

Cromwelliana

A portrait of a woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a blue dress with a white lace collar and a white sash. The background is dark and textured.

The Journal of
The
Cromwell Association

2021

The Cromwell Association

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

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

- campaigns for the preservation and conservation of buildings and sites relevant to Cromwell
- commissions, on behalf of the Association, or in collaboration with others, plaques, panels and monuments at sites associated with Cromwell
- supports the Cromwell Museum and the Cromwell Collection in Huntingdon
- provides, within the competence of the Association, advice to the media on all matters relating to the period
- encourages interest in the period in all phases of formal education by the publication of reading lists, information and teachers' guidance
- publishes news and information about the period, including an annual journal and regular newsletters
- organises an annual service, day schools, conferences, lectures, exhibitions and other educational events
- provides a web-based resource for researchers in the period including school students, genealogists and interested parties
- offers, from time to time, grants, awards and prizes to individuals and organisations working towards the objectives stated above.

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

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Editor: Dr Maxine Forshaw

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Cover image: Elizabeth Claypole née Cromwell (1629–1658), the Lord Protector's second daughter, c.1653. Circle of Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680) oil on canvas, h.66cm x w.48cm. Courtesy of the Cromwell Museum.

Opinions expressed herein are solely those of the contributors and do not express the views or opinions of the Cromwell Association.

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the absence of both Cromwell Day and a Study Day in 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, it was decided that the 2021 edition of *Cromwelliana* should continue to be themed in some way. Patrick Little suggested the subject of women in the Cromwellian period and this has turned out to be an inspired proposal, as I hope you agree, with five splendid articles on this theme. Cromwell had seven sisters and four daughters, and his mother who died only four years before him – his life was domestically dominated by women, which makes this such an interesting topic to explore.

The articles in this theme cover the women in Cromwell's life and his relationship with them; a look at how family occasions were held during the 1650s at Cromwell's court; the financing of marriage settlements for two of his daughters; analysing the Protectoral portraits of Cromwell's wife and daughters; and moving on to first-person accounts of women's lives during the civil war. Thanks to Patrick for putting forward this fascinating topic.

Other articles include a fresh look at the political career of Edward Montagu, Earl of Manchester, and the siege of Crowland (Lincolnshire) in 1644 and its role in the civil war. There are also a substantial number of book reviews for you to peruse and perhaps be encouraged to follow up, together with the usual listing of new books and relevant new journal articles.

My thanks to all the contributors to this year's edition of the journal.

If you are interested in contributing to future issues of the journal, please contact the Cromwell Association via the email address:
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‘ALL IMAGINABLE POMP AND LUSTRE’: FAMILY OCCASIONS AT CROMWELL’S COURT

by Dr Miranda Malins

When Oliver Cromwell moved into the royal palaces of Whitehall and Hampton Court in spring 1654 as the new Lord Protector, he was not alone. Apartments had to be found and hastily refurnished not only for him and his wife Elizabeth, the Lady Protectoress, but for his widowed mother and his three younger daughters – with the eldest, Bridget, living only a few hundred yards away at Wallingford House on her return from Ireland.¹ These young women found themselves at the centre of their father’s new court where they remained for the whole of the Protectorate.

Historians have had very little to say about the Cromwells’ daughters and yet their place at the heart of the new regime was never in doubt to contemporary observers. Styled ‘lady’ or occasionally ‘highness’ they were courted by foreign ambassadors and dignitaries. They set fashions and attracted crowds wherever they went. Books were dedicated to them and poems celebrated their charms. Their domestic doings were documented in the newspapers and satirised by opponents of the regime. And through all this the Cromwell sisters occupied a large share of their father’s love, concern and attention. Theirs was a close family with a formerly private life now lived in the full glare of the public spotlight. Marriage negotiations for the unmarried girls now assumed dynastic importance and family weddings, births and funerals were transformed into state occasions. This was especially true in the later years of the Protectorate when the character of Cromwell’s rule and court became increasingly regal after his second investiture as Lord Protector in June 1657. Double weddings for his youngest daughters in November and a funeral for his beloved older daughter Elizabeth, nine months later, paint this princessly picture particularly vividly and so the more detailed examination of these events that follows provides new insights into the nature of the Cromwellian Protectorate and how it was perceived.

