, formality: Political ideas and culture, 1600-1900* (Exeter, 2008), 89.
- <sup>7</sup> Davis, 'Cromwell's religion', 182-3.
- <sup>8</sup> Davis, 'Cromwell's religion', 189, 201-8;
- <sup>9</sup> Morrill, 'How Oliver Cromwell thought', 89.
- <sup>10</sup> D. Smith (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell and the Interregnum: The essential readings* (Oxford, 2008), 141-66.
- <sup>11</sup> Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), lord protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland, *Oxford DNB*; Morrill, 'How Cromwell thought', 89-112.
- <sup>12</sup> For Cromwell's providentialism, see B. Worden, 'Providence and politics', in his *God's instruments: Political conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford, 2012), 33-62.
- <sup>13</sup> R.S. Paul, *The Lord Protector: Religion and politics in the life of Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1955), 67.
- <sup>14</sup> S.C. Lomas, *The letters and speeches of Oliver Cromwell, with elucidations by Thomas Carlyle* (3 vols, 1904), i. 89-90.
- <sup>15</sup> Paul, 399.

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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- <sup>16</sup> Cromwell, *Oxford DNB*; J. Morrill, 'Rewriting Cromwell: A case of deafening silences', *Canadian Journal of History/Annals canadiennes d'histoire*, 38 (2003), 565-7.
- <sup>17</sup> For recent discussions, see S. Hardman Moore, *Pilgrims: New World settlers and the call of home* (New Haven, 2007).
- <sup>18</sup> A. Barclay, *Electing Cromwell: The making of a politician* (London, 2011), 65-74.
- <sup>19</sup> Paul, 46.
- <sup>20</sup> P. Collinson, 'The English conventicle', in W.J. Sheils and D. Wood (eds), *Voluntary religion* (Studies in Church History, 23, 1986), 223-59.
- <sup>21</sup> Matthew Sylvester (ed.), *Reliquiae Baxterianae, or, Mr. Richard Baxter's narrative of the most memorable passages of his life and times* (London, 1696), i. 50.
- <sup>22</sup> Sylvester, i. 51.
- <sup>23</sup> Paul, 67.
- <sup>24</sup> Paul, 67.
- <sup>25</sup> Matthew Sylvester (1636/7–1708), ejected minister, *Oxford DNB*.
- <sup>26</sup> I would like to thank John Coffey for a discussion about this event and this section of Baxter's text. Readers should be aware that a new edition of Baxter's *Reliquiae* is nearing completion.
- <sup>27</sup> C. Holmes, 'Colonel King and Lincolnshire politics, 1642-1646', *The Historical Journal*, 16:3 (Sept. 1973), 462; T. Edwards, *The second part of Gangraena* (London, 1646), 105.
- <sup>28</sup> Holmes, 462.
- <sup>29</sup> Norfolk Record Office, FC 31/1, 10 Aug. 1645.
- <sup>30</sup> For a discussion of early church gatherings see Joel Halcomb, 'A social history of congregational religious practice during the puritan revolution', PhD thesis (Cambridge, 2010), 22-36.
- <sup>31</sup> *A true relation of a great victory obtained by the Parliament forces in Lincolnshire, under the command of the Lord Willoughby, Colonel Hobart, Colonel Cromwell, Lieutenant Generall Hotham* (London, 1643), 6.
- <sup>32</sup> Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden, 1982), 162-75, 226-32.
- <sup>33</sup> Norfolk Record Office, MC64/4, 508x8, 23-4, 25.
- <sup>34</sup> Paul, 64.

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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- <sup>35</sup> Lomas, i. 154.
- <sup>36</sup> *Monarchy Asserted* (London, 1660), 39; Lomas iii. 65-6.
- <sup>37</sup> C. Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1974), 177.
- <sup>38</sup> Lomas, i. 171.
- <sup>39</sup> An effective army needed God's support, of course.
- <sup>40</sup> Holmes, *Eastern Association*, 113.
- <sup>41</sup> Lomas, i. 156.
- <sup>42</sup> British Library, RP 522; Lomas, i. 181.
- <sup>43</sup> Paul, *Lord Protector*, 65.
- <sup>44</sup> Holmes, *Eastern Association*, 172.
- <sup>45</sup> D. Masson and J. Bruce (eds), *The quarrel between the earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell: An episode of the English Civil War* (Camden Society, N.S. 12, 1875), 72.
- <sup>46</sup> Sylvester, 51.
- <sup>47</sup> British Library, Add. MS 5015\*, fos 12v-13r; Lomas, i. 205.
- <sup>48</sup> Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Nalson 4, no. 80, fo. 196v; Lomas, i. 218.
- <sup>49</sup> Lomas, i. 353.
- <sup>50</sup> T. Goodwin, *et al.*, *An apologeticall narration* (London, 1644), 11-12.
- <sup>51</sup> Lomas, ii. 536.
- <sup>52</sup> Presbyterians and congregationalists emphasized this formula when arguing for accommodation between the two movements. For more, see chapter 3 of my forthcoming monograph *Congregationalism and the puritan revolution*.
- <sup>53</sup> Davis, *Cromwell*, 132.
- <sup>54</sup> Society of Antiquaries, London, SAL/MS/138, no. 128, fos 292r-v; Lomas, ii. 293.
- <sup>55</sup> Lomas, ii. 535-6.
- <sup>56</sup> Lomas, ii. 536.
- <sup>57</sup> The classic statement on congregationalism remains Geoffrey Nuttall, *Visible saints: the congregational way, 1640-1660* (Oxford, 1957). See also, Halcomb, 'Congregational religious practice'.
- <sup>58</sup> For Cromwell and toleration, see B. Worden, 'Toleration and the Protectorate', in his *God's instruments*, 63-90.

CROMWELL STUDY DAY: OCTOBER 2015  
CROMWELL'S RELIGION

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- <sup>59</sup> Quoted in Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in puritan faith and experience* (1946), 116. Nuttall provides a good discussion of the Spirit and Cromwell's statements on toleration.
- <sup>60</sup> A.S.P. Woodhouse (ed.), *Puritanism and liberty: Being the army debates (1647-49) from the Clarke Manuscripts* (London, 1938), 104.
- <sup>61</sup> Society of Antiquaries, London, SAL/MS/138, no. 128, fos 292r-v; Lomas, ii. 293.
- <sup>62</sup> Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Nalson 4, no. 80, fo. 196v; Lomas, i. 218.
- <sup>63</sup> Davis, *Cromwell*, 134-5.
- <sup>64</sup> *His Highness Speech to the Parliament in the Painted Chamber, at their Dissolution, Upon Monday the 22d of January 1654* (London, 1655), 18-19; Lomas, ii. 417-18.
- <sup>65</sup> J. Coffey, 'The toleration controversy during the English Revolution', in C. Durston and J. Maltby (eds), *Religion in revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2006), 51-3.
- <sup>66</sup> B.G. Owens (ed.), *The Ilston Book: Earliest register of Welsh Baptist* (Aberwystwyth, 1996), 101-3.
- <sup>67</sup> Owens, 103.
- <sup>68</sup> Halcomb, chapter 5; J. Bunyan, *Differences in Judgment About Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion* (London, 1673), 101-22.

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## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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*By Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons*

It was perhaps inevitable that the House of Lords’ vote in October 2015 to delay controversial tax cuts prompted politicians and political commentators to deliberate over the upper chamber’s place in Britain’s ‘unwritten’ constitution. Most obviously, it begged the pertinent question of whether an unelected assembly can legitimately defy the will of an elected House of Commons. The matter is hardly a new one. For over a century the House of Lords has been the subject of sporadic debates concerning its constitutional role, leading to a number of reforms – including restrictions upon its legislative veto (Parliament Acts, 1911 and 1949), the admission of life peers and women (Life Peerages Act, 1958), and a significant reduction in its hereditary membership (House of Lords Act, 1999) resulting in a shift to a mostly appointed chamber. But recent controversies show that there remains a sense that more still needs to be done – that the House of Lords must either be reformed further or be abolished and replaced by a new chamber.

Perhaps those considering the future of the upper parliamentary chamber should pay more attention to its past. The turbulent period from 1640 to 1660, in particular, offers some striking parallels to contemporary constitutional debates: during the course of those two decades the House of Lords was reformed, abolished, and ultimately replaced by a new upper house under the terms of the *Humble Petition and Advice* of 1657. This ‘Other House’ as it was called, was to comprise a body of between forty and seventy members nominated by Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell.<sup>1</sup> In most accounts this new chamber is taken to be a symptom of a regression in political forms during the Protectorate, complementing Cromwell’s emergence as a ‘king in all but name’.<sup>2</sup> The Other House, it is claimed, demonstrates that the regime was backsliding its way towards the ancient constitution of King, Lords and Commons, an impression made all the stronger by the fact that Cromwell himself referred to it as ‘our House of Lords’.<sup>3</sup>

But appearances are deceptive. It is important to look deeper than the languages and images used to promote the Protectorate. As this article suggests, the Other House experiment was not as conservative as it seemed. Rather, it illuminates many important aspects of Cromwell’s politics – not

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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least his relationship with parliament, his attitude towards the nobility, his views on hereditary office and, most importantly, his vision for settlement.

### I

Ascertaining Cromwell's attitude towards the nobility and the House of Lords is no easy task. So much of what we know comes from the bitter testimony of his critics. Particularly notorious are those accusations made against Cromwell during his quarrel with the earl of Manchester in late 1644. Manchester himself claimed that Cromwell's 'expressions were sometimes against the nobility; that he [Cromwell] hoped to live to see never a nobleman in England'.<sup>4</sup> Another deponent condemned Cromwell's tendency to 'make choice of his officers' from 'common men' of 'poor and... mean parentage' rather than 'men of estate'; he reportedly declared that 'God would have no lording over his people'.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps there was a grain of truth in these claims. We are reminded of Cromwell's famous letter of September 1643 to the commissioners in Suffolk in which he stressed that he had 'rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else'.<sup>6</sup> It was too easy for Manchester and his allies to twist such sentiments into evidence of a programme for social levelling. In reality Cromwell merely wanted men of principle, the 'godly precious men' as Manchester's allies derided them, to prosecute the war effort.<sup>7</sup> It was Manchester's military incompetence combined with his Presbyterian sympathies that made him the target of Cromwell's ire, not the fact that he was a nobleman.

That Cromwell bore no personal animosity towards the nobility is further demonstrated by his close friendship throughout the 1640s with those 'Independent' peers who shared his aims for the war and its outcome – most notably Viscount Saye and Sele and Lord Wharton. In 1647, as the army took the initiative in negotiating a settlement with Charles I, a number of 'Leveller' writers even accused Cromwell and other army 'grande'es' of kowtowing to the peers, rather than securing the demands of the soldiers and the liberties of the people. John Wildman, for one, could hardly believe that this was the same 'Cromwell who professed to Manchester's face, that

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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England would never flourish, until he was only Mr Mountagu, nor the public affairs be managed successfully, whilst a house of Peers are extant’.<sup>8</sup>

Again, perhaps there was some truth in the Levellers’ accusations. Cromwell clearly strived to placate those peers who had supported the New Model Army and was reluctant to see the House of Lords abolished. During the debates of the general council of the army at Putney in the autumn of 1647, both Cromwell and his son-in-law Ireton parried demands to divest the House of Lords of its negative voice.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, although Cromwell supported the trial of Charles I, and accepted the purged House of Commons’ right to act unilaterally without the Lords in order to pass the legislation establishing the High Court to try the king, he apparently did not believe it should spell the end for the upper house. According to one report, Cromwell was ‘very violent’ against suggestions that the ‘house of Peers might be wholly suppressed’ and believed that Commons were ‘mad’ to ‘take these course, to incense all the Peers of the whole kingdom against them, at such a time where they had more need to study a near union with them’.<sup>10</sup>

Ultimately, Cromwell probably had mixed feelings about the abolition of the House of Lords in 1649. While it was obvious that the circumstances of the coup in the winter of 1648–9 left the position of the upper chamber untenable, it seems that Cromwell’s preference was for retaining a second parliamentary chamber in an attenuated form, if only out of respect for his allies there. With time, however, Cromwell became even more convinced that the abolition of the upper chamber had been a mistake. His constant struggles with the unicameral parliaments of the 1650s only strengthened his conviction that an upper chamber of some sort was necessary to moderate the actions of the Commons.

## II

Indeed, Cromwell believed that the creation of an ‘Other House’ was the single most important aspect of the proposed parliamentary constitution of 1657. On 27 February 1657 he berated a meeting of around one hundred army officers who objected to the new constitution because of the offer of the Crown. Cromwell urged them to look beyond the kingly title; as far as he was concerned it was a mere ‘feather in a hat’.<sup>11</sup> Much more important



## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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for Cromwell was the fact that the proposed constitution offered a means by which parliamentary government could be secured and made to work.

The Protectorate, as settled under the *Instrument of Government*, had failed miserably. The *Instrument*, Cromwell argued, was an ‘imperfect thing which will neither preserve our religious or civil rights’. Rather, he told the officers that it was ‘time to come to a settlement and lay aside arbitrary proceedings, so unacceptable to the nation’.<sup>12</sup> Plainly, the constant routine of military-inspired purges and dissolutions of parliament was no basis for a lasting settlement. Pride’s Purge, the ‘Recognition’ forced upon the first Protectorate Parliament and the exclusion of around one hundred MPs before the sitting of the second Protectorate Parliament, were all desperate attempts to bend the will of the House of Commons to that of the army and their adherents. Even worse, despite this ‘garbling’, the parliaments still proved unmanageable.<sup>13</sup> A better way was needed to solve that fundamental problem facing Cromwell and his parliaments: how to secure the goals of a godly minority with an assembly that was representative of the nation at large.

This problem became all the more pressing for Cromwell in light of the case of James Nayler, a Quaker arrested for riding into Bristol in a manner that seemed to imitate Christ’s entry to Jerusalem. In December 1656, after protracted debate, the Presbyterian majority in the Commons resolved that Nayler’s crimes were ‘horrid blasphemy’ and voted a suitably savage punishment.<sup>14</sup> While Cromwell did not sympathize with Nayler’s crimes, he did worry about the single chamber parliament claiming a unilateral authority to judge and punish his crimes without proceeding upon any known law.<sup>15</sup> As he told the army officers in February 1657, it was painfully obvious that the Commons were ‘in need of a check, or balancing power... for the Case of James Naylor might happen to be your own case’.<sup>16</sup>

The Other House provided the perfect answer to all of Cromwell’s constitutional worries. It would remove the need for the army to tamper with the Commons while also ensuring that the Commons were not left with an unlimited power to ride roughshod over religious liberties. ‘Unless you have some such thing as a balance’, he warned the army officers, ‘either you will grow upon the civil liberties by secluding such as are elected to sit

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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in Parliament (next time for ought I know you may exclude 400); or they will grow upon your liberty in religion’.<sup>17</sup>

That the Other House was essential to Cromwell’s constitutional plans is reinforced further by a comment he made in his speech at the dissolution of the second Protectorate Parliament on 4 February 1658. Recalling the genesis of the new constitution he reminded the Commons how ‘I did tell you, at a conference concerning it [ie the new constitution] that I would not undertake it, unless there might be some other Persons between me and the House of Commons... and it was granted I should name another House’.<sup>18</sup> What is unclear is when precisely this ‘conference’ took place. Given that the Other House had always been a part of the proposed constitution since it was presented to parliament on 23 February 1657, it seems that Cromwell’s ultimatum, that he ‘would not undertake’ the settlement unless it provided for an upper chamber, must have occurred *before* that date, at a time when the status of the new upper chamber was not part of the planned constitution or not assured. If true, it suggests not only that Cromwell knew rather more about the plan for a new constitution than he subsequently let on, but that the Other House was really his brainchild – its inclusion in the constitution was essentially a concession by MPs to him.

### III

To understand more clearly Cromwell’s aims for the Other House we must study its composition. Despite Cromwell’s refusal of the Crown and the subsequent revision of the *Humble Petition and Advice*, the Other House remained an integral part of the new constitution finally approved in June 1657. Under its provisions, Cromwell was instructed to nominate the members of the new upper chamber and summon them to sit at the next parliamentary session in January 1658.<sup>19</sup>

In all, Cromwell nominated sixty-two men.<sup>20</sup> He chose carefully and deliberately: as he told the Commons in February 1658, he wanted to ensure that the Other House be comprised of ‘men that should meet you wheresoever you go, and shake hands with you, and tell you it is not titles, nor Lords, nor party they value, but a Christian and an English interest’. He hoped that the Other House ‘would not only be a balance unto you, but to themselves while you love England and Religion’.<sup>21</sup>

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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A closer inspection of those summoned bears out Cromwell's comments. First and foremost, his assertion that he chose men not because they valued 'titles, nor Lords' seems true enough. Contrary to the expectations of many, he did not summon to the new chamber all the old members of the House of Lords who had remained faithful to the parliamentary cause. Rather, only seven English peers were sent writs of summons. These included five nobles who had previously sat in the House of Lords: the earls of Manchester, Mulgrave and Warwick, Viscount Saye and Sele and Lord Wharton. Also summoned were Lords Eure and Fauconberg, both of whom only succeeded to their titles in the early 1650s and had therefore never before sat in the upper chamber.

Perhaps Cromwell nominated these peers to give weight to the Other House – or to stress continuity with the House of Lords. But other explanations are also likely. Most obviously, the choice of Saye and Wharton was the latest in a string of attempts by Cromwell to coax his old allies out of their self-imposed political retirement since the regicide. Writing to Wharton from Ireland in early 1650 Cromwell lamented how his 'friend' had 'withdraw his shoulder from the Lord's work'. After all, Cromwell urged, Wharton had been 'with us in the Form of things', so 'why not in the Power?'<sup>22</sup> The writ of summons to the Other House issued to Wharton and Saye might therefore be read as yet another olive branch to his former friends.

Others of the old lords summoned by Cromwell can also be explained less by their lordly titles and more by the fact that they were firmly established members of the Cromwellian establishment. For instance, Edmund Sheffield, second earl of Mulgrave, was one of the least experienced of the members of the defunct House of Lords – only succeeding to his title in October 1646. Yet, by 1654 he was evidently held in high esteem by Cromwell, having become a member of the Protectoral Privy Council. The same is true of George, sixth Baron Eure, an obscure Yorkshire nobleman mocked by one pamphleteer as 'not very bulky or imperious for a Lord', who had willingly engaged in politics since the regicide and had served as an MP in both the first and second Protectorate Parliaments.<sup>23</sup>

Even more obvious were the reasons behind Cromwell's nomination of Thomas Belasyse, Lord Fauconberg. Although, like Eure, he was from a

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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strongly royalist family, Fauconberg had married Cromwell’s daughter Mary in November 1657. Cromwell was evidently impressed with Fauconberg’s personal qualities; he reportedly considered him ‘a solid man... and not given to vanities’.<sup>24</sup> Also occupying a far more public role in the later Protectorate was Robert Rich, second earl of Warwick. At Cromwell’s second investiture as Lord Protector in June 1657, Warwick carried the sword of state and assisted the Speaker of the Commons in the investiture ceremonials.<sup>25</sup> Warwick’s emergence in support of the Cromwellian regime was doubtless galvanized by his ongoing attempts to broker a marriage settlement between his grandson and heir – also called Robert Rich – and another of Cromwell’s daughters, Frances, which finally went ahead in November 1657.

Less easy to explain is Cromwell’s nomination of his old adversary the earl of Manchester. Manchester had played no active part in politics since the regicide and had refused to take the oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth regime.<sup>26</sup> According to one report, however, Manchester – previously ‘a great stranger at Whitehall’ – had visited Cromwell in June 1657 to discuss the ongoing marriage negotiations between Frances Cromwell and Rich, who was Manchester’s nephew.<sup>27</sup> So perhaps Cromwell’s nomination was a sign of a rapprochement between the two men. It may also have reflected the fact that Manchester had valuable expertise in the workings of the upper chamber. From the time he lost his commission in the army in 1645 through to Pride’s Purge in December 1648, Manchester had routinely assumed the position of Speaker of the House of Lords.

Above all, Cromwell’s choice of only a handful of noblemen suggests that he did not envisage the Other House to be a straightforward restoration of the House of Lords. Perhaps he had no choice: there simply were not enough nobles willing to sit. But it seems more likely that Cromwell actually had in mind an upper chamber grounded upon principles very different to that abolished in 1649.

In particular, the membership of the Other House, unlike that of its predecessor, would not sit by hereditary right. Under the terms of the *Humble Petition and Advice* all members of the Other House would serve as life peers only – once they died the vacant places would be filled by nomination, not by hereditary succession. This arrangement pleased Cromwell exceedingly; as he told parliament in February 1658, he liked the

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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new constitution precisely because it did not establish ‘Hereditary Lords, nor Hereditary Kings’.<sup>28</sup>

As was the case when selecting army officers during the 1640s, Cromwell as Lord Protector continued to stress that a man’s skills and principles, rather than birth alone, were the best qualifications for office. It was on these grounds that he repeatedly opposed agitation in both the first and second Protectorate Parliaments to make the Protectorate hereditary. In his speech at the dissolution of the first Protectorate Parliament on 22 January 1655 he claimed that had the *Instrument of Government* placed the Protectorate ‘in my family hereditarily’ he would have ‘rejected it’. It was much better to ‘have men chosen, for their love to God, and to Truth and Justice’. Hereditary government would not do: as Cromwell warned, in an allusion to *Ecclesiastes* 2:19 that hardly reflected favorably on his eldest son Richard, ‘Who knoweth whether he may beget a fool or wise?’ Under a hereditary Protectorate, whether the next in line was ‘honest or not’ mattered little, for ‘whatever they be, they must come in’.<sup>29</sup>

This is not to say that Cromwell objected to hereditary honours. As Lord Protector he conferred no less than 12 baronetcies.<sup>30</sup> He would also confer a viscounty on Charles Howard in July 1657 and a baronage on his cousin Edmund Dunch in April 1658. The letters patents issued by Cromwell to bestow these honours followed the traditional formula: they stressed that it was the greatest of those ‘Prerogatives which adorn the Imperial Crown’ to ‘be the fountain of honor’. The recipient and their ‘heirs males’ were to ‘hold and enjoy the same and the like priviledges, prehemineties, dignities and Immunities whatsoever with other Barons of England’.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, these Cromwellian honours were distinctive in that they did not confer the right to sit in the upper parliamentary chamber. Whereas Howard was eventually summoned to sit as a member of the Other House by writ of summons, Dunch was not.<sup>32</sup> This was a very definite break with established practice whereby the monarch’s letters patent conferring a peerage were understood to grant an automatic right to sit in the House of Lords to the recipient and their heirs. Famously, in 1626 this right was upheld in the clash between the Lords and Charles I over the latter’s refusal to issue a writ of summons to the recalcitrant earl of Bristol. In the case of the Cromwellian ‘Other House’, however, only a handful of those holding

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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hereditary honours received writs of summons while the majority of those summoned – though often styled ‘lords’ – held no hereditary title at all.

### IV

With so few old nobles chosen to sit in the Other House, it was easy for Cromwell’s critics to claim that the majority of the ‘new’ lords summoned were a body of low-born acolytes. As one satirical tract put it, they were nothing more than Cromwell’s ‘Sons and Kindred, Flattering Courtiers, corrupt Lawyers, degenerated Sword men, and... most of them self-interested Salary-men’.<sup>33</sup>

The charge of nepotism was a powerful one; no fewer than seventeen of the nominees, over a quarter of those summoned, had close ties of kinship to the Protector, including his two sons and three of his sons-in-law. But this is hardly surprising. It was only natural when nominating a body of members on whose fidelity the future security of the regime rested that Cromwell chose men he knew to be faithful to himself and the cause. Those who had served with Cromwell in the army, or under the various regimes of the 1650s – of which many also happened to be related to him – were therefore an obvious choice. Moreover, the fact that Cromwell failed to nominate his new son-in-law Robert Rich, a man about whose character he had some misgivings (having heard ‘reports of his being a vicious man, given to play, and such like things’) suggests that he was unwilling to promote those he considered inexperienced or unsound in their opinions just because they happened to be members of his family.<sup>34</sup>

Experience of both parliamentary politics and civil office were a distinguishing feature of the majority of those chosen. All but three of the members had sat in at least one English Parliament prior to 1657, with over half having sat in one of the two houses of parliament prior to the revolution of 1649. Also chosen were fifteen out of the sixteen active members of the Cromwellian Privy Council – Secretary John Thurloe being the only councillor left to manage the government’s affairs in the Commons. There were also a number of financial administrators, court officials and judicial office holders – including the Lord Chief Justices of both benches who were summoned to sit as fully-fledged members of the

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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upper chamber rather than as their assistants as had previously been the case with the House of Lords.

The membership of the Other House chosen by Cromwell was also geographically diverse. Particularly well represented were the ‘dark corners’ of the land with many of the members having been born, or owning large estates, in Wales or the northern counties of England. There was also representation for Scotland and Ireland – including the Irish nobleman Lord Broghill and the Scottish earl of Cassillis and a number of others who had served as officers or administrators across the three kingdoms. As Peter Gaunt has observed, Cromwell’s experience of campaigning across Britain gave him an invaluable insight into the challenges of ruling a harmonized British state during the 1650s.<sup>35</sup> It is hardly surprising then that when choosing the members of the Other House, he recognized the importance of having a membership that included men who could speak not only for England but for the British Isles as a whole.

Even more revealing is an examination of the political and religious sympathies of the members of the Other House. As already noted, Cromwell professed that he wanted its members to be a ‘balance’ not just to the Commons but also to themselves.<sup>36</sup> But just how balanced was the membership nominated by Cromwell? Can it tell us anything about the sort of settlement he hoped to secure?

Most obviously, it is worth considering whether the membership of the Other House displayed any political bias: was it weighted in favour of either Cromwell’s military or civilian supporters? Certainly, there were a number of contemporary critics who suggested that the Other House was nothing more than a ‘council of officers’.<sup>37</sup> In reality, the number of soldiers nominated by Cromwell was sizeable but not overbearing, with fourteen serving army officers receiving writs of summons in December 1657. Simply counting the number of soldiers in the Other House, however, is not necessarily the best way to identify those with military sympathies. If we define the ‘military’ Cromwellians as those who opposed the offer of the Crown in 1657 then, somewhat paradoxically, many of the officers summoned to the Other House were not really ‘military’ men: such as Richard Ingoldsby, Charles Howard and William Lockhart who all voted in favour of kingship.<sup>38</sup> Conversely, there were other members who held no

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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military office but, nevertheless, sympathized with the ‘military’ outlook, including William Sydenham and the brothers Walter and Sir William Strickland who all opposed the offer of the Crown.<sup>39</sup>

With these caveats in mind it appears that the advocates of the military interest only commanded a sizeable minority in the Other House as nominated by Cromwell. Far more numerous were men of politically conservative instincts. These included not only those civilian Cromwellians who led the ‘kingship’ party of 1657, such as Lord Broghill, Nathaniel Fiennes, Philip Jones and Bulstrode Whitelocke, but also the old peers and many prominent country gentlemen including Sir Richard Onslow, Sir John Hobart and others of their stamp.

As such, the political complexion of the Other House seems to have reflected Cromwell’s determination – expressed in his stormy exchanges with the hundred officers – to bring to an end ‘arbitrary proceedings’ of the army that had been ‘so unacceptable to the nation’. While the Other House institutionalized the role of a number of ‘military’ men within the constitutional settlement, it did not allow them an overbearing presence.

Of far greater importance to Cromwell was the capacity of the Other House to act as a bulwark for what he called the ‘Christian’ interest. There was more than an echo of the Nominated Assembly or Parliament of Saints of 1653 in Cromwell’s nominations to the Other House. Indeed, twenty of those summoned to the Other House, almost a third of its membership, had been members of the Nominated Assembly. In both 1653 and 1657 it seems Cromwell envisioned the creation of a body of godly men to help secure what he believed was the ‘natural right’ of ‘liberty of conscience’.<sup>40</sup> The definition of what this liberty entailed was neatly summed up in Cromwell’s plea to the second Protectorate Parliament that whatever ‘men will profess, – be they those under Baptism, be they those of the Independent judgment simply, and of the Presbyterian judgment, – in the name of God, encourage them, countenance them’.<sup>41</sup> While Cromwell hoped to see the day when there would be no such thing as ‘sects’, he accepted that the best he could hope for in the short term was a settlement whereby those who professed faith in God through Jesus Christ were free to worship as they wished, so long as they did it without disturbing others.



## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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To some extent the membership of the Other House reflected the different religious outlooks that Cromwell hoped to reconcile under the umbrella of liberty of conscience. On the one hand there were a number of conservative country gentlemen, like Onslow, Hobart and Sir William Strickland, who tended to favour a Presbyterian church settlement. On the other hand there were many members who had connections with, or were members of, Congregational churches. Charles Fleetwood, Charles Howard, Robert Tichborne and Bulstrode Whitelocke, for instance, were all closely associated with George Cokayne, the Independent minister of St Pancras, Soper Lane.

More importantly, however, the majority of those summoned to the Other House were sympathetic towards Cromwell’s vision for church settlement. It is notable that many of those nominated had previously worked the hardest to moderate the excesses of the Commons in the aftermath of the heated debates over the punishment of Nayler – again reaffirming the close connection in Cromwell’s mind between that incident and the creation of the new chamber. Bulstrode Whitelocke and William Sydenham, for instance, strongly opposed motions from the Presbyterian MPs for a general law against the Quakers for fear that ‘Quaker’ as ‘a word signifies nothing’ and could just as easily be applied to punish members of other sects.<sup>42</sup>

As this last example demonstrates – with the ‘civilian’ Cromwellian Whitelocke joining forces with the ‘military’ Cromwellian Sydenham – the issue of liberty of conscience bridged the political gulf that divided Cromwell’s supporters. It meant that even though the military Cromwellians were a minority in the Other House, those who advocated liberty of conscience – ie the military and civilian Cromwellians combined – were very much in the majority. The net result was an upper chamber that was relatively conservative in its politics but mostly radical in its religious outlook. It was a paradoxical blend that, in many ways, reflected the contradictory personality of Oliver Cromwell himself.

### V

Despite Cromwell’s careful work in nominating the Other House, the experiment ultimately proved abortive. When parliament reassembled on 20 January 1658 many in the Commons criticised the new chamber while few

## ‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL, THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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jumped to its defence. For the Commonwealthsmen, who had been excluded in the previous session and believed that there should be no check upon the people’s representatives, the Other House was an unwanted usurpation. For the majority of conservative MPs who had voted for the Other House in 1657, Cromwell’s choice of members and the lack of old peers left them cold. It seems the Other House pleased no one. As one satirical verse put it at the time:

Surely his highness was inspired,  
When he made that house, which no man desired.<sup>43</sup>

Cromwell wanted an upper chamber to bind the Commons and avert the use of direct force against parliaments. Yet the ultimate paradox was that it could only be an effective balance over the Commons so long as the Commons accepted it as such. With the Commons proving recalcitrant and questioning both the nature of the Other House and its membership, Cromwell was once again compelled to rely on ‘arbitrary’ tactics and dissolved the parliament abruptly on 4 February 1658 after it had sat for little over a fortnight.