There seems to be a different spirit, dances having been held there again during these past days, and the preachers of the older times are withdrawing from it ... The subalterns of the army grumble at it; but their suspicions being won over, everything will be arranged without any disturbance. It is now the opinion of some that the upper house will not be called before the other has re-established kingship.²

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The French ambassador noted this change in the feeling of the Protectoral court in November 1657 – ‘a moment that is often overlooked’ by historians according to Edward Holberton.³ In Ambassador Bordeaux’s analysis, more than the political signs of the increasingly traditional, monarchical aspects of Oliver Cromwell’s rule, such as his dispensing titles to populate the new Other House of Parliament and the revived rumour that he would accept the crown, this softening culture and hopeful spirit was best evidenced by the dancing at the extravagant weddings of the youngest Cromwell children. For these grand spectacles stated more clearly than any words could have done that there was now a family at the helm of the Commonwealth, a new ruling dynasty whose younger generation would play a key part in reconciling the warring factions among their parents. The knotty question of Cromwellian kingship has intrigued historians as much as it did contemporaries and much assessment and argument has been made of the precise balance between the regal and the republican within the Protectorate regime. However, the place of the Cromwells’ daughters at the centre of this picture, and the importance of their state family occasions of 1657–8 in understanding the evolving character of the Protectorate, has been neglected.

The Cromwells had a large family of nine children, six of whom survived to see their father become Lord Protector. Of these, four were daughters. They fell into two natural pairs: Bridget and Elizabeth (often called Betty) who were the third and sixth children, born five years apart and aged 29 and 24 at the start of the Protectorate; and Mary and Frances, the last two children, born a year apart – effectively a second family – and aged 16 and 15 when their father became head of state. These differences in age placed the two pairs of sisters in very different positions when they took up residence in and nearby to the royal palaces: the older two established married mothers living with their families; the younger two unmarried girls living within the household of their parents. Bridget was the only one of the four women not to live at court. Married now to her second husband, army grandee Charles Fleetwood, she was with him in Ireland where he governed as Lord Deputy, before they later returned and took up residence at Wallingford House, just outside the grounds of Whitehall palace. Elizabeth meanwhile was married to the MP John Claypole, appointed to the plum position of Master of Horse at his father-in-law’s court, and they and their children occupied prime apartments at Whitehall and Hampton Court. Reputed (perhaps with a degree of

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romantic hindsight) to be her father’s favourite, Elizabeth Claypole lived as ‘the greatest ornament’ of the court.⁴

The question of suitable marriages for the Cromwells’ youngest two daughters occupied their parents considerably.⁵ So much so that when Frances formed a stubborn attachment to the young courtier Robert Rich, grandson of the Earl of Warwick – a match Cromwell initially deemed unsuitable – Frances’s brother, Henry Cromwell, was told that the couple’s attachment seems ‘to trouble the minds both of your father and mother more than anything else’.⁶ This preoccupation of the Lord Protector and Lady Protectoress with their youngest daughter’s romantic life is particularly striking given that this was at the height of the kingship crisis of spring 1657 when Oliver was wrestling with the great question of whether or not to accept the crown. This shows not only the importance Oliver placed on securing his daughter’s future but perhaps indicates a link between the two issues; uncertainty over Cromwell and his daughters’ status is likely to have posed a potential problem in marriage negotiations. It is notable that, though there was much deliberation over potential suitors for Frances and Mary in previous years (even including rumours of a proposal from the exiled Charles Stuart himself through the intermediary of Roger Boyle, Lord Broghill), it was in the context of the aftermath of Cromwell’s acceptance of the Humble Petition and Advice and second investiture as Lord Protector that his daughters’ marriages were finally arranged.⁷ Certainly, discussions with Mary’s prospective suitor Thomas Belasyse, Viscount Fauconberg, then living in Paris, appeared to stall while the question of Oliver’s acceptance of the crown hung in the air.