Cromwell had tried his best to convince the Commons to own the Other House. Attempts were made to make it appear as familiar as possible – it met in the old House of Lords’ chamber, its members were styled ‘lords’, its members consulted the records of the House of Lords for precedents and Cromwell himself called it ‘our House of Lords’. Yet, few were convinced, not least the old peers. Conspicuously, of the seven old English peers summoned, only Fauconberg and Eure took their seats. The sentiments of those old lords who stayed away are best summed up in a letter from Viscount Saye to Lord Wharton in December 1657. Saye was adamant that the old peers must not sit in the Other House. To do so, he warned Wharton, would make them complicit in the ‘laying aside of the Peers of England who by birth are to sit’; they would ‘disown their own rights and the rights of all the Nobility of England’. To Saye’s mind the Other House was not a House of Lords but ‘a stalking horse and vizard to carry on the design of over-throwing the House of Peers’.<sup>44</sup>

In many ways, Saye was right. So much about the Other House was novel. Not only did it have a membership of nominated life peers fixed in number,

‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL,  
THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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but Cromwell’s nominees to that chamber were far more socially and geographically diverse, and arguably more ‘representative’ of the British Isles, than any House of Lords had ever been. Yet in a society that revered precedent and loathed the mere suggestion of change, the Other House was always going to be a hard sell. Try as he might, Cromwell could not convince the majority in the Commons that the Other House was a legitimate replacement for the House of Lords. The lack of old peers and the predominance of what many considered to be new ‘upstarts’, many of whom had just months earlier sat on the benches in the Commons, was simply too much for the majority of MPs to bear. As Cromwell himself conceded during the kingship debates of 1657 the ‘People do love what they know’ and it was a House of Lords grounded upon hereditary principles that they knew best.<sup>45</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> The constitutional provisions for the Other House are found in articles 2 and 5 of the *Humble Petition and Advice*: see S.R. Gardiner (ed.), *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, 3rd edn. rev. (Oxford, 1906), pp. 449, 452.
- <sup>2</sup> R. Sherwood, *Oliver Cromwell: King In All But Name, 1653-1658* (Stroud, 1997).
- <sup>3</sup> Museum of London, Tangye MS 11a, fols. 8r-v.
- <sup>4</sup> ‘A Letter from the Earl of Manchester to the House of Lords’, in *Miscellany, Vol. VIII* (Camden Society, 1883), pp. 1-3.
- <sup>5</sup> ‘Statement by an Opponent of Cromwell’ in *The quarrel between the earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell* (Camden Society, 1875), pp. 71-77.
- <sup>6</sup> T. Carlyle (ed.), *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, rev. S.C. Lomas (3 vols., London, 1904) [hereafter Carlyle-Lomas] i. 154.
- <sup>7</sup> ‘Statement by an Opponent of Cromwell’, p. 72.
- <sup>8</sup> J. Wildman, *Putney Projects. Or the Old Serpent In a new Forme*. (London, 1647), p. 42.
- <sup>9</sup> C.H. Firth (ed.), *The Clarke Papers* (4 vols, Camden Society, 1891-1901), i. 378-83, 391-2, 396-7.
- <sup>10</sup> Bodleian Library, Oxford, Clarendon MS 34, fols. 73-4.
- <sup>11</sup> Carlyle-Lomas, iii. 487; *Clarke Papers*, iii. 92.
- <sup>12</sup> P. Gaunt (ed.), *The Correspondence of Henry Cromwell, 1655-1659* (Camden Society, 5th Series, 31, 2007) p. 215; Carlyle-Lomas, iii. 488.

‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL,  
THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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- 13 Gaunt, *Correspondence of Henry Cromwell*, p. 206.
- 14 For the Nayler debates see J.T. Rutt (ed.), *The Diary of Thomas Burton* (4 vols., 1828), i. 10-175, *passim*.
- 15 Carlyle-Lomas, iii. 20.
- 16 Carlyle-Lomas, iii. 488.
- 17 Gaunt, *Correspondence of Henry Cromwell*, p. 216.
- 18 Carlyle-Lomas, iii. 189; in another version of this speech (*Ibid.*, iii. 505), there is no mention of a ‘conference’ but Cromwell states that ‘one thing that I made a condition’ was that there should be an Other House.
- 19 Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, pp. 463-4.
- 20 A number of imperfect lists of the members of the Other House circulated in late 1657. A full list of those summoned, and the form of the writ of summons, is provided in British Library, Sloane MS 3246.
- 21 *Clarke Papers*, iii, 137.
- 22 Carlyle-Lomas, i, 521-3.
- 23 *A Second Narrative of the Late Parliament (so called.)* (1658), p. 20.
- 24 *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian: 1657-1659*, pp. 138-9.
- 25 *Mercurius Politicus*, 369 (25 Jun – 2 July 1657), pp. 7882-4.
- 26 I Gentles, ‘Montagu, Edward, second earl of Manchester (1602-1671)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19009>].
- 27 *Correspondence of Henry Cromwell*, p. 288.
- 28 Carlyle-Lomas, iii, 190, 506.
- 29 Carlyle-Lomas, ii, 422-23. Cromwell’s comments cast further doubt on his supposed ‘nomination’ of his son Richard as his successor. See J. Fitzgibbons, “‘Not in any doubtfull dispute’? Reassessing the nomination of Richard Cromwell”, *Historical Research*, 83 (2010), pp. 281-300.
- 30 *The Perfect Politician Or, A Full View Of the Life and Action... of O. Cromwell...* (London, 1660), pp. 356-9.
- 31 A facsimile of Edmund Dunch’s writ of creation is printed in M Noble, *Memoirs of the Protectoral-House of Cromwell* (2 vols., London, 1787), ii. 162-3.
- 32 Of course, Dunch was created a baron only after the first sitting of the Other House, but Richard Cromwell did not issue him with a writ of summons to the third Protectorate Parliament of 1659.

‘OUR HOUSE OF LORDS’: OLIVER CROMWELL,  
THE NOBILITY AND THE OTHER HOUSE

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- <sup>33</sup> *Second Narrative*, pp. 23-4.
- <sup>34</sup> T. Birch (ed.), *Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe* (7 vols., London, 1742), v. 146.
- <sup>35</sup> P. Gaunt, ‘A Cromwellian Landscape?’ in J.A. Mills (ed.), *Cromwell’s Legacy* (Manchester, 2012), p. 86.
- <sup>36</sup> *Clarke Papers*, iii. 137.
- <sup>37</sup> *Burton’s Diary*, iv. 35.
- <sup>38</sup> *A Narrative of the late Parliament (so called)* (London, 1657), pp. 22-3.
- <sup>39</sup> Gaunt, *Correspondence of Henry Cromwell*, pp. 205-6.
- <sup>40</sup> Carlyle-Lomas, ii. 382-3.
- <sup>41</sup> Carlyle-Lomas, ii. 535-6.
- <sup>42</sup> *Burton’s Diary*, i. 170, 172.
- <sup>43</sup> British Library, Microfilm 331/6, fol. 1.
- <sup>44</sup> C.H. Firth, ‘A Letter from Lord Saye and Sele to Lord Wharton, 29 Dec. 1657’, *English Historical Review* (1895), pp. 106-7.
- <sup>45</sup> Carlyle-Lomas, iii. 54.

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## MONARCHICAL CROMWELLIANS AND THE RESTORATION

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*By Dr Miranda Malins*

For the politicians who sought to make Oliver Cromwell king and supported his son Richard as Lord Protector, the collapse of the Protectorate in May 1659 was a unilateral disaster.<sup>1</sup> They had invested more in the Protectorate than in any previous political regime, seeing in it the greatest chance to realise the moderate monarchical settlement they craved safe in the hands of their great friend and ally, Cromwell. Their admiration for and loyalty to Cromwell and his sons Richard and Henry was total, and with the family's fall in 1659 these monarchical Cromwellians faced a multitude of dangerous and complex choices which would determine the course of the rest of their lives.

For the exiled Stuart court, in contrast, the failure of the Protectorate represented a great opportunity to build a consensus for the restoration of Charles II. The court, and in particular Edward Hyde and his agents, watched and courted the monarchical Cromwellians, believing them to be the most useful converts to the royalist cause through whom the Stuart restoration might at last be achieved. Lord Culpeper best expressed this ambition in a letter to Hyde in June 1659 when he explained his hopes of: 'uniting to the King's party all the Monarchical party that looked upon Cromwell as the fittest person to attain their ends by. Their golden calf is now fallen, they can no more hope in him, neither will they depart from their Monarchical principles, they will not (I cannot fear it) submit to this rascally crew, and more so, see they cannot possibly set up any other besides the right owner'.<sup>2</sup>

This article considers the attempts made by Hyde and his agents to secure 'the Monarchical party' to the royalist cause in the year preceding the Restoration of Charles II in May 1660, and the decisions that their Cromwellian targets made in response to these overtures. In this 'age of conscience', such choices came at enormous personal and political cost – something acknowledged by Hyde as much as the Cromwellians themselves – and they reveal much of both the balance and the perception of political power in this turbulent year.<sup>3</sup>

## I

The 'Monarchical party' on whom Hyde and his network focussed their attention encompassed those politicians who spearheaded the campaign to offer the crown to Oliver Cromwell in 1657 and then supported Richard Cromwell as his closest civilian advisers. These men were identified by contemporaries and subsequently examined by historians as a loose political grouping.<sup>4</sup> While accounts of the group's exact make-up differ to a degree, there is a strong case for identifying them as: Lord Broghill, Oliver St John, William Pierrepont, Bulstrode Whitelocke, Edward Montagu, Charles Wolseley, Nathaniel Fiennes, John Glynne and Philip Jones. David L. Smith and Patrick Little have identified these same men, along with John Claypole, as the 'leading civilian courtiers' of the Protectorate.<sup>5</sup> Following Gerald Aylmer's analysis, John Thurloe, Henry Cromwell and General Monck should also be considered as allied to this group and Hyde and his informers certainly considered each as central to a successful restoration of the king.<sup>6</sup> This group has been described variously as a 'court party', a 'kingship party' or as 'new Cromwellians' or 'conservative Cromwellians'.<sup>7</sup> It seems most apt, however, particularly in the context of their labelling as the 'Monarchical party' by Hyde's informant, to refer to them here as 'monarchical Cromwellians'. This description at once captures the essential features common to all men (and deemed most notable to their royalist observers), namely, their principled adherence to a monarchical settlement and personal allegiance to the Cromwell family.<sup>8</sup> Hyde himself recognised the unifying effect the offer of the crown to Oliver Cromwell had upon these politicians, observing years later: 'This proposition found a marvellous concurrence; and very many who used not to agree in any thing else were of one mind in this, and would presently vote him [Oliver Cromwell] king'.<sup>9</sup>

The monarchical Cromwellians thrived under the Protectorate, rising to prominent positions on the Council of State, important military and administrative postings and with many ennobled to the Other House. While it has always been accepted that they were loyal to Oliver Cromwell, a re-examination of contemporary sources, in particular Peter Gaunt's edition of the Henry Cromwell correspondence, demonstrates their equally close and developing relationships with his sons Richard and Henry. As Andrew Barclay observes, 'Broghill, Montagu and Wolseley were the next generation, all at least twenty years younger than Cromwell and so closer in age to the

Cromwell sons. These were the men to perpetuate the rule of the Cromwells after Cromwell himself was dead<sup>9</sup>.<sup>10</sup>

This is exactly what the monarchical Cromwellians attempted to do, not only during Richard's rule, but also for many months afterwards. Indeed, their strong support for Richard is a key aspect of the recent reassessment of Richard's Protectorate by Jason Peacey, Peter Gaunt, David L. Smith and Patrick Little in particular. They suggest that Richard's Protectorate was more viable than its detractors have allowed, with his personal qualities, rather than hampering Richard's efficacy, helping him to build a broader base of support among those who could not support his father.<sup>11</sup> The contemporary evidence points to Richard's reliance on the monarchical Cromwellians – and on Thurloe, Pierrepont and St John in particular – who assume a far greater importance within this new analysis. Hyde's pronounced focus on this triumvirate, as described later in this article, further supports this view.

The continued viability of restoring Richard Cromwell to power only complicated the options open to the monarchical Cromwellians at the fall of the Protectorate in spring 1659. As Richard Ollard argues, the choice should have been a simple one: logically, a Cromwellian who had become a Cromwellian in order to re-introduce the monarchical element into the constitution had a clear choice between restoring Richard or Charles Stuart. If an alternative military candidate such as Lambert or Monck were elevated, that would entail a military *coup d'état* setting an unfortunate precedent and which would have been, in any event, anathema to the civilian principles of the monarchical Cromwellians.<sup>12</sup>

However, the reality of political life was more complicated. Circumstances had placed each man in a unique position, with a different balance of responsibilities, expectations and opportunities and, as such, they responded to these pressures in a range of ways. At one end of the spectrum, for instance, Montagu and Broghill kept a safe distance from the new republican regime, having officially accepted its rule; at the other, St John, Whitelocke and later Thurloe remained in London and continued to work with the republican regimes. While this divergence may seem contradictory, it is more readily explicable when the men's personal and professional situations are taken into account and placed in a wider understanding of



how choices of allegiance were envisaged at the time. Those Cromwellians who distanced themselves from the new regime were, for the most part, men of private means able to retire to country estates or military postings, such as Broghill and Montagu. Those who continued to work with the republican regime were based in London and reliant on the continuation of their professional legal practices. Of these, St John and Whitelocke believed, moreover, that they had a duty to preserve and continue the rule of law, necessitating some cooperation with the *de facto* government; an attitude they later relied on in their defence at the Restoration.<sup>13</sup>

For each man, these practical considerations were balanced to a greater or lesser degree by questions of conscience. Loyalty to the Protectorate and the Cromwell family weighed heavily on their minds and their responses to the republican regime, exiled court and later writings demonstrate the lengths they went to justify – both to themselves and to others – that any change in allegiance did not entail the betrayal of a prior commitment and any consequent loss of honour. Keith Thomas captured these struggles in his description of the period as the ‘age of conscience’. As he argued, ‘there has been no period in English history when men and women were subjected to so many religious and political conflicts of duty and allegiance or responded to them in so intensely scrupulous a fashion’.<sup>14</sup>

## II

No one was more aware of this complex political and emotional landscape than Edward Hyde. Writing to an agent in the context of their plans to convert Montagu to the royalist cause in February 1660, Hyde mused: ‘I have no better opinion of the honesty of the age than you seem to have, and do not look that conscience and repentance shall dispose men to lose all they have got, yet how to apply a general remedy to that disease is above my skill in physic’. Although he could not think of a ‘general remedy’ to the problem of how to engineer the conversion of former enemies, Hyde recognised the importance, in particular cases, that ‘care is taken that all be said that is necessary’ to reassure potential collaborators that they would be safe from retribution.<sup>15</sup>

In the months surrounding Richard’s abdication, Hyde instructed his network of informants to work on the monarchical Cromwellians, seeking

ways to win them over to the royalist cause. He first attempted to reach a settlement with Richard Cromwell himself through his agent John Mordaunt but, to his surprise, the long-standing partnership of Thurloe and St John (his 'master' as Hyde often referred to Thurloe's former employer<sup>16</sup>) proved an insurmountable obstacle to this: 'I cannot comprehend', Hyde wrote to Mordaunt, 'why Thurloe and even his master St John should not be very ready to dispose Cromwell to join with the King, and why they should not reasonably promise themselves more particular advantages from thence, than from anything else that is like to fall out?'<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, Hyde continued to hope that the monarchical Cromwellians would choose to align with the royalists at this stage, failing to believe that they could reconcile themselves, or indeed be acceptable, to a republican regime. 'Nor is it possible', he wrote in March 1659, 'that St John can ever find his account with the Republican party. I know the man very well, and the part he hath had throughout those troubles, yet methinks it should not be impossible to persuade him, that he might find most security and most advantage by serving the King'.<sup>18</sup> In fact, to Hyde's mind, St John's conversion was not so much desirable as essential: 'St John is so considerable that I wish him well disposed'.

As so often in Hyde's correspondence, the triumvirate of St John, Thurloe and Pierpoint are accorded particular significance and influence. As Hyde continued to explain, he expected St John, once he had realised the 'necessary of calling in the King' to 'press that all should be settled upon the old foundation... especially if he can draw his friends Pierpoint and Thurloe to the same concurrence, who have enough manifested that they are not enemies to a single person, and they can never be secure under any other than the right one, whom they would love if they knew'.<sup>19</sup> Hyde's network had always considered the three men as central to the government of the Protectorate. As one agent wrote about Richard's Protectorate, 'the present government... is managed by St John, Peirpoint, and Thurloe; what these resolve on in their Cabal is presented to the Council, and there confirmed' while another reported Fauconbridge as saying that 'Thurloe governs Cromwell, and St John and Pierpoint govern Thurloe'.<sup>20</sup>

Once this alliance was identified as the principal obstacle to Hyde's advances to Richard Cromwell, Hyde instructed his agents to concentrate

on either securing them to the royalist cause or sabotaging their power. This manifested itself in a variety of tactics: 'We know Pierpoint is well, and that he will never be severed from St John', Hyde wrote,

but if he were once broke, the other would look about him, indeed if those two were out of the way, Cromwell himself would quickly find the only course to preserve his family... We have taken the best care we can that Pierpoint might be better disposed; but those who know him best, dare not approach him, till the other two are humbled; therefore I pray do all that may be to prosecute Mr. Thurloe and his Master, which will produce excellent effects.<sup>21</sup>

Despite initial reports that Morduant had secured a deal with Richard, nothing came of it however, possibly due to Thurloe delaying the process and Richard getting cold feet.<sup>22</sup>

Looking beyond Richard, Hyde targeted those Cromwellians who held strategically important military posts around the British Isles, including Henry Cromwell, Monck, Montagu and Broghill. In a letter of June 1659, he set out his interpretation of their reluctant acceptance of the republican regime and hopes for their conversion:

Truly if with reason and honesty we consult both [Henry and Monck], their best game lies that way: for neither upon their owne score can keepe possession, and by a submission here, both lost; which by a compliance with the right owner what hath power to make good whatt he promiseth a preservation to them selfs and their alliance may be obtained: The like game may Montagu play, beinge in the same predicament; which is feared all three will doe; then assuredly our Idoll, The good old cause falls eternally.

Montagu was a particular focus for Hyde's hopes and he was approached as early as May 1659 with a letter from Charles himself. In this, Charles wooed Montagu, writing: 'it is very longe since I have promised my selfe your intire affection and all the offices you can performe towards the restoringe me to what is my right, and your Country to the happinesse it hath been so long deprived of'.<sup>23</sup>

Hyde approached Lord Broghill through his agent Villiers whom he told that the 'King looks upon Lord Broghill as a person who may be most instrumental to do him service there, and he does not believe he will have any adverseness to it when the season shall be proper'. Villiers was instructed that 'the King very much desires... that you would haste into Ireland, and that you would assure Lord Broghill of all that he can wish for from the King, if he will perform this service'.<sup>24</sup> Charles Wolseley was another target: 'If Sir Charles Wolseley be disposed', Hyde wrote, 'he can easily possess Stafford, which is no ill post, he may very securely depend upon his Majesty'.<sup>25</sup>

In each case, Hyde's correspondence reveals the understanding and sympathy he and his agents felt for the monarchical Cromwellians' quandary. In Montagu's case, for instance, Hyde wrote years later of how Cromwell had charmed Montagu into his service and of how Montagu had been, quite understandably, 'passionately adhered' to him.<sup>26</sup> Hyde's informants, working on Montagu, recognised this and also understood that Montagu had responsibilities at home; a great stake to be lost should he gamble on a Stuart restoration and lose. As Samuel Morland wrote to Charles, 'having understood your Ma<sup>ty</sup>s great desire that Gratt: Montague should quit that Jewish Party to wch he hath so long adhered, & become at length a faithfull & loyall subject':

...he was wholly devoted to old Noll – his countrey man, & for his sake a great lover of all his family, but a perfect hater of the men y<sup>t</sup> now rule, as he has often told me privately... the trueth is he hath left behind him a very good stake; two thousand pound per annum, with a wife & ten small children, & it's no small matter will reward him for such a losse.<sup>27</sup>

Hyde understood that the monarchical Cromwellians would need a great deal of reassurance that the King would treat them kindly and reward them for their help in recognition of the great risks they would take on his behalf.

### III

Despite this conciliatory attitude, correspondence with the exiled court remained one-sided and nothing came of Hyde's agents' negotiations. In the

summer of 1659, Hyde received a series of disappointing reports describing an apparent resurgence in fifth monarchyism, Richard Cromwell's diminishing importance and the monarchical Cromwellians' withdrawal from the centre of power.<sup>28</sup> Hyde made a final attempt to bring Richard on board in July but his emissaries drew a blank when they visited him.<sup>29</sup> Hyde's agents suggested that St John, Thurloe and Pierpoint were actively opposed to such an alliance which, if true, may suggest they continued to believe that Richard's cause was salvageable and doubted that they could ensure Charles was restored with appropriate conditions and safeguards for themselves or for the nation. Even if Hyde were to promise indemnity to them, he could not guarantee what a restored Long Parliament might choose to do.

It certainly seems that the monarchical Cromwellians continued to explore the viability of restoring Richard Cromwell for some time after his fall. Both Hyde and ambassador Bordeaux of France reported these activities. The ambassadorial correspondence records a series of negotiations between Bordeaux, Thurloe and Fiennes in May and June. Acting on behalf of Cardinal Mazarin, Bordeaux approached Thurloe initially to pledge the support of French troops to restore Richard. Thurloe was unsure whether Richard had fallen too far into disgrace for his restoration to be achievable, and had misgivings about the consequences of failure. The ambassador wrote that the Secretary agreed 'that it would be an undertaking which would lead to his total ruin and to the ruin of his friends, and which might also be prejudicial to France, were it not successful'. This came to nothing, however, with Fiennes explaining later that Thurloe 'was not a man to enter into any warlike designs, and that as Divine Providence had seen fit thus to dispose of the government of England, no other course remained open but submission'.<sup>30</sup>

This account affords a glimpse into the precarious position in which Thurloe and his fellow monarchical Cromwellians found themselves. The restoration of Richard would undoubtedly have been the most desirable eventuality for them, and yet it was a considerable risk. Nevertheless, reports of these designs were reaching Hyde as late as March 1660. 'Various are the opinions, even of the wisest men', wrote one informant, 'whether there be not a combination between St John, Pierpoint, Thurloe, Montague, Phil Jones and others, to reinvest Richard Cromwell'. Another agent wrote on 3

March 1660 that: 'This is the first night that Thurlow sits in the Councell as Secretary of State: Hee, St Johns, Montague, and that Caball have been of late finding a way to let Dic Cromwell in againe'. Montagu himself told Pepys three days later that 'there was great endeavours to bring in the Protector again'. However, he went on to comment that 'he did not believe it would last long if he were brought in'.<sup>31</sup>

It is impossible to be sure of how long individual monarchical Cromwellians continued to work towards Richard's restitution. What can be ascertained, however, is a more detailed and accurate understanding of their feelings towards Richard and the Protectorate that had turned to dust in their hands. The evidence amassed above leaves little doubt that Richard's Protectorate was the monarchical Cromwellians' regime of choice. It was their strong commitment to both the Cromwell family and the Protectorate which fuelled their immense efforts to prevent its collapse, their expressions of grief when it did so, and their continued longing for Richard's return.<sup>32</sup> As Thurloe wrote to William Lockhart on Richard's abdication in May 1659: 'How this change doth afflict all of us here who had the honour to be related both to his Father and himself I need not trouble your Excellency with. I am in so much confusion that I can scarce constrain myself to write about it'.<sup>33</sup>

However, the monarchical Cromwellians' active support for Richard diminished as the months wore on after his abdication. This did not represent any cooling in their affections for him and his family, but instead a lessening of their belief in his capabilities and in their ability to restore him (as evidenced in Thurloe's reluctant negotiations with ambassador Bordeaux). This accords with the pragmatism which this particular group of politicians displayed throughout their political careers and which led at various points to their castigation as self-interested time-servers. There was a strong sense too, among some of the monarchical Cromwellians, that Richard had failed in some degree to prevent his fall. After the Restoration, Montagu told Samuel Pepys 'of the simplicity of the Protector in his losing all that his father had left him'. Montagu blamed Richard's failing to listen to the counsel of the monarchical Cromwellians in particular.<sup>34</sup>

Likewise, when ambassador Bordeaux sought an audience with Fiennes 'in order to ascertain whether any hope remained for the Protector', he learned

that Fiennes ‘blames his [Richard’s] conduct and compares it to that of Rehoboam’.<sup>35</sup> (Rehoboam, the son of Solomon who reigned after his father’s death, went against the counsel of his older advisers and increased the taxes upon his subjects who rebelled as a result and created the new Israel.) This comparison suggests that, like Montagu, Fiennes blamed Richard for ignoring the advice of his closest civilian advisers inherited from his father – the monarchical Cromwellians.

Taken together, these considerations helped to ease the monarchical Cromwellians’ consciences as they began to look beyond the Cromwell family to explore the other options available to them. It would have been natural for them to brood over such a ‘case of conscience’, surrounded as they were by casuistical debate in the privacy of men’s homes, at the universities and in the press.<sup>36</sup> Their need to reconcile themselves to such actions echoes through their later writings, but they also made their justifications clear at the time. Monck explained that: ‘Richard Cromwell forsook himself else had I never failed my promise to his Father, or regard to his memory’.<sup>37</sup>

Montagu took a similar view, as one of Hyde’s informants reported: ‘He [Montagu] told me lately in private... as others had accused him for treating with the King, & the like, but he valewed his Honour more than all that Family; But if Richard had not so foolishly broken his Parliament both he & Monke would have stood by him; And this, so farr as I know, is his true sence’.<sup>38</sup> Whitelocke used this same practical approach to Richard’s fall in his explanation to Broghill of his decision to work with the *de facto* military authorities in October 1659: ‘Whitelocke had resolved in his mind the present state of affayres, that there was no visible authority or power for government at this time, butt that of the Army’.<sup>39</sup> The line of reasoning that in Richard’s absence they were absolved from their ties to him – almost universal among the monarchical Cromwellians – explains how, once the time was right, they felt able to look beyond the Cromwellian dynasty and, in particular, to begin to respond to their courtship by the royalist cause.

## IV

Discussions between the two sides only really got under way in the early months of 1660. Once the Rump had reassembled in December 1659 and,

with Monck's march to London and the return of the secluded members in February, those Cromwellians who had stayed away during the Republican interlude returned to London with renewed confidence: Thurloe was reinstated as Secretary of State in February; Montagu and Broghill returned to Parliament, Broghill as a Commissioner to rule Ireland; Pierrepont and Montagu joined the Council of State; and Monck and Montagu became joint Generals at Sea. From this power base the monarchical Cromwellians began to reassess their relationships with the exiled court.

Thurloe made his move some time after resuming office. The evidence of Richard Willis, the double agent who served both Thurloe and Hyde, suggests that Thurloe may have been in contact with the court the previous year, although it is difficult to verify this, and Willis's account must be approached with caution as he used it to defend his traitorous behaviour after the Restoration.<sup>40</sup> Thurloe certainly contacted Hyde in the spring of 1660, as Hyde told Sir John Grenville on 13 April that he had received overtures from him. He remained cautious, however, and would not submit any commitment in writing.

Hyde and Charles observed Thurloe's apprehension with much less sympathy than they accorded to Montagu. While they accepted Montagu's reluctance to commit to their cause they did not doubt his wish to do so. Notwithstanding his silence, they remained convinced of Montagu's loyalty and were thus far more delighted when he appeared to have changed his mind about supporting Charles' restoration. It seems likely that Montagu was one of the first to come to the private decision that the King's restoration would be the best available outcome, as reported by a royal agent: 'Montagu has absolutely forsaken Thurloe, St John and all that Caball, and doth now wholly cleave to his father-in-law and his Party'. Furthermore, the source reported Montagu to have said to a mutual friend that 'the true reason why I left the one, and cleave to the other, is, because I playnely see, there is an utter impossibility of settlement without bringing in the King; and I professe, I had rather the Nation were settled, though I and my whole Family suffer by it, as I know I shall'.<sup>41</sup> Montagu's tone here seems more resigned than fervent; his acceptance of this course was a pragmatic rather than an ideological decision.



Montagu was careful, however, to hold out as long as possible before agreeing to support Charles and, when he did so, to keep his support utterly secret. We know from the *Clarendon State Papers* that Montagu was in contact with Charles in April 1660 through the mediation of a relation. Charles assured Montagu that he understood the delicate nature of his position: 'I know too well the use you may be of to me in a good conjuncture, to expose you unnecessarily, and in an unfit season; therefore all that I desire of you is that you will give me your word, that you do and will take my business to heart'. Charles promised Montagu not 'to say anything of what hath been done in former times, in which I know well by what reasons and authority you were led, and I doe assure you I am so far from remembering any thing to your disadvantage, that I look upon you as a person to be rewarded'.<sup>42</sup>

Montagu was finally persuaded by this letter to respond favourably to Charles' overtures on 10 April, assuring Charles that 'I am unalterably a most dutiful subject and faithful servant of yours to the uttermost of my power', adding that 'the resolution I have fixedly taken, and shall never be cancelled'.<sup>43</sup> Once he had written this, Montagu considered himself bound in honour to Charles and it was on the following day that Pepys first noted Montagu's having a 'mind clear to bring in the king'. Six days later Montagu told his clerk 'his thoughts that the King would carry it, and that he did think himself very happy that he was now at sea, as well for his own sake as that he thought he might do his country some service in keeping things quiet'. On 3 May Montagu declared for the King and revealed to Pepys that 'there hath been many letters sped between them for a great while'.<sup>44</sup>

These successes boosted the royalists' confidence to the point where they began to wonder why some other Cromwellians had not made contact. As Hyde wrote of Broghill: 'if Lord Broghill had that zeal of the King's service, which some of his friends think him to have, or that entire confidence in Ned Villiers that he imagines, sure he would have sent an express to him in all this time, and not expected one from him'.<sup>45</sup> Despite Hyde's anxieties, his informants continued to believe Broghill loyal, although they could only speculate as he still refused to speak openly of his commitment. Thus Hyde received word on 16 March: 'Noe letters from Ireland these last two posts: Jones, Coote, and Broughill, are the chief actors there. Soe farr as we understand they are all there disposed for the King'.<sup>46</sup>

This silence may be explained by the pragmatism of the monarchical Cromwellians, many of whom continued to keep their options open. This is not to argue that the information Hyde received of their genuine interest in his cause was inaccurate – it did indeed have its attractions for them – but to suggest that they continued to explore other alternative courses of action; courses available to them only as long as they did not commit themselves fully and openly to one cause. As set out above, reports reached Hyde as late as March 1660 that some monarchical Cromwellians were exploring a final attempt to restore Richard Cromwell.<sup>47</sup> Hyde would not believe this of his favourite Montagu, writing: ‘some would persuade us that he [Montagu] is most desirous to set up Richard again, which is so ridiculous that I cannot believe it. I wish you would say somewhat to me of him, and whether he be again to go to sea’.<sup>48</sup>

Montagu certainly knew about the plan, for he confided in Pepys ‘that there was great endeavours to bring in the Protector again’.<sup>49</sup> However, the fact that Montagu told Pepys that he thought the enterprise unlikely to succeed suggests that he was not involved in the plot.<sup>50</sup> This is perhaps the most convincing piece of evidence to suggest that the other monarchical Cromwellians were launching a last ditch attempt to restore Richard. Rumours to that effect were certainly circulated widely, as Pepys recounted aboard Montagu’s flagship four days earlier: ‘Great is the talk of a single person, and that it would now be Charles, George or Richard again. For the last of which, my Lord St Johns is said to speak high’.<sup>51</sup> Montagu’s prediction was proved right, however, and the plan to restore Richard came to nothing. Most Cromwellians soon abandoned the plot, as Hyde heard on 9 March: ‘Last week there was great caballing to bring in Dick Cromwell by Thurloe, St Johns, Montague, & others, but that designe proving too weake, St Johns and Thurloe have this week assisted the Rump in fomenting discontents amongst the Officers of the Army’.<sup>52</sup>

Of all the monarchical Cromwellians, St John seems to have been the most trenchant in his opposition to a Stuart restoration. While exploring the potential for Richard’s restoration in private, he worked tirelessly to safeguard the Commonwealth.<sup>53</sup> He displayed his true feelings at the turbulent first meeting of the new Council of State where Hyde’s informant told Hyde that ‘St Johns and his party [are] for any thing or person to be sett up but ye king’.<sup>54</sup> St John was powerless to prevent the Restoration,

however, and when his arguments fell on deaf ears he withdrew from the Council, speaking angrily of Monck's conversion to the royal cause 'that nothing troubled him more then that Monke was a Rigid Chavaleere, both hee and his man Thurlo are oul att heeles'.<sup>55</sup> Thurloe then was equally powerless.