Cromwell’s choice of sons-in-law, and the weddings themselves, afford valuable insights into the evolving character of his rule. Though he had initially refused to entertain Robert Rich as Frances’s betrothed (due, it seems, to a variety of concerns over the young man’s character, the value of the settlement proposed by his family, and possibly his ill-health) the match afforded an excellent opportunity for Cromwell to marry his daughter into the old aristocracy and further widen the Protectorate’s base of support. Robert was the grandson and heir of the powerful Earl of Warwick, former commander of Parliament’s navy, his grandmother the equally formidable royalist Countess of Devonshire. The whole Cromwell family hoped to

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benefit from this union: when the young groom tragically died only a few months after his wedding to Frances, her brother Henry Cromwell wrote to the bereaved Earl of Warwick, ‘I am cut very short in my expectations; for I placed much happiness even in thinking upon those seeds, which I understood to be in Mr. Rich, both as to the honour of our whole family, and the advantage of my own particular concernments’. Indeed he feared that his new brother-in-law’s death ‘may be a reproof particular unto myself, for placing (if it were possible) too much upon the consequences of this alliance’. To the Countess of Devonshire, Robert’s grieving grandmother, Henry wrote his assurance that the death would not ‘break the bond’ between their families and ‘that nothing shall be wanting in me to strengthen this knot, whereof I was ever ambitious’.⁸

Mary’s marriage, which unlike Frances’s, was fully arranged by her father, echoed her sister’s by uniting the Cromwell family once more to the old nobility. Thomas Belasyse, Viscount Fauconberg (also known as Falconbridge) was an even grander match for the Protector’s third daughter, coming from a noble house with great estates in Yorkshire. Once again it demonstrated the Cromwells’ desire to mend fences with important royalist families and caused a great stir when the engagement was announced. The superior pedigree of these younger two sisters’ husbands to those their much older sisters had had the opportunity to marry a decade earlier told the world all it needed to know about the Cromwell family’s startling ascent to power. The message was not lost on the Protectorate’s critics. Lucy Hutchinson derided the matches on exactly this basis: ‘Then the Earl of Warwick’s grandchild and the Lord Falconbridge married his two daughters; such pitiful slaves were the nobles of those days.’ It was clear to her that these matches showed ‘that Cromwell now intended to confirm the government in his own family’.⁹ This was a new dynasty and with Cromwell now empowered to nominate his successor – most likely to be his eldest son Richard – there was an increasing drive for the younger generation of Cromwells to secure their power base of support. This networking becomes apparent in reading the correspondence of Henry and Richard Cromwell which reveal how many younger politicians and courtiers closer to their ages than their father’s pledged their loyalty in very personal terms to them.¹⁰

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Frances and Robert Rich married first on 11 November in considerable splendour at Whitehall palace, with Mary and Viscount Fauconberg following a week later on 18 November at Hampton Court. These were the perfect occasions to display the Cromwell family’s increasingly dynastic status and proclaim the power of the Protectorate. The newspaper *Mercurius Politicus* reported Frances’s wedding in the rapturous terms usually applied to royal weddings of dynastic importance:

the most illustrious Lady, the Lady Frances Cromwell, youngest daughter of his Highness the Lord Protector, was married to the most noble gentleman, Mr. Robert Rich, son of the Lord Rich, grandchild of the Earl of Warwick and the Countess Dowager of Devonshire, in the presence of their Highnesses, and of his grandfather, and father, and the said Countess, with many other persons of high honour and quality. The solemnities of the happy nuptials were continued and ended with much honour.¹¹