In resisting the Restoration so passionately, St John continued to confound all of Hyde's expectations. His reasons for resisting the Restoration are likely to have been complex. He had indeed always desired a monarchical settlement, but his personal hostility to the Stuart dynasty had a long history. The hostility was mutual. Over the months, Hyde received hysterical reports of St John's – and naturally Thurloe's – activities in the most colourful language: 'Thurloe is semper idem; but I hope his hornes will never grow so long as formerly to push the King's friends. St John is a great pike that's loath to be beaten into the nett. He & Thurloe have been labouring of late to blow up the sectarys and discontented officers, but I hope it will come to nothing'.<sup>56</sup> It was not for nothing that another informant declared St John to be 'the most deadly enemy the King has in England'.<sup>57</sup>

It was unfortunate for St John that his actions were so closely scrutinised as he was not the only monarchical Cromwellian working to prevent a Stuart restoration. Broghill, while corresponding with the royal court on the one hand, continued ostensibly to work with Thurloe against a royal return until late April. He wrote to the Secretary, partially in code, assuring him: 'They have had odd plots 6 29 32 40 39 6 heere concerning the king, and all means used to win me; and thos failinge, other things were thought on; but I can assure you, I has intirely secured Munster 38 17 16 5 81 against any, that shall be for the king, or not for the council of state or parliament'.<sup>58</sup>

By this stage, what the monarchical Cromwellians feared most was that Monck would restore the King without sufficient conditions. Whitelocke was one of the first to guess Monck's true intentions and it was because of this that he urged Charles Fleetwood either to bid to control the King's restoration or else to oppose it militarily. When Fleetwood eventually refused to do either, Whitelocke rightly observed: 'you will ruine your selfe and your friends'.<sup>59</sup> Broghill expressed similar concerns to Thurloe, writing: 'Wee all hope thos pretious rights we have soe longe, and we thinke justly contended for, will not be exposed, but provided for'.<sup>60</sup> Montagu, for his

part, entertained suspicions that Monck was aiming at his own dictatorship.<sup>61</sup> Hyde refused to believe that Monck's colleagues had guessed Monck's true intentions, however: 'It is not possible', he wrote, 'that Pierpoint and St John would be so impertinently violent against the King, if they believed Monk would ever be wrought over to him'.<sup>62</sup> Generally, Hyde's informants were unconcerned, as one wrote: 'Thurloe is not much in use, and his good old Master [Oliver St John], after his lost hopes, is returned to keep his cushion till Wednesday morning. Pierpoint is still inveterate'.<sup>63</sup>

### V

These observers were proved right. When Charles Stuart was restored on 8 May 1660, it was done so remarkably easily and entirely unconditionally. Gradually over the past months, most of the monarchical Cromwellians had accepted the likelihood of restoration and sought to influence it. This acceptance represented more a pragmatic resignation than an ideological commitment, however, even on the part of those who corresponded with the King. Their experience of the civil wars had left them with a mistrust of unbridled kingship and their admiration of Oliver Cromwell bequeathed them higher expectations of a monarch grounded in his superior behaviour rather than his divine right to rule. As Montagu observed dispassionately: the King would not last long 'unless he carry himself very soberly and well'.<sup>64</sup>

Examining the monarchical Cromwellians' relationship with the exiled court in this troubled time reveals a number of conclusions. It reinforces the monarchical Cromwellians' position at the centre of government and influence, particularly under the Protectorate. Hyde's instructions reveal the importance he placed on securing them to the royalist cause while his agents' obsession with St John, Thurloe and Pierpoint in particular, rescue them from something of the obscurity into which their own skilled attempts to distance themselves from the Protectorate and republican regime at the Restoration cast them. This whitewashing disguised the monarchical Cromwellians' firm commitment to the Protectorate and to the Cromwell family which they otherwise demonstrated in their attempts to restore Richard, their agonising over changing their allegiance to the royalist course – made possible in many of their minds only by Richard's own actions

releasing them from their bond to him – and by Hyde and his royal master's own acknowledgement of their former loyalty.

But as their royalist observers correctly identified, the key feature of many of the monarchical Cromwellians' political views was their desire for a monarchical settlement and this rendered many of them both attractive and, ultimately willing, converts to the King's cause. The finer points of their conversion – its tone and timing – cast a long shadow over their future careers under the Restoration. Those who, like Montagu, Monck and Broghill, negotiated their relationship with the exiled court well, enjoyed royal favour while those who, like Thurloe, St John and Pierrepont, resisted the Restoration for too long, or who were thought to do so, never regained their public positions. Age and utility may have also played a part, with the younger members of this group more able to distance themselves from the civil wars and to promise decades of loyal service to the new King than their older colleagues.

The wide variation in the success with which the monarchical Cromwellians' loyal submissions were received at the Restoration closely reflected the royalists' experiences of dealing with them throughout the preceding year. Those Cromwellians whom the exiled court came to consider as hostile obstacles to the Restoration were damaged for life. 'Without doubt', one agent wrote to Hyde of St John, Thurloe and Pierrepont on 13 May 1660, 'there are not in nature three such beasts, from whose villainy and treachery I beseech God defend His Majesty'.<sup>65</sup> The contrast between this vitriol and Hyde's desires only a year earlier that his agents secure the services of these same men, illustrates the high price the monarchical Cromwellians paid for the choices they had made in the intervening twelve months.

<sup>1</sup> This article is taken from my PhD thesis 'Conservative Cromwellians and the Restoration: c. 1657 – 1677' (University of Cambridge, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Lord Culpeper to Edward Hyde, 17 June 1659, in *Clarendon State Papers (CSP)*, III, p. 493.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Thomas, 'Cases of Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England' in John Morrill, Paul Slack and Daniel Woolf (eds.) *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993), p. 29.

- <sup>4</sup> See for example: Major Anthony Morgan to Henry Cromwell, 24 February 1657, *The correspondence of Henry Cromwell, 1655-1659: from the British Library Lansdowne Manuscripts* ed. Peter Gaunt (2007), pp. 204-5; Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English affairs from the beginning of the reign of Charles the First to the happy restoration of King Charles the Second*, (4 vols., Oxford, 1853 edn), IV, 289; and Robert Beake to Leonard Piddock, 28 March 1657, Coventry City Archives, BA/H/Q/A79/302. This letter appears in Carol Egloff, 'Robert Beake and a letter concerning the Humble Petition and Advice, 28 March 1657', *Historical Research*, 68 (1995), 233-9.
- <sup>5</sup> Patrick Little and David L. Smith, *Parliaments and politics during the Cromwellian Protectorate* (Cambridge 2007), p. 108 & note 35.
- <sup>6</sup> G. E. Aylmer (ed.), *The Interregnum: the quest for settlement 1646-1660* (1972), pp. 187-8.
- <sup>7</sup> See C. H. Firth, 'Cromwell and the Crown', *English Historical Review*, 17 (1902) & 18 (1903), 18, 68; H. R. Trevor-Roper, 'Oliver Cromwell and his Parliaments', in Ivan Roots ed. *Oliver Cromwell: A Profile* (1973), p. 128; G. E. Aylmer (ed.), *The Interregnum: the quest for settlement 1646-1660* (1972), pp. 187-8; Barry Coward, *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (Manchester, 2002), p. 82; and Miranda Malins 'Conservative Cromwellians and the Restoration: c. 1657 – 1677' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2010).
- <sup>8</sup> For a more detailed investigation of the make-up and description of this group of Cromwellians, please see my PhD thesis 'Conservative Cromwellians and the Restoration: c. 1657 – 1677' (University of Cambridge, 2010).
- <sup>9</sup> Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England begun in the year 1641*, ed. W. Dunn Macray (6 vols., Oxford, 1888), VI, 21.
- <sup>10</sup> Andrew Barclay, 'The Lord Protector and his Court' in Little (ed.) *Oliver Cromwell: new perspectives*, pp. 209-10.
- <sup>11</sup> See Jason Peacey, 'The Protector Humbled: Richard Cromwell and the constitution' in Little (ed.) *The Cromwellian Protectorate* and "'Fit for public services": The upbringing of Richard Cromwell' in Little (ed.) *Oliver Cromwell: New Perspectives*; Peter Gaunt, 'Richard Cromwell' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn, January 2008);

- 'Richard Cromwell and Parliaments' in Little and Smith, *Parliaments and politics*; and Miranda Malins, 'My solitary life: Richard Cromwell, 1659-1712' (*Cromwelliana*, 2010) and PhD thesis 'Conservative Cromwellians and the Restoration: c. 1657 – 1677' (University of Cambridge, 2010).
- <sup>12</sup> Richard Ollard, *Cromwell's Earl: A Life of Edward Montagu 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Sandwich* (1994), pp. 73-4.
  - <sup>13</sup> Oliver St John, *The Case of Oliver St John, Esq. concerning his actions during the late troubles* (1660); and Bulstrode Whitelocke, 'The case of Bulstrode Whitelocke Knight' in *The diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke 1605-1675*, ed. Ruth Spalding (Oxford, 1990).
  - <sup>14</sup> Keith Thomas, 'Cases of Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England' in John Morrill, Paul Slack and Daniel Woolf (eds.) *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993), p. 29.
  - <sup>15</sup> Edward Hyde to Mr Hatton, 17 February 1660, in *CSP*, III, 701-02.
  - <sup>16</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 427-8, 448-9.
  - <sup>17</sup> Edward Hyde to Mordaunt, 4 April 1659, in *CSP*, III, 448-9.
  - <sup>18</sup> Edward Hyde to Mr Broderick, 10 March 1659, in *Ibid.*, p. 434-5.
  - <sup>19</sup> Edward Hyde to Mr Broderick, 21 March 1659, in *Ibid.*, p. 710.
  - <sup>20</sup> Mr Robinson to Edward Hyde, 2 December 1658, in *CSP*, III, 421; Mr Mordaunt to Charles II, 10 February 1659, in *Ibid.*, p. 423. For further examples of this see: Mr Robinson to Edward Hyde, 2 December 1658, in *CSP*, III, 421; Mr Crimson to unknown, 13 February 1659, in *Ibid.*, p. 424; and Edward Hyde to Mr Broderick, February 1659, in *Ibid.*, pp. 427-8.
  - <sup>21</sup> Edward Hyde to Mr Broderick, February 1659, in *Ibid.*, pp. 427-8.
  - <sup>22</sup> Mordaunt to Charles Stuart, 11 May 1659, in *Ibid.*, p. 469; and Guizot, *The History of Richard Cromwell*, I, 142-3.
  - <sup>23</sup> There are three alternative drafts of this letter written in Hyde's hand in the manuscripts of the *Clarendon State Papers* altogether. See also Charles Stuart to Edward Montagu, draft by Edward Hyde, 9 May 1659, in Bodl., MS Clarendon 60, f. 436.
  - <sup>24</sup> Edward Hyde to Ned Villiers, 20 June 1659, in *CSP*, III, 500-02.
  - <sup>25</sup> Edward Hyde to Mr Mordaunt, 25 July 1659, in *Ibid.*, pp. 534-5.
  - <sup>26</sup> Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, VI, pp. 186-8.
  - <sup>27</sup> Samuel Morland to Charles Stuart, 15 June 1659, in Bodl., MS Clarendon 61, f. 195.

- 28 Mr Broderick to Edward Hyde, 24 June 1659, in *CSP*, III, 505-06 and 16 July 1659, in *Ibid.*, pp. 526-8.
- 29 Ollard, *Cromwell's Earl*, p. 268.
- 30 Guizot, *History of Richard Cromwell*, I, Appendix, 389-93, 393-8, 402-05.
- 31 *CSP*, III, 693-4; Bodl., MS Clarendon 70, f. 85; and *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, I, 79.
- 32 For a detailed analysis of this commitment please see my PhD thesis 'Conservative Cromwellians and the Restoration: c. 1657 – 1677' (University of Cambridge, 2010).
- 33 John Thurloe to William Lockhart, 5 May 1659, in *CSP*, III, 461; Butler, *Richard Cromwell*, p. 125.
- 34 *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, I, 180.
- 35 Guizot, *History of Richard Cromwell*, I, Appendix, 402-05.
- 36 See Thomas, 'Cases of Conscience' in Morrill, Slack and Woolf (eds.), *Public Duty and Private Conscience*, pp. 29-56.
- 37 Mr. Hancock (Broderick) to Edward Hyde, 16 December 1659, in *CSP*, III, 628-9.
- 38 Unknown to Edward Hyde, 9 March 1660, MS Clarendon 70, f. 132.
- 39 *The diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, p. 538.
- 40 David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England 1649-1660* (New Haven, 1960), p. 250.
- 41 Mrs Harrison to Charles Stuart, 19 March 1660, in *CSP*, III, 703.
- 42 Charles Stuart to Edward Montagu, April 1660, in *Ibid.*, p. 719.
- 43 Edward Montagu to Charles Stuart, 10 April 1660 in *Ibid.*, pp. 724-5.
- 44 *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, I, pp. 106-07, 110 & 124-5.
- 45 Edward Hyde to Mr Wright (Rumbold), 26 March 1660, in *CSP*, III, 707.
- 46 Unknown to Edward Hyde, 16 March 1660, in T. H. Lister, *Life and Administration of Edward, First Earl of Clarendon* (3 vols., 1838), III, 90.
- 47 *CSP*, III, 693-4; Bodl., MS Clarendon 70, f. 85; and *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, I, 79.
- 48 Edward Hyde to Mr Hatton, 17 February 1660, in *CSP*, III, 701-02.
- 49 *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, I, 79.
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- 52 An informer to Edward Hyde, 9 March 1660, in Bodl., MS Clarendon 70, f. 132.



- <sup>53</sup> See Monck's praise of St John for these efforts in George Monck to Oliver St John, 21 January 1660, in *The Clarke Papers: selections from the papers of W. Clarke, Secretary to the Council of the army, 1647-9, and to General Monck and the commanders of the army in Scotland, 1651-61*, ed. C. H. Firth (4 vols., 1891-4), IV, 249.
- <sup>54</sup> Letter from an informer to Edward Hyde, 29 March 1660, Bodl., MS Clarendon 71, ff. 81-2.
- <sup>55</sup> Miles Barton to Edward Hyde, 30 March 1660 in *Ibid.*, f. 107.
- <sup>56</sup> Unknown to Edward Hyde, 16 March 1660, transcript from an original MS in the Bodleian Library in Lister, *Life and Administration of Clarendon*, III, 90.
- <sup>57</sup> Unknown to Edward Hyde, 23 March 1660, transcript from an original MS in the Bodleian Library in *Ibid.*, III, 93-4.
- <sup>58</sup> Lord Broghill to John Thurloe, 24 April 1660, in *A collection of the state papers of John Thurloe, Esq; secretary, first, to the Council of State, and afterwards to the two Protectors, Oliver and Richard Cromwell*, ed. T. Birch (7 vols., 1742), VII, 908. There is no evidence that anyone has yet broken this cipher.
- <sup>59</sup> *The diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, pp. 551-2.
- <sup>60</sup> Lord Broghill to John Thurloe, 2 May 1660, in *TSP*, VII, 911.
- <sup>61</sup> *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, I, 75.
- <sup>62</sup> Edward Hyde to Mordaunt, 17 March 1660, in *CSP*, III, 701.
- <sup>63</sup> Mr Samborne to Edward Hyde, 23 March 1660, in *Ibid.*, pp. 731-2.
- <sup>64</sup> *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, I, 79.
- <sup>65</sup> Mr Broderick to Edward Hyde, 13 May 1660, in *CSP*, III 747-9.

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By Vanessa Moir

Oxford, unlike some of the places featured in this series, is well known to many as an ancient university city, but the role it played as Royalist capital during the first four years of the civil war is surprisingly unknown, and moreover, relatively unstudied. John Barrett's recent book *Cavalier Capital* is the first full study of the contemporary city published since the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> Interest in the civil war tends not to be high on the list of the many visitors to Oxford every year, notwithstanding the fact that many of the beautiful and historic buildings they come to see played a role not just in *Inspector Morse* but in the King's garrison and capital (and a considerably bigger role than they played in *Harry Potter*). Despite this, the account is worth telling.

Although there was some Roman clay mining in the surrounding area, Oxford owes its origin to the Saxons, for whom it was a leading burgh or fortified town, defending against the Vikings. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century it had grown into an important market town, already a centre of learning in the churches and monasteries from around 1096, and one that boasted a royal palace where kings lived and were born. It was this mix of learning and political and economic power that drew students to Oxford in greater numbers after the banishment of English students from the University of Paris in 1167, a migration that would result in the beginning of the University of Oxford, the body that would dominate the city for hundreds of years.

In the lead up to the Civil War, Oxford was surprisingly closely connected to the political divisions of the day. In the mid-seventeenth century Oxford was in a state of prosperity. After something of a decline in the later Middle Ages, the town had recovered and achieved economic success mostly through service industries, supplying the University with food, drink and entertainment. The University itself was doing well, and both City and University had been honoured by a Royal visit in 1636. Charles I and his court visited Oxford, stayed in Christ Church, received honorary degrees, and were feasted in a great banquet in the newly built Canterbury Quad in St John's College.<sup>2</sup> This visit was hosted by one of the most divisive figures of the time, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of the University of Oxford, William Laud. The violent street battles that characterised the medieval Town-Gown rivalry had faded into political squabbles, but the

influence of Archbishop Laud meant that national political arguments fed into local ones, with arguments even over whether the University or City had the right to run nightwatch patrols linked to support (or not) for the King's personal rule.<sup>3</sup>

The summer months of 1642 were dramatic in Oxford. The University was from the beginning a firm supporter of the King, demonstrated by a series of loans given to him by the University and the colleges in July 1642.<sup>4</sup> It greeted with seeming enthusiasm the King's proclamation of the suppression of the rebellion, which reached Oxford on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August. Students eagerly became soldiers and on the 18<sup>th</sup> some 330 students and members of the University marched through the city to a park to practise drill, which they continued to do over the following weeks, ready to support the King.<sup>5</sup> They also started to build makeshift fortifications, such as blocking up the end of Magdalen Bridge with 'longe timber logges to keepe out horsmen'.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this, the early months were fluid. Oxford's position between London and the Midlands meant that parties of troops from either side moved through and around it, and it was unclear which side it would end up on. The first troops to enter and take position of the city were Royalist, under John Byron who arrived at midnight on August 28<sup>th</sup>. They spent the next week or so training with the Royalist supporters in the University.<sup>7</sup> However, this show of overt support for the King started to unnerve the townspeople, who sent messages to Parliament insisting it was all done 'at the sollicitation and instigation of the Universitie more than of their owne proper inclination'. Worried, the University sought to change tack, seeking to placate the Parliamentarians by sending messages to them at Aylesbury. This led to the departure of Byron and his troops on September 10<sup>th</sup>, accompanied by 'diverse schollars volunteers'.<sup>8</sup>

This fluidity was illustrated by the entrance two days later of a vanguard of Parliamentary troops, followed on the 14<sup>th</sup> by the Parliamentary commander Lord Saye and Sele, an Oxfordshire man from Broughton Castle in the north of the county.<sup>9</sup> This occupation lasted for around three weeks and demonstrates that Oxford's status as the Royalist capital was far from inevitable. Saye held a meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup> in which he debated whether to leave troops in the city, seeking an assurance from the University

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‘that they should not send for any other forces’, and was begged by a Puritan academic to leave a garrison so that ‘honest men’ could walk through Oxford without being called a roundhead.<sup>10</sup> It was the uncontrollable nature of his own troops, who had already started to mutiny over pay, and who by the end of the occupation were fighting with swords in the street, added to rumours that Prince Rupert was attacking his house at Broughton, that led to Saye and the Parliamentarian’s departure, rather than strategic considerations.<sup>11</sup> The King did not quite, despite John Aubrey’s description, ‘[enter] the city like Apollo and [take] it back from Parliament’s soldiers’.<sup>12</sup>

Oxford’s status as the Royalist capital therefore only came fully into being in the aftermath of the Battle of Brentford, when it became clear that the King would not make an easy return to the capital to end the war. It was chosen for a variety of reasons, including simply the position of forces after the Battle of Edgehill, the city and University’s close relationship and support in the years leading up to the war and the rooms potentially available in the Oxford colleges.<sup>13</sup>

Once it became clear that the King would be remaining in Oxford for the foreseeable future, the predominant need was for the city to be able to support the pursuit of fighting a war. Many university buildings were pressed into use for this. Areas of what are now the historic parts of the Bodleian Library, then fairly newly built and used for teaching, examinations, university governance and storing books, were co-opted for various different purposes. The Bodleian Library’s Schools’ Quad was at the time used both to store books and had classrooms for teaching, which were now pressed into use for storage. Corn was stored there, along with cloth for uniforms in the Music and Astronomy Schools (the space also used by tailors to make the uniforms), while drawbridges were made and stored in the School of Rhetoric. New College became the arsenal, and Magdalen College was used for storing the artillery guns.<sup>14</sup> The city had natural defences in the rivers Thames and Cherwell, but fortifications were also slowly built around the city for the next few years. Sentry posts were held in the grounds of Gloucester Hall (now Worcester College), New College, Wadham College, the back of Christ Church, and at ‘Dover’s peer’ on the river Cherwell at Magdalen College, named after the Earl of Dover who commanded a regiment of students.<sup>15</sup>

The loss of London and the machineries of government, law and economics was a major blow to the Royalist cause and attempts had to be made to replicate them. Again, the Bodleian Library was used a lot. Convocation House, the seat of the University government, was used for the Court of Chancery when the law terms began in January 1643, while the Natural Philosophy School was used for the Court of Requests.<sup>16</sup> In January 1644 the King decided to hold a Parliament in Oxford and ‘summoned the members from London to assemble in Christ Church Hall’. ‘Most of the House of Lords and about a third of the House of Commons’ answered his summons.<sup>17</sup> There was also a mint in New Inn Hall Street. A fellow of All Souls’ College, John Birkenhead, was chosen ‘as someone fit to write the news’ and became the editor of *Mercurius Aulicus*, ‘which he wrote wittily enough till the surrender of the town’.<sup>18</sup> These attempts to replicate London were not entirely successful. For example, the output of all Charles I’s mints (he had another in Bristol) during more than four years was approximately equivalent to the average of 2–3 months production at the established mint in the Tower of London.<sup>19</sup>

Other elements of the capital were also reproduced as the royal ‘court [was] shrunken in scale and mapped on to Oxford’.<sup>20</sup> The King lived at Christ Church, dining in the Hall and attending services in the Cathedral.<sup>21</sup> The Queen, after arriving in the summer of 1643, lived at nearby Merton College, and a passageway was cut between the two.<sup>22</sup> The King’s court spread out around the colleges. Nobles who had attended a college, or had friends or relatives attached there, returned to stay, often with their families. This sudden imposition of women and children into a normally all-male environment could be startling for the dons. John Aubrey recalls how Lady Isabella Thynne and Mrs Fanshawe ‘would have a frolic to make a visit’ to the elderly President of Trinity College, Ralph Kettell to ‘tease’ him. Kettell found the ‘dissoluteness of the times’ hard and ‘his days were shortened’, dying in 1643.<sup>23</sup>

The presence of the young women meant that court social life did not end. The Trinity College grove was described by John Aubrey as the ‘Daphne for the ladies and their gallants to walk in’, and was the place to see and be seen for the young noblemen and women. Lady Isabella Thynne ‘would make her entry with a theorbo or lute played before her’, and she and Mrs Fanshawe would come to services in Trinity chapel ‘half dressed like

angels'.<sup>24</sup> When not away fighting, the ultimate Cavalier, Prince Rupert, was recorded as riding around Oxford in a coach accompanied by a fashionably dressed lady wearing 'a round black velvet cap on, and a long white feather with a redd tipp at the end of it'.<sup>25</sup> The Oxford taverns, having run out of expensive wine shortly after Christmas 1642, were restocked at the end of January 1643, probably having been imported from France, an illustration of the priorities for some in the city.<sup>26</sup> It is notable that movement and trade did not entirely cease between Oxford and Parliamentary held areas. This could be surreptitious: some carriers would 'pretend at the courts of guard at London that they have them out for the Parliament use'.<sup>27</sup> In August 1643 the king had 'a shippe of wyne and sweete meates' delivered to him.<sup>28</sup> Many did not share these priorities, and found the Royalist years a hard time, with even the elite not immune. Ann Fanshawe (née Harrison), the daughter of Sir John Harrison (who had given loans to the King), arrived in Oxford with her sister after her father commanded them to go there in 1643. Compared to her previous life 'lived in great plenty and great order', arriving in Oxford was like being 'fishes out of water'. Ann and her family lived 'in a baker's house in an obscure street' and had gone from 'roomes well furnished to lye in a very bad bed in a garrett'. They ate 'one dish of meat and that not the best ordered' and had neither money...nor clothes more than a man or two brought in their cloak bags'.<sup>29</sup> The inhabitants faced the deaths, injuries and separations inevitable in wartime, 'the perpetuall discourse of losing and gaining of towns and men'<sup>30</sup>, as Ann Fanshawe put it. A 'collecion for mony for the maymed soldiers that were hurt at Redding' was held in 'all the churches in Oxford' in May 1643.<sup>31</sup> Ann's brother William Harrison, a pre-war MP, 'dyed at Oxford with a bruise in his side caused by the fall of his horse, which was shot from under him', described as 'a very good and gallant young man' by the King 'when he was told of his death'.<sup>32</sup> She married diplomat Sir Richard Fanshawe in May 1644 and her account of their separation tells of what many must have felt: Sir Richard 'was extremely afflicted even to tears, though passion was against his nature' by the sight of 'leaving [her] with a dying child...in a garrison town, extream weak and very poor'.<sup>33</sup>

Oxford was 'too small to cope' with it all. It became 'overfull, disease ridden, [with] people in the street...hungry and dying'.<sup>34</sup> The city was considerably more crowded during the occupation and disease spread easily. Ann Harrison described witnessing 'the sad spectacle of war, sometimes

plague, sometimes sicknesses of other kind, by reason of so many people being packt together'.<sup>35</sup> 1643 was a particularly bad year for fatalities from disease. In April John Aubrey was one of the lucky ones, sent home after he 'fell sick of the smallpox at Trinity College'.<sup>36</sup> In July 1643, of those less fortunate 'about 40 a weeke [died] of the plague in Oxford, besides, many of other diseases', which rose to '20 a day' in August. Even in December, spies reported that 'many dye dayly in Oxford of the new disease'.<sup>37</sup> The death rate soared compared to pre-war levels as noted in the listings of burials in the city's churches. The city church of St Michael at the Northgate had buried 35 people in 1641, but in 1643 buried 216, including 43 with no name, and then 145 in 1644, including 34 who died through disease.<sup>38</sup>

The presence of ill-trained soldiers could be dangerous for the population. Ann Fanshawe was once watching a company of foot march past, commanded by an acquaintance, Sir Charles Lee, when 'one of the muskets being loden' during an attempted salute to her resulted in 'a brace of bullets' hitting a tree 'not 2 inches above my head'.<sup>39</sup> A gentleman soldier called Arthur Swayne was apparently killed when his son, whom he was instructing in the use of arms, discharged a mistakenly loaded pistol at him.<sup>40</sup> At court 'twoe gentlemen fell out and fought for a horse that was given betweene them, and one of them runne the horse through', a fight not ended until 'Prince Rupert came forth with a poleaxe and parted them'.<sup>41</sup> The Oxford of August 1643 described by Parliamentary spies as being rampant with disease, the King having to issue edicts against plunder and the report that Prince Rupert had hanged a butcher for refusing to bless the King, sounds a nervy and unstable place.<sup>42</sup> The loyalty of the city was not entirely trusted and in April 1645 the governor imposed a loyalty oath.<sup>43</sup> Sometimes events, however, could be less dramatic than they sounded. A duel fought in March 1643 between the son of the Earl of Lennox and a gentleman of the King's bedchamber ended in 'no hurt done on either side'.<sup>44</sup>

Fire was another hazard, especially a large fire on October 8<sup>th</sup> 1644. It began at two o'clock in the afternoon in a poor house on what is now George Street 'occasion'd by a foot-soldier's roasting a pigg which he had stoln', and spread, burning most of the houses between Cornmarket and New Inn Hall Street, down past Queen Street to at least level with Pembroke College (which survived), and probably in some areas all the way down to the river.<sup>45</sup> It destroyed '8 common Brewhowses and 10 Bakehowses...besides many

malt howses, Mault, wheat, Wood and other provisions'.<sup>46</sup> In total, probably around 300 properties were lost.<sup>47</sup>

The overcrowding and societal problems were leavened by some of the normal inhabitants of the city being mostly absent during this period. The number of students in the city dropped. There had been 131 MA candidates in 1642, which fell to 25 by 1644, while 200 BA candidates in 1641 fell to 31 in 1645.<sup>48</sup> Some students became soldiers, such as those in Lord Digby's troop of horse which '[consisted] all of scollars',<sup>49</sup> while in May 1644 the Earl of Dover raised a regiment of 630 'scholars and strangers'.<sup>50</sup> Not all the students left. For example, William Brouncker, the future first President of the Royal Society 'lived in Oxford when 'twas a garrison for the king' where he 'addicted himself only to the study of mathematics, and was a very great artist in that learning'.<sup>51</sup>

Supplies of food and other necessities were a big worry, and they started to run very low at the beginning of the occupation. In February 1643 one Parliamentary spy reported that 'hay and salt is soe scarce at Oxford that they cannot continue long'; another that 'hay is very scarce there and hee paid 2s a night for his horses hay'; and a further one reported that 'horsemeate, fewell and other provisions is very scarce'.<sup>52</sup> The Royalist authorities needed to find more sources of supplies, and it was reported at the end of February that the King had 'commanded the constables inhabiting within 17 parishes next adioyning to Oxford to bring in straw, hay, oates, corne and all other provision whatsoever to bee employed for his Majestie['s] service'.<sup>53</sup> By May 1643 the spies reported that 'there [were] great store of cattle, corne and other provision brought into the towne, and all the bakers employed in making of biskett'.<sup>54</sup> In December 1643 Oxford had 'provision sufficient of all sorts and at indifferent rates, onely fewell is extreame scarce and their beere is very ill'.<sup>55</sup> As well as supplies for the garrison, the city council agreed to pay £5 each at the beginning of the war to start 'a Magazin of Wheate' to supply the townspeople, especially the poor.<sup>56</sup>

Appropriation continued throughout the use of Oxford as a garrison. The post of Commissary General of the Victual was created. In June 1644 this was Captain Henry Stevens who was ordered to 'fetch in such prouisions of Corne and Victualls from the seuerall Diuisions of this Country as shalbe



necessary for this Garrison'.<sup>57</sup> To improve storage, on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1644 Captain Stevens was ordered to survey the dining halls in Exeter, Oriel, Wadham, Jesus, St. John's and New Colleges to choose the most appropriate 'to bee forthwith Boarded [and] devided into [partitions] to store vpp the Corne'.<sup>58</sup> The supplies were seemingly not enough as the King issued a proclamation on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1644 that all corn and grain in Oxfordshire and Berkshire should be brought into Oxford and stored there to keep it safe from Parliament and provide food to the garrison.<sup>59</sup>

This all had to be paid for and one of the biggest impacts was monetary, with the city and University pressed to finance the King's war. Initial voluntary bequests by the University and colleges later became more forced. £250 lent by the city on the King's re-entry after Edgehill became £2,500 requested by the King from the city in June 1643.<sup>60</sup> In January 1643 the King sent a request to the colleges 'for their plate to be brought into the mint there to be coyned into money'.<sup>61</sup> The Council records are full of protest at heavy taxes, and considered that the King was 'demanding more than [was] really due to him'.<sup>62</sup> On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1644, in the aftermath of the fire, the city council petitioned the King that he leave Oxford, and at least lessen the heavy tax burden they were paying, a petition which was, unsurprisingly, refused.<sup>63</sup>

Oxfordshire saw raids and some small-scale fighting, but only the battle of Chalgrove took place nearby and there were no large battles. The summer of 1643 saw skirmishes in South Oxfordshire and the summers of 1644 and 1645 saw manoeuvring by the Parliamentary armies near the city, which ended both times with the timely departure of the King, and the decision of the Parliamentary commanders to leave, rather than to lay siege without him. Although prepared for siege, it wasn't until the summer of 1646, when it was increasingly obvious that the end was nigh for the Royalists, that any form of serious siege on the city was mounted. Thomas Fairfax's troops surrounded the city, firing cannonballs towards Christ Church. The city was eventually allowed to surrender with little damage, partly thanks to Fairfax as 'the first thing General Fairfax did was to set a good guard of soldiers to preserve the Bodleian Library' which was allegedly more damaged by the Royalists 'by way of embazzling and cutting off chains of books', than by the conquering forces.<sup>64</sup>

Oxford took little part in the events of the second part of the war and the subsequent fifteen years. Its most notable role during the Commonwealth was the purging of many University academics by the Parliament to ensure that an institution that had previously tended towards Arminianism, supported what was now seen as the correct religion. In the immediate aftermath of its surrender, seven preachers were sent to Oxford in 1646 to counteract four years of Royalist propaganda.<sup>65</sup> In April 1648, 'in regard of the recent contempt of Fellows, officers and members of the University of Oxford towards the authority of Parliament', a proclamation was issued that 'all who will not submit to it shall be removed from their positions...and the Parliamentary Visitors [would] appoint others to their places', a process which continued until the Restoration.<sup>66</sup>

All spelling in primary sources is original.