Assembling such grandees from across the political spectrum to witness and celebrate the young couple’s union offered a stunning visual statement of exactly the kind of ‘healing and settling’ Cromwell longed for. As Roy Sherwood observes, ‘other members of the old nobility clearly identified with the new order, a new order which now had all the appearance of the beginnings of a fresh royal dynasty’.¹²

The services themselves were short and simple, conducted in the new civil fashion in line with the 1653 *Act touching Marriages and Registering thereof*.¹³ This involved a prayer from one of the court chaplains and an official marriage by a Justice of the Peace – in Frances’s case the clerk to the Privy Council, Henry Scobell. The secular nature of the services provoked much comment and even speculation that the families held additional private marriage ceremonies conducted by ministers using the traditional Book of Common Prayer. This was variously ascribed to the desires of the brides and grooms – particularly of the royalist Thomas Belaysse, Viscount Fauconberg – and, if true, that Cromwell allowed such an indulgence to traditional Anglican beliefs testifies to the spirit of reconciliation and compromise that prevailed in these months. Enemies of the Protectorate saw it rather as hypocrisy, as Edward Hyde, later Earl of Clarendon, commented:

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it was observed that though the marriages were performed in public view according to the rites and ceremonies then in use, they were presently afterwards in private married by ministers ordained by bishops and according to the form of the Book of Common Prayer; and this with the privity of Cromwell who pretended to yield to it in compliance with the importunity and folly of his daughters.¹⁴

In the case of Mary’s wedding, it was rumoured that the cleric who may have officiated privately was the Anglican Dr John Hewett – a source of great embarrassment to the family when he was convicted of treason the following year. It was widely speculated then that Mary and Elizabeth had pleaded with their father on the cleric’s behalf; an argument that some even claimed contributed to Elizabeth’s subsequent mortal illness.¹⁵

If the marriage ceremonies themselves were simple, the festivities that followed were anything but. The weddings were celebrated, Clarendon wrote, ‘with all imaginable pomp and lustre’ and gleefully reported in detail in the press.¹⁶ Frances and Robert’s wedding was marked ‘as that occasion required’ by bells ringing in the City and guns firing at the Tower following the custom of previous royal weddings such as that of Charles I and Henrietta Maria in 1625.¹⁷ Luxurious gifts were lavished on the couple including £2,000 worth of gold plate from the groom’s grandmother the Countess of Devonshire and two sconces of £100 each from Frances’s older sister, Elizabeth.¹⁸ The wedding feast involved forty-eight violins and fifty trumpets (in other words a full orchestra and wind band according to Sherwood’s analysis) and ‘mixed dancing’ until 5 o’clock in the morning – a sight hitherto unimaginable in the Commonwealth and the cause of much public comment.¹⁹ It was even reported that some of the most high profile royalist guests had taken to the dance floor: the Earl of Newport, who had been interned in the Tower only two years earlier on suspicion of treason but through this marriage had become a relation of the Cromwell family, ‘danced with her highness’;²⁰ while the old courtier Sir Thomas Billingsley, now a Gentleman of the Lord Protector’s bedchamber, recalled the courts of the former Stuart kings by dancing with sword and cloak in the Jacobean style. So excessive was the merriment that it led to a catalogue of pranks which reveal some of the complex cultural tensions at the court. Billingsley, who had previously shaved off his much-admired beard to conform with the Protectoral fashion, found

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his chin attacked with a pen and drew a knife on his mocking stylist. Then, in one of the most infamous incidents of Cromwell’s propensity to horseplay, the Lord Protector apparently threw sack posset among the ladies, soiling their rich clothes and pinched the fashionable wig from the bridegroom’s head and sat upon it.²¹

We must hope that the Lord Protector paced himself rather more than this anecdote suggests, as the wedding celebrations for his youngest daughter continued for most of the week. As a contemporary noted: ‘The discourse of the town has been much filled up with the great marriage at Whitehall, which was solemnized there three or four days last week, with music, dancing and great feasting, and now it begins for two or three days at the Earl of Warwick’s.’²² Mary’s wedding was, by contrast, a smaller and simpler affair which took place in the relative privacy of Hampton Court – the family’s weekend retreat. This may have reflected the groom Viscount Fauconberg’s desire not to waste his father-in-law’s money or, perhaps, to save any possible embarrassment from the absence of Fauconberg’s most prominent royalist relatives. Certainly the match was a bold one which caused widespread astonishment. Though a less public occasion, this marriage too was announced grandly in the press as befitted a union of a ruling house:

Yesterday afternoon his Highness went to Hampton Court and this day the most illustrious lady, the Lady Mary Cromwell, third daughter of his Highness the Lord Protector, was there married to the most noble lord, the Lord Fauconberg, in the presence of their Highnesses and many noble persons.²³

As her sister’s had been, so Mary Cromwell’s wedding seems to have been celebrated over several days, as John Thurloe wrote to Mary’s absent brother, Henry: ‘This week hath in great part been taken up solemnising the marriage of my Lady Mary with My Lord Fauconberg.’²⁴

If Mary’s nuptials were rather more restrained than her younger sister’s, the musical entertainment provided for her guests was the equal of Frances’s. Both weddings occasioned the performance of newly commissioned masques, providing perhaps the most symbolically regal elements of the court celebrations. Edmund Waller composed ‘On the Marriage of Mts. Frances

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Cromwell with Mr. Rich Grandchild to the Earle of Warwicke’ for Frances’s wedding and Andrew Marvell followed this at Mary’s with ‘Two Songs at the Marriage of the Lord Fauconberg and the Lady Mary Cromwell’, at which there may also have been an epithalamium written by another of the Protectorate’s creative luminaries, William Davenant.²⁵ In Sherwood’s view, these performances marked ‘the revival, albeit in extremely shadowy form, of those magnificent masques which had helped to make the courts of the first two Stuarts among the most extravagant in Europe’.²⁶

Holberton, although he acknowledges the regality of the ‘reused cultural material that had been exploited by kings’, perceives more complexity in the compositions which were themselves alive to the ironies of the Protectorate’s republican heritage.²⁷ His detailed analysis of the masques suggests the prominent role of Cromwell’s daughters, and the new generation they represented, in promising a more civilian, cooperative and courtly future for the Protectorate after Oliver’s death. In Frances’s wedding masque, it is likely that the young bride herself danced and sang the part of the goddess Venus before her father and the court – a sight which must have brought the pre-war performances of the former queen Henrietta Maria to mind, especially for those older courtiers like Sir Thomas Billingsley who would have been in the audience at the Stuart court. Frances is presented as a goddess/princess: ‘Faire Venus from the Ocean sprang, she from the Prince that rules the sea’. Cromwell himself is acknowledged not only as king but, in allusion to the rampant lion of the Protectoral seal, as the biblical lion slayed by Samson whose strength gives way to sweetness when bees are found using its carcass for a hive. Thus are Cromwell and Frances’s virtues balanced and blended: ‘Soe Honny from the Lyon came, And sweetness from the strong.’ Where Waller’s poetry had previously attempted to placate the warring military and civilian factions at court by celebrating the balance of both virtues within Cromwell alone, now in the aftermath of Oliver’s acceptance of the Humble Petition and Advice without the crown, he divides them happily between the martial father and graceful daughter. As Holberton concludes:

Frances represents what will come after Cromwell. Waller makes the courtiers look hopefully towards Cromwell’s children rather than critically towards Cromwell (or seditiously towards each other). Cromwell is a stiff old soldier, but he happily watches his daughter

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dance like a courtier as the Cromwells marry into the nobility. This image hints that as long as no one rocks the boat, the return to a courtly government will be smooth, bloodless and probably quite soon.²⁸

The entertainment at Mary’s wedding was just as symbolic. For this, Marvell chose a pastoral, Platonic allegory casting Mary and Fauconberg as the mythical lovers – the goddess Cynthia and shepherd Endymion. This was a playful piece celebrating the sensible, arranged courtship of this bride and groom in contrast to the heady love match of the previous week’s wedding, even hinting mischievously that Frances and Robert, now safely married, may in their ardour and determination to force the issue, have anticipated their wedding night:

Courage, Endymion, boldly Woo,
Anchises was a Shepherd too;
Yet is her younger Sister laid
Sporting with him in Ida’s shade:
And Cynthia, though the strongest,
Seeks but the honour to have held out longest.