- <sup>1</sup> However, there are many short local history studies of the experiences of various towns in Oxfordshire, and an account of the experience of the county as a whole was published in 1995.
- <sup>2</sup> Ian Roy, 'The City of Oxford 1640-1660, pp. 130-68, In R.C. Richardson, *Town and Countryside in the English Revolution*, (Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 130-2, David Eddershaw, and Eleanor Roberts, *The Civil War in Oxfordshire*, (Alan Sutton Publishing 1995), pp. 1-4.
- <sup>3</sup> Ian Roy and Dietrich Reinhart, 'Oxford and the Civil Wars' pp. 687-731, in *The History of the University of Oxford: Vol. IV: Seventeenth Century Oxford*, edited by Nicholas Tyacke, (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 688.
- <sup>4</sup> The University of Oxford was the first corporate body to lend the King money for his war, giving him £14, 283 in the early months of the war. Ian Roy and Dietrich Reinhart, 'Oxford and the Civil Wars', pp. 694-5.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695, described by Himself: Vol. I: 1632-1663*, edited by Andrew Clark (The Oxford Historical Society, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1891), p.54. Despite being published as part of Wood's memoirs, the most detailed period of the account of the civil war (9<sup>th</sup> August 1642 to 15<sup>th</sup> July 1643) was actually not written by Wood himself, but by Brian Twyne, Keeper of the University Archives. Twyne died in 1644 and his 'Musterings' were incorporated into Wood's memoirs.

- <sup>6</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 55.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, pp. 56-8.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 59. The messages were ill-received, returning 'sharp answers' demanding the taking into custody of those 'Doctors delinquents' most active in the Royalist cause, leading to the imprisonment of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Robert Pinke, who had lead the military preparations.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, pp. 60-1. In the manner of tourists today, some of the early troops to arrive went on a visit to see Christ Church (although to the Cathedral, not the Hall as today), where they marvelled at the extravagance of the church and its 'paynted windowes'.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, pp. 64-5.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, pp. 65-7.
- <sup>12</sup> Ruth Scurr, *John Aubrey: My Own Life*, (Chatto & Windus, London 2015), pp. 48-9.
- <sup>13</sup> Ian Roy and Dietrich Reinhart, 'Oxford and the Civil Wars', p. 699.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 84. School is an Oxford word for classroom or lecture hall.
- <sup>15</sup> Ian Roy and Dietrich Reinhart, 'Oxford and the Civil Wars', p. 707.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 83.
- <sup>17</sup> *John Aubrey: My Own Life*, p. 63.
- <sup>18</sup> *John Aubrey: Brief Lives*, edited by Richard Baker (The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1982), p. 39.
- <sup>19</sup> C. E. Challis, 'Lord Hastings to the Great Silver Recoinage, 1464-1699' p. 179-397. in *A New History of the Royal Mint*, edited by Christopher Edgar Challis (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 283.
- <sup>20</sup> *John Aubrey: My Own Life*, p. 49.
- <sup>21</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 72, pp. 95-6; *John Aubrey: My Own Life*, p. 50. John Aubrey watched Charles I eat 'mutton and veal (boiled and roasted), capons, hens (with eggs), partridges, pheasants, cocks, larks, beef, mallards, pig, salmon, sea flounder, venison, conies and teales, with baked tart and Pippins to follow.' Christ Church was not quite the magnificent building that it is today, as much of its present appearance is owed to building works in the 1660s-1680s. The great front quad lacked a fourth side and it failed to match the grandeur of St John's, where the beautiful Canterbury Quad had recently been built.

Nevertheless, it had been partly built with Royal visits in mind and was still unequalled in size and number of rooms available. Notably, however, there are only two mentions of the court being there in the Christ Church archives.

- <sup>22</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 91.
- <sup>23</sup> *John Aubrey: Brief Lives*, pp. 186-7.
- <sup>24</sup> *John Aubrey: Brief Lives*, p. 186. Mrs Fanshawe is often believed to be Ann Fanshawe, who described herself as 'wild' in her youth, but in Clare Hopkins, *Trinity: 450 Years of an Oxford College Community*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 108., she states that she was the former Dorothea Kingesmill, married to John Fanshawe, a former Trinity student.
- <sup>25</sup> *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, (The Oxfordshire Record Society, 1949), p.5. Samuel Luke was the Parliamentary Scoutmaster or spymaster, and his journal records the reports of his spies, who present an often highly accurate picture of wartime life in Oxford.
- <sup>26</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 84.
- <sup>27</sup> *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 206.
- <sup>28</sup> *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 140.
- <sup>29</sup> *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, edited with an introduction by John Loftis (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979), p. 111.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, p. 111.
- <sup>31</sup> *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 72.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, p. 109.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, p. 114.
- <sup>34</sup> *John Aubrey: My Own Life*, p. 49.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, p. 111.
- <sup>36</sup> *John Aubrey: Brief Lives*, p. 8.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p.
- <sup>38</sup> Parish records of St. Michael at the Northgate, transcribed by the Oxfordshire Family History Society.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, p. 115.
- <sup>40</sup> *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 110.
- <sup>41</sup> *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, pp.4-5.
- <sup>42</sup> *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 140.
- <sup>43</sup> 'Oxford and the Civil Wars', p. 715.

- 44 *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 91.
- 45 *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 111; S. Porter, 'The Oxford Fire of 1644', in *Oxoniensia*, XLIX, 1984, pp. 289-300.
- 46 *Oxford Council Acts 1626-1665*, edited by MG Hobson and HE Salter, (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1933), p. 126.
- 47 'The Oxford Fire of 1644', p. 296.
- 48 'Oxford and the Civil Wars', p. 713.
- 49 *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 11.
- 50 'Oxford and the Civil Wars', p. 714.
- 51 *John Aubrey: Brief Lives*, p. 51.
- 52 *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p.3, p. 4, p.13.
- 53 *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 23.
- 54 *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 69.
- 55 *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 217.
- 56 *Oxford Council Acts*, p. 111.
- 57 *The Papers of Captain Henry Stevens, Waggon-Master-General to King Charles I*, transcribed and edited by Margaret Toynbee for the Oxfordshire Record Society (1961), p. 26.
- 58 *The Papers of Captain Henry Stevens*, p. 25.
- 59 *The Papers of Captain Henry Stevens*, p. 52.
- 60 *Oxford Council Acts*, pp. 111-3.
- 61 *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 81.
- 62 *Oxford Council Acts*, p. 133.
- 63 *Oxford Council Acts*, pp. 123-6.
- 64 *John Aubrey: Brief Lives*, p. 112.
- 65 'Oxford and the Civil Wars', p. 721.
- 66 *John Aubrey: My Own Life*, p. 73.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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Stephen Porter, Stephen K. Roberts and Ian Roy, eds, *The Diary and Papers of Henry Townshend, 1640–1663*. Worcestershire Historical Society, new series 25, 2014. (351 pp.) ISSN 0141-4577. £32 hardback.

*Reviewed by Prof Peter Gaunt*

In his own right, the diarist Henry Townshend was not a significant figure, nor indeed was he much of a diarist in the usual sense – he was certainly no Pepys or Evelyn. His father, Sir Henry, was in many ways much more prominent, as head of a long-established landed family in central Shropshire, sometime chief justice of Chester, an active member of the Council of Wales and the Marches and three times MP in the parliaments of Elizabeth I and James I. Even his elder (half-) brother, Hayward Townshend, has a greater claim to fame, through the detailed record he kept of debates and procedures in the late Elizabethan House of Commons, in which he sat in 1597 and 1601; it is Hayward, not Henry, who gets a biography in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. The younger Henry, born in 1601 or 1602 after his father's second marriage, spent his life in Worcestershire – his father became the long-serving recorder of Worcester – in due course marrying the coheir of an established Worcestershire family and inheriting land and property at Elmley Lovett, a parish and small village in north Worcestershire. Further inheritances and marriage ties to a more prominent county family helped Henry up the pecking order, so that from the late 1630s he became an active Worcestershire JP, twice serving as chairman of the bench, before the civil war and again after the Restoration. By the time he died in spring 1663, he had become a solid, middling member of the Worcestershire landed gentry, with an estate valued at over £700, including not only his large and extended house at Elmley Lovett but also further land and property in the county and within the county town, on which he held long leases. As a younger son he had done well, but it was hardly an exceptional life.

Henry did, however, live through exceptional times and he witnessed the civil war at first hand, not as a combatant, but as a pro-royalist civilian and administrator – the king named him to the Worcestershire commission of array in 1642 – who spent much of the main civil war in royalist-controlled, increasingly isolated and ultimately besieged Worcester, probably living in a house he rented not far from the cathedral. He was also a scribbler, keeping

a variety of miscellaneous, more or less contemporary records intermittently from 1640 until a few weeks before his death. Fortunately for historians his writings have survived. In style, tone and content they are very varied, ranging from almost daily records of generally national and international events – not really a diary in the sense of a personal and first person reflection but, as the editors point out, more a record of “‘observable passages” of the years covered...a chronicle of events’ – to discrete notes of particular developments, incidents, offices and officials, transcripts of official documents, letters and petitions which came his way, sporadic financial and tax accounts, memoranda and assorted other jottings. Together they comprise, again in the editors’ words, ‘not a personal memoir, but nearer in type to a series of memoranda or commonplace books’. Now held by the Worcestershire archives, his writings have long been known to and used by historians, in many cases via a four-part, two-volume set edited by J. W. Willis Bund and published by the Worcestershire Historical Society almost a century ago. But that was a rather sprawling and messy edition, oddly arranged, the text littered with misreadings and other errors. Accordingly, the Historical Society and a skilled team of three very experienced co-editors are greatly to be commended on producing this excellent new single-volume version, transcribed afresh, laid out very differently – generally in chronological order – and altogether very much clearer, cleaner and easier to use.

Amongst a mass of material, we have jottings on local and national weather, dated notes on key metropolitan, national and international developments, many of them probably taken from the newspapers of the age, plus the occasional record of local reactions to those wider developments. There are also narratives of some of the parliaments of the day, including the Short Parliament and the opening weeks of the Long Parliament, accounts of some of the taxes imposed during the 1640s and 1650s and of their collection and the tax-payers in parts of Worcestershire. However, the bulk of the material and thus of this volume (pp. 87–265) span the years of the main civil war, from the king’s commission of array in summer 1642 through to the surrender of royalist Worcester in summer 1646. This material focuses on the Worcester-based administration, in which Henry Townshend was directly involved as a JP and commissioner of array, and as such it provides historians with one of the fullest and richest surviving records of royalist war-time provincial administration. We gain valuable

## BOOK REVIEWS

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insights into justice and court business during the war, the raising, equipping and maintaining of troops, the physical defence of Worcester and the demolition of parts of its suburbs, the heavy financial and material burdens of war and – another recurrent theme – the trials and tribulations caused by the presence of soldiers and a garrison within the city. From time to time, as revealed here, these pressures came to a head, in accusations against the first royalist governor leading to a detailed examination of his financial accounts, in squabbles between soldiers and civilians and between different bodies of troops and their officers over billeting, and in appeals to the king for some relief from the heavy financial and military demands or for a measure of regional self-control. We are given the views of one man – but an intelligent, informed and involved man – about the administrative interplay between the county town and the county, and between Worcestershire, the Marcher and West Midlands region and the royalist high command based at Oxford, as well as about the changing fortunes, fluctuating performances and demands and increasing depredations of the war. Having been briefly attacked and held by parliament early in the conflict, and occasionally threatened from the south or east during 1644, royalist control of Worcester did not come under serious threat again until the closing months of the war and Henry Townshend provides us with a ‘dairy’ of the resulting siege of Worcester, from 21 May to 25 July 1646. As the editors note, here he gives a continuous, immediate and more or less daily narrative of events, in the way that many of his other so-called diaries do not, and he also provides historians with one of the fullest accounts of a civil war siege, especially strong in throwing light on the attitudes of civilians under the pressure of siege and bombardment and on the attendant collapse of order and morale. It is in many ways the high point of this consistently rich volume.

The editors and their publisher deserve high praise for producing such an attractive and affordable volume. The transcribed material is clearly and logically set out and readers can navigate their way around it via a detailed contents page, headings to the various entries and separate and detailed indexes of persons and places. Presumably for reasons of space and accessibility, the editors have taken two decisions which will not please everyone. Firstly, they do not provide a gloss on the transcribed material and so – very different from the profusely-referenced modern editions of Pepys’s diary or Sir William Brereton’s letterbooks, for example – there are no footnotes here providing information about the myriad of people, places



## BOOK REVIEWS

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and events which are mentioned in the transcript. True, the volume opens with a substantial introduction exploring the life and career of Henry Townshend, his writings and the key themes which they cover, including a detailed and interesting account of Worcester and Worcestershire in the civil war, and it closes with brief biographical notes on eighteen protagonists and a select glossary of words and phrases. But even so, the consequence is that scores of people, places, documents, initiatives and events pop up in the transcribed text for which no explanation or supporting information is offered to readers. Secondly, spelling and apparently punctuation too have been standardized and modernized throughout. While some will regret these decisions, they have resulted in a very clean, attractive and readable text and have made it possible to present almost all of Henry Townshend's extant writings in a manageable single volume. That is a great achievement, reflecting the outstanding skills of the three editors, and the resulting volume will be a boon to historians and deserves a wide readership.

Charles Singleton, *Famous By My Sword: The Army of Montrose and the Military Revolution*. Helion & Company, Century of the Soldier, 1618–1721, no. 1, 2014. (72 pp.) ISBN 978-1-909384-97-2. £16.95 paperback.

Malcolm Wanklyn, *Reconstructing the New Model Army, Volume 1: Regimental Lists, April 1645 to May 1649*. Helion & Company, Century of the Soldier, 1618–1721, no. 4, 2015. (v + 183 pp.) ISBN 978-1-910777-10-7. £19.95 paperback.

*Reviewed by Prof Peter Gaunt*

Helion & Company are a fairly new publishing house, dedicated to producing books on military history of all eras, from classical to modern. However, members of the Association are most likely to be interested in titles appearing in their 'Century of the Soldier, 1618–1721' series. The five volumes which have been published in this series to date include John Barratt's *Cavalier Capital* on Oxford during the main civil war (see the review by Vanessa Moir in this edition of *Cromwelliana*), Jonathan Worton's hot off the press *To Settle the Crown: Waging Civil War in Shropshire, 1642–48*. and also, on a later conflict, Nicholas Dorrell's *Marlborough's Other Army* exploring the British army in the first Peninsula War of 1702–12. *To Settle the Crown*

## BOOK REVIEWS

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certainly merits further notice, though as the author was a PhD student of mine and this is essentially the book of his excellent doctoral dissertation, I cannot comment further. In this series, new studies of the Duke of Buckingham's army of 1624–28 and of the royalist army in exile during the latter half of the 1650s are imminent. However, this review focuses on two paperback volumes which appeared in this series in 2014–15. (Before assessing those two studies, it is only right and proper that I should declare an element of interest, in that I have signed up to publish a volume on the civil war which will appear in this series in due course, though I have had no direct involvement or interest in either of the two titles considered here.)