While it is not suggested that Mary acted on the stage as Frances had done, it is possible that Cromwell himself took the non-speaking part of Jove – the Roman king of the gods and approving father. Again, the story takes on the contradictions of the Cromwellian Protectorate and finds ways to resolve them into a political ideal. The allegory elevates the Cromwell family to royalty, even as their own rustic, non-royal heritage is celebrated as socially levelling by Endymion’s shepherding past. ‘The Platonic cosmos’, as Holberton sees it, ‘is mapped on to an ideal body politic in which the Cromwells, because they are princes, inhabit the spheres of influence in the realm of pure reason.’²⁹ Like Waller, Marvell presents the young couple as representative of a new generation that will unite the warring sides of the late Civil Wars and lead the nation into a more secure and civilised future. Certainly the bride and groom’s triumphant honeymoon journey up to his ancestral lands in Yorkshire, where they were ceremonially welcomed by fawning local dignitaries and huge crowds, suggested they would fulfil this task.

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But this dream of a new dynasty danced in the November candlelight was never to materialise. Where 1657 propelled the Cromwells to the heights of prestige and pleasure, the year that followed landed blow after blow upon them. Cromwell’s niece Lavinia, who had once lived with the family and been close to his daughters, died, as did three of the Lord Protector’s grandchildren: Richard’s new baby son, Bridget’s baby daughter Anne Fleetwood, and Elizabeth’s youngest child Oliver. Tragically Robert Rich, Frances’s new husband for whom she had fought so fiercely, died in February. Again, the princely status of a son-in-law to the Lord Protector was confirmed as the whole court plunged into three days of formal mourning with Cromwell himself assuming the purple garb of a grieving king, and the young man travelling from Whitehall to Warwick House to lie ‘in great state’ in the same rooms in which he had lately celebrated his wedding. It was done ‘as they used to do for the great in the old days’, a contemporary observed, ‘so that at least he died as a prince’.³⁰

But worse was to come. The loss of her baby weakened Elizabeth Claypole who had suffered from several dangerous bouts of illness (probably cancer) in the past. She swiftly deteriorated, causing the whole machine of government to grind to a halt as her devoted parents kept vigil at her bedside. The reaction to her death on 6th August and her extraordinary funeral confirmed Elizabeth’s position as a de facto princess just as powerfully as her sisters’ weddings had done nine months earlier. The government newspaper *Mercurius Politicus* announced her death with due reverence just as it had her younger sisters’ nuptials:

This day it pleased God to put a period to the life of the most illustrious lady, the Lady Elizabeth, second daughter of his Highness the Lord Protector, to the great grief of her lord and husband, their Highnesses, the whole court, and of all that have had the honour to be witnesses of her virtue, being a lady of an excellent spirit and judgment, and of a most noble disposition, eminent in all princely qualities.³¹

This approach would have chimed with the mood of the court where rumours that Cromwell was finally going to accept the crown were once more swirling: three days earlier, a contemporary noted, ‘his Highness, with his family, is settled at Hampton Court, Lady Claypole being still very ill and the physicians

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much fearing her. There is a hot report now of a coronation which shall be shortly, but it is not believed until it is seen done’.³²