Charles Singleton is certainly not the first, and will not be the last, to write on Montrose and his military style: the swashbuckling first marquess and his supposedly daring military exploits in Scotland during the 1640s, repeatedly overcoming odds stacked heavily against him and his clan warriors, before coming to a sticky end in 1650, have attracted many writers, popular and academic. But in this new study, the author – quite rightly – has little time for the romanticized myths which have long swirled around Montrose, his men and his tactics and for the misconceptions they have fostered. Thus the author is very sceptical of arguments that Montrose relied heavily upon a Highland and clan-based warrior class and their Highland charge, instead stressing the centrality of regular troops – both infantry and, after a slow start, cavalry – as well as the professionalism of much of Montrose's army and his reliance upon fairly standard military tactics of the day: all viewed within the context of wider military developments and the 'military revolution' thesis. Even if Montrose's approach had to be modified somewhat in the light of supply, equipment and funding, terrain and the nature and tactics of his opponents, plus a degree of innovation and experimentation, an impressive range of evidence is here deployed to argue that Montrose's considerable military success against Covenanter armies, especially during the mid 1640s, rested not on daring-do, wildly adventurous tactics adopted to overcome the odds, or clannish Highlanders terrifying his enemies. More soberly and judiciously, Charles Singleton concludes that 'Montrose won battles because his was a better trained, officered and handled army' than the generally poorer government forces sent against him; regular, well-trained troops, both cavalymen and infantry well-versed in the use of pike and musket brought him victory, not irregular Highlanders fighting in a tribal fashion, who were generally kept back and only unleashed

## BOOK REVIEWS

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by Montrose once his regulars had broken the enemy. The Scottish Highlander was 'of only marginal military value', mainly in raiding, plundering and skirmishing, it is argued, and accordingly they played only a very secondary role in Montrose's battle-plans and battlefield victories. More broadly, it is suggested that, once he had added a strong cavalry element to his regular infantry, Montrose possessed and led 'a conventional army that would not have looked out of place on the battlefields of Europe'. Although this is not a lengthy book – the main chapters in which this thesis is developed cover less than fifty pages – the arguments are interesting, clear and well-presented; they are supported by plentiful illustrations, both contemporary portraits and images and modern maps and plans, plus a selection of colour plates upon which further explanatory commentary is offered and a very useful selection of eyewitness accounts of Montrose's battles. Overall, this is a very thoughtful and thought-provoking study, offering much, much more than the all-too-common romanticized and mythologized portrait.

Professor Malcolm Wanklyn's study is very different. Springing from the surviving regimental lists of the New Model Army from its inception in spring 1645 down to spring 1649 (the eve of the departure of a large part of the army for service in Ireland), this volume reconstructs the more senior officer corps (company and troop commanders, so from captain-lieutenant upwards) of each regiment. This is done via a table for each regiment for each of the main surviving listings (of April and May 1645, December 1646, May and August 1647 and May 1649), comprising rank, name and in many cases a few words about their military career. However, appended to the tables are a very large number of footnotes, in which additional and often much fuller biographical information and further details of their military career are given, together with an indication of the key primary sources from which all this information has been drawn. The latter confirm that this study rests upon an enormous amount of primary research, including extensive work on the Clarke Papers held at Worcester College, Oxford, and both the State Papers and the so-called commonwealth exchequer papers (SP 28) in the National Archives at Kew, together with an array of other printed and archival sources. This has clearly been a huge undertaking and the resulting volume offers a wealth of very valuable new material and information on New Model Army officers. As we in the Association know only too well, in the light of our own current biographical dictionary of parliamentarian

## BOOK REVIEWS

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officers' project, there are different ways in which a mass of information of this ilk can be presented, and just about any choice will bring advantages and disadvantages. Not everyone may find the style adopted here – of quite sparse tables and a mass of appended footnotes set in quite small type – the easiest way to access information on specific individuals, though the volume closes with a very full and detailed index of officers' names. However, this is an enormously rich, informative and valuable resource and the levels of new research and dedication evident here are exemplary.

The main section listing company and troop commanders is preceded by discursive introductory assessments explaining the context, approach and sources, and exploring key issues such as the social and professional origins of the officers, the geographical origins of them and their men and subsequent careers after leaving the army. It is followed by a shorter, though similarly presented section, listing junior commissioned New Model officers as shown in the surviving lists of March and May 1647, together with generally thinner or more intermittent biographical and career information about them. Appendices offer further brief but valuable information on the officers of Essex's old army as it was being broken up or absorbed in spring 1645, on the New Model regiments (prematurely, as it turned out) selected for service in Ireland in spring 1647, on Skippon's Bristol regiment, on regiments added to the New Model in the late 1640s and further information on New Model junior officers 1645–47. Overall, this is a hugely impressive piece of work of enormous value and many, both historians and a wider readership, will be keenly awaiting the appearance of Professor Wanklyn's second and accompanying volume, covering the New Model from 1649 down to its disbandment in the early 1660s, due to be published by Helion later in 2016.

John Barratt, *Cavalier Capital: Oxford in the English Civil War 1642–1646*. Helion & Company, 2015. (224 pp.) ISBN 978-1910294581. £25 hardback.

*Reviewed by Vanessa Moir*

An effective, if somewhat dry account of the events in Oxford and the surrounding area during its time as Charles I's capital between 1642–1646, John Barratt's *Cavalier Capital* is one of relatively few accounts of Oxford's

## BOOK REVIEWS

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war, and the first for a number of years. While its claim to be the first full study focused on Oxford's position as Charles I's capital from 1642–1646 since Frederick John Varley's *The Siege of Oxford* in 1932 may be slightly tenuous, it is certainly the first detailed study since David Eddershaw's *The Civil War in Oxfordshire* in 1997. Like Eddershaw and Varley, Barratt does not focus purely on Oxford itself, but on the interconnected wider campaigns and battles of the Thames Valley area. Approximately the first half of the book describes the situation within Oxford, whilst the second half, aside from a couple of interjected short chapters on health and a fire in 1644, describes events in the surrounding area.

The book is written as part of Helion Books' *Century of the Soldier* series, which seeks to chart the 'military revolution' between c 1618 and 1721, and is therefore focused on military history. For example, there is only one short chapter of two pages on the impact of the war on the University of Oxford, set against three substantial chapters in the first half of the book on the garrison, munitions and fortifications. Barratt is at his strongest when describing military matters and has useful and detailed accounts listing the various governors of the Oxford garrison, the units making up the Oxford army, and the attempts to fortify the city. He also makes full and good use of research by Eric Gruber von Arni on the medical services of the Royalist army, detailing the location of hospitals. He pays less attention to the civilians present in Oxford, mainly giving a taste of their lives by quoting Anne Fanshawe's account of her life in contemporary Oxford at rather too great a length to take in. However, he writes effectively about the personalities of the time, such as William Dobson, the court portrait painter. Like anyone writing about the period, he is hampered by the lack of sources in certain areas, such as those from the Oxford Parliament which were destroyed in 1646. The campaigns are well narrated and he does well to identify some of the dissenting Puritan voices in Oxford, rather than using the Royalist Anthony Wood as a source.

Unfortunately *Cavalier Capital* is let down in certain areas. In the second half of the book, incidents such as the King's flight from Oxford in 1644 and the Battle of Cropredy Bridge would have been easier to follow by the insertion of better maps of the immediate area, despite maps of the wider Thames Valley region being included. It has also suffered from poor editing, with many typos, missed punctuation and some silly mistakes: the

## BOOK REVIEWS

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Principal of Trinity College Oxford was Ralph Kettel, not Ralph Fell (the Fell family were heads of Christ Church); Aldgate is in London, St Aldates in Oxford (p. 117); and similarly, the *Wallington* mentioned on p. 148 is presumably meant to be *Wallingford*. Barratt also makes the interesting assertion on p. 80 that Oxford businessmen ‘actually profited financially from the newcomers’, but then fails to elaborate or provide any evidence to support this. That at least some people would profit from supplying a wartime occupying army makes sense, and the same assertion is made by Ian Roy in his chapter on the period in Ralph Richardson’s *Town and Countryside in the English Revolution*. Neither of them, however, provide enough clear evidence nor develop this thesis far enough.

On the whole, this is an effective marshalling of sources and relatively new research to give an overall account of events, but there is definitely room for a more comprehensive analysis of Oxford and the Thames Valley during this period.

Mark R.F. Williams, *The King’s Irishmen: the Irish in the Exiled Court of Charles II, 1649–1660*. Boydell Press, 2014. (x+340 pp.) ISBN 978-1-84383-925-5. £75 hardback.

*Reviewed by Patrick Little*

The royalist court in exile continues to fascinate historians, producing such recent books as Geoffrey Smith’s *The Cavaliers in Exile* (Palgrave, 2003) and the collection of essays edited by David L. Smith and Jason McElligott, *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). As these volumes readily accept, some of the most important of these exiles came not from England but from Ireland, and Mark Williams’ book is in effect a group portrait of these Irish exiles.

The book takes the form of a series of case studies. The first chapter introduces the troubled figure of Murrough O’Brien, Lord Inchiquin: a Protestant of Gaelic blood, keen to reinvent himself as a loyal courtier despite having spent much of the 1640s in the service of Parliament. The second subject, Theobald Taaffe, Viscount Taaffe of Corren, also had a dubious past as a Confederate rebel of Old English (or Anglo-Norman)

extraction who used his personal friendship with Charles II and his good connections with catholic Europe to assert his loyalty to the crown while protecting his own honour. Taaffe reappears in chapter 6. The next case study, in chapter 3, is John Bramhall, the Yorkshire-born protégé of the earl of Strafford, who had been a prominent figure in the Church of Ireland as bishop of Derry in the 1630s. His main role during the interregnum was as a controversialist, keen to protect Charles II from those who sought to convert him to Catholicism. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the four Talbot brothers: Old English Catholics who sought to balance their faith with their duty to the crown. Another conflicted figure is presented in the form of the Gaelic Protestant courtier, Daniel O'Neill, who did his best to protect the young king's image and authority. In this he worked in tandem with the most important of the Irish exiles: James Butler, marquess of Ormond. A Protestant of Old English heritage, Ormond was an important patron for the other Irish in exile and a key figure in negotiations with Spain and France during the 1650s: both positions required him to suppress his religious beliefs for the greater good.

As will already be obvious, these Irish royalists differed enormously in ethnicity, religion and political background. This diversity presents considerable challenges when constructing an overall picture of Irish royalism. In the first place, beyond a basic loyalty to the king, royalism is a slippery term. Williams is keen to play down the religious differences which would seem to divide his sample in two. Instead, he emphasises the factors that linked together the disparate group. This has the result of reducing 'what might be called "Irish royalism"' (p. 302) to the lowest common denominator, 'their mutual devotion to the Stuart cause in opposition to the perceived disorder of the Commonwealth and Protectorate regimes' (p. 305), or seeking a definition based on negative terms: 'royalism could be defined more by reaction than action, responding to negative attributes (accusations of disloyalty, inconstancy, self-interest, etc.) more than it confirmed positive qualities' (p. 305).

The question of what constitutes 'Irishness' poses still greater difficulties. Can Bramhall, the Englishman who treated the Irish church as a branch office of the Church of England, really be described as 'Irish' in any meaningful way? A further problem, which is not tackled directly, is that the traditional categories used to define competing communities in Ireland –

## BOOK REVIEWS

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the ‘Old English’, the ‘New English’, the ‘Gaelic Irish’ – had been distorted and remoulded by the upheavals of rebellion and war in the 1640s. Some of the Old English now made common cause with their co-religionists of Gaelic or even English blood. The New English, by contrast, were busy reconsidering their own position, prompted by newer English arrivals – especially the Cromwellians – to think of themselves as ‘Old Protestants’ or even ‘Irish Protestants’. Oddly, the most important exile from the New English community – Richard Boyle, 2<sup>nd</sup> earl of Cork – is not included in this survey; but then he spent only a few months on the continent before returning to make peace with the Cromwellian regime.

In his conclusion, Williams falls back on a variety of nuanced terms to define the (almost) indefinable: ‘the “Irish” brand of royalism’ (p. 304), the ‘notion of “Irishness”’ (p. 306) and finally, ‘those who populated Ireland’ (p. 308). The last is not only too broad to be helpful as a definition, it is also ironic: for the one thing that these exiles indisputably had in common was that they did *not* populate Ireland in the 1650s.

Such criticisms reflect the immense difficulty of getting to grips with the complexities of both royalism and Irishness in the mid-seventeenth century, and are not a reflection on Williams’ scholarship; rather, they remind us how fraught and difficult the 1650s were, especially for those determined to remain loyal to the wayward Charles II. The young king lurked behind the problems faced by all the characters discussed in this book. As Williams points out, Charles II seemed intent on ‘allowing his indiscretions and inconsistencies to threaten his cause and the royalist community as much as the fate of Cromwell and the coffers of Europe’ (p. 236).

Timothy Venning, *An Alternative History of Britain: The English Civil War*. Pen and Sword, 2015. (viii + 258 pp.) ISBN 978-1-47382-782-0. £19.99 hardback.

*Reviewed by Patrick Little*

Counterfactual, or ‘what if?’ histories appear occasionally in the bookshops. Usually they are volumes of essays covering a large time-frame, put together by academics keen to emphasise the contingency of events, and to get away



from the sense (however subconscious) of ‘inevitability’ that hinders us from appreciating the predicaments of those in the past, for whom the future was anything but clear. This book is different, as it focuses entirely on one fairly short slice of time, 1641–1645, and is written by a single author. In fact, it is Volume 6 of what promises to be a long series of counterfactual books by Timothy Venning, covering selected periods from the Anglo-Saxons onwards, collectively titled *An Alternative History of Britain*. The present volume has an advantage, as Dr Venning, in his academic role, is a historian of mid-seventeenth century Britain of some regard, whose book on *Cromwellian Foreign Policy* has become a standard text on the subject. Venning’s alternative history of the civil wars is divided into five lengthy chapters, looking at different episodes when things might have turned out very differently. Chapter one looks at the period before the start of the war, and specifically at Charles I’s attempt to arrest the ‘Five Members’ at the House of Commons in January 1642. The alternatives discussed include the king deciding not to make the arrest, delaying the attempt until he had more supporters in the chamber, and, most startling, succeeding in capturing his enemies. The second chapter examines the Edgehill campaign of 1642. Although it is unlikely the king could have actually won the battle, a quick advance on London immediately afterwards would have found the parliamentarians unprepared, and quite likely have won the capital for the king or forced a peace settlement there and then. Chapter three considers 1643, when the king’s successes in the south west and the north might also have led to a speedy advance on London, especially if the king had not been distracted by besieging Gloucester or had beaten Essex at the first battle of Newbury. In chapter four, the chances of a decisive victory by both sides are discussed, especially if the king had won Cheriton in the south or Marston Moor in the north, or if parliament had followed up its own victory outside York. The latter might also have avoided the creation of the New Model Army in the spring of 1645, with further knock-on effects. The final chapter turns to 1645. Might Cromwell have been sacked from his military command after the Self-Denying Ordinance? Could the Uxbridge peace negotiations have worked? If so, what then? Although Venning considers it unlikely that the king could have won at Naseby, he might have forced a draw and extracted his army to fight another day.

These ‘what-ifs’ scenarios are well-handled and thought-provoking, but there are a few quibbles about the book as a whole. Firstly, it starts and

## BOOK REVIEWS

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finishes very abruptly. An introduction setting the scene, explaining how the civil wars came about, would have been very useful for the non-specialist, rather than flinging the reader straight into the deep end. Venning's attempt to introduce people and concepts in the initial pages of the first chapter is somewhat breathless and even confusing as a result. Secondly, there are a few minor errors that should have been spotted: the marquises of Winchester were the Paulets not the Pagets (p. 63), for example. Thirdly, the coverage is curiously curtailed. The five episodes looked at in detail are important ones, but the selection is very narrow, looking at the nitty gritty of mostly military history in the early to mid-1640s and then following the scenarios through. A limited timescale is probably wise, as the further from reality these counterfactuals go, the more unbelievable they become. But it is a shame that the later 1640s were not allowed their own 'what ifs'. To pick but three: what would have happened if the Presbyterians had fought the New Model in 1647, or if Cromwell had lost to the Scots at Preston, or Charles I had escaped from Carisbrooke? Maybe we can hazard a guess of our own: is there another volume on the English Revolution in the pipeline?

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By Dr David L Smith

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