In her death at the height of her family’s dynastic power, Elizabeth’s widely admired character assumed ‘princely’ qualities and her reputed intercessions with her father on the part of his enemies earned her a sanctified place in royalist folklore. James Toland in his ‘Life of Harrington’ described how the author had decided to approach Elizabeth to plead with him to allow the publication of *Oceana* because he had heard of her as: ‘acting the part of a princess very naturally, obliging all persons with her civility, and frequently interceding for the unhappy’.³³ The chronicler Mark Noble saw her in similar terms: ‘This lady had the elevation of mind, and dignity of deportment, of one born of a royal stem, and all the affability and goodness of the most humble’.³⁴ Even enemies of the Cromwells cast the young princess in a royal aspect at the centre of the Protectoral court, albeit a mocking one. So Samuel Butler captured her in satire:

Yet old Queen Madge,
Though things do not Fadge,
Will serve to be Queen of the May-pole;
Two Princes of Wales,
For Whitsun-ales,
And her Grace Maid-Marion Cleypole.³⁵

For Butler, the Cromwells may have lacked legitimacy, causing them to appear in an inverted carnivalesque parody or royal dignity, but the dynastic character which they displayed and in which they were treated is not in dispute. Many other contemporary criticisms of the Cromwell women likewise rested upon their assumption and appearance of the highest possible status as the basis for charges ranging from gaucheness to hypocrisy. Thus Lucy Hutchinson dismissed all but the notoriously austere Bridget as ‘insolent fools’, describing how Oliver’s ‘wife and children were setting up for principality, which suited no better with any of them than scarlet on the ape’.³⁶

The manner of Elizabeth’s death itself also seemed to elevate her to the quasi-immortal realm of kings, particularly when it became apparent that her father’s grief for her would contribute to his own final illness. So Samuel

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Carrington described her death as that of ‘A worthy daughter of so famous a father, whom Heaven too soon snatched away both from the virtuous and from the miserable, and whose soul did admirably correspond with her fortune and the majesty of her comportment’. It was an ‘Amazonian-like death, despising the pomps of the earth, and without any grief, save to leave an afflicted father perplexed at her so sudden being taken away’. Her death ‘struck more to his heart than all the heavy burdens of his affairs’.³⁷ Marvell made much of the mortal link between father and daughter in his ‘Ode upon the death of OC’, painting a moving picture of Elizabeth’s deathbed scene:

She lest He grieve hides what She can her pains,
And He to lessen hers his Sorrow feigns:
Yet both perceiv’d, yet both conceal’d their Skills,
And so diminishing increast their ills:
That whether by each others grief they fell,
Or on their own redoubled, none can tell.

Grief for a cherished child was the only power strong enough to slay Marvell’s mighty prince less than a month later:

For he no duty by his height excus’d,
Nor though a Prince to be a Man refus’d:
But rather then in his Eliza’s pain
Not love, not grieve, would neither live nor reign.
And in himself so oft immortal try’d,
Yet in compassion of another dy’d.³⁸

So precious a princess required a stately funeral to match, though perhaps no ceremony, however grand, could ever be adequate. Samuel Carrington captured this desperate need to honour the lady whose premature loss had broken the Lord Protector’s heart:

I shall not at all speak of her funeral; for, if I might have been credited, all the Muses and their god Apollo, should have made her an Epicedium, and should have appeared in mourning, which should have reached from the top of their mount Parnassus, to the bottom of the valley thereof ... If this great Personages death received not the

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Funeral Rites which all great Wits were bound to pay it, the Martial men did evidence, that the neglect did not lie at their doors...

Indeed, Carrington opined dramatically, the army had sought its revenge for Elizabeth’s death in attacking the Spanish at Gravelines which had then fallen to their French allies; hers was a national loss which ‘touched the gallant English to the heart’ and was seen by many contemporaries and subsequent commentators as a tragic contrast to the Protectorate’s concurrent military success in the Battle of the Dunes.³⁹

For all that Carrington might have wished it grander still, Elizabeth Claypole’s funeral was an extraordinary occasion. Having died at Hampton Court, Elizabeth’s body needed to be transported to Whitehall for burial and, as it was customary for funerals to take place at night, she was rowed down the Thames at twilight in an ethereal and silent torchlit flotilla ‘being accompanied by a great number of barges filled with persons of honour and quality’ and with crowds lining the banks to watch. Arriving at Westminster Stairs at about 11 pm, Elizabeth lay in the Painted Chamber of Westminster Palace in a ‘stately hearse’ for about an hour before she was carried across to Westminster Abbey.⁴⁰ The funeral itself was swift and private, just as Mary’s and Frances’s weddings had been, to ensure its compliance with the Puritan values enshrined in the 1645 *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God*. But this should not be taken as evidence against Elizabeth’s perceived regality but rather as respect for her family’s wishes. It is likely that Cromwell himself had a similarly private burial, prior to a formal state funeral which centred around his effigy. Indeed, a codicil to the *Directory*’s section on burial allowing greater pomp in the case of high-ranking individuals seems to acknowledge this conflict between the State’s need for ceremony to mark the passing of its rulers and the Puritan desire for simple burial free from popish ritual.⁴¹

If the moment of interment itself was ‘managed without funeral pomp’, the setting could not have been grander.⁴² Elizabeth was lowered into the vault of ‘the dormitory of the english kings’, the Henry VII Chapel, to lie alongside the mighty monarchs of the past, including her namesake Queen Elizabeth I.⁴³ Her coffin plate placed her in this royal tradition as the daughter of an English prince:

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The body of the most illustrious Lady Elizabeth late wife of the Rt.Hon. Lord John Claypole, Master of the Horse, and second daughter of the most serene & mighty prince Oliver by the grace of God of England Scotland & Ireland etc. Protector. She died at Hampton Court on the sixth day of August in the 28th year of her age and in the year of our Lord 1658.⁴⁴

There, beneath the marble, Elizabeth joined her grandmother, baby niece and a number of the chief dignitaries of the Commonwealth, including her brother-in-law Henry Ireton. Thus the Commonwealth and, more particularly, the Cromwells’ symbolic appropriation of the rituals and sacred spaces of their royal predecessors continued; and Betty had only a few months to wait for her beloved father to be buried alongside her, as Clarendon saw it, ‘in the sepulchre of the Kings with the obsequies due to such.’⁴⁵

In death, as in life, Cromwell’s daughters were treated as (and criticised for presuming to be) princesses. They were praised and painted, courted and copied as daughters of ruling houses always have been. Theirs were lives lived on the international stage: every element of them, from their marriages, production of children and deaths, to their tastes and fashions, consumed by the public. An examination of their unique experiences of the Protectorate – concentrating here on the great events of Frances’s and Mary’s weddings and Elizabeth’s funeral – helps to further our understanding of the changing nature of the Protectoral court towards a more civilian and constitutionally certain future. It reminds us too that, far from the masculine, martial environment of popular imagination, Cromwell’s circle was full of women and their concerns. The steps he took to secure his daughters’ futures, promoting the older ones’ husbands and children, and knitting the younger ones into the old nobility and so placing them at the centre of his reconciliation with former royalist foes, demonstrate Cromwell’s desire to perpetuate his dynasty, further bolstering and indeed broadening the existing evidence for his grooming of his son Richard to succeed him.⁴⁶

If Cromwell could see the importance of his daughters to his vision of the future, so too could his contemporaries. For both those seeking to mould the Lord Protector into a monarch, and those who attacked him for such pretensions, his large, close and multi-generational family was a crucial

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feature. Monarchy had always meant blood, succession and dynasty; and here was a ready-made family with enough children and grandchildren to guarantee stability for the war-weary nation for generations to come. But recasting the Cromwells as a royal family held as many traps as trappings, creating dangerous hostages to fortune. As Laura Lunger Knoppers concluded in her analysis of Oliver’s elaborate state funeral: ‘The monarchical obsequies for Oliver were, ironically, the first step in a process that revived the martyr-king and helped to pave the way for the restoration of his son.’⁴⁷

All that would come, but for a brief and happy time these puritan princesses had the world at their feet. And if their time in the limelight was transitory, their place in Protectoral histories should be permanent. A visit to Westminster Abbey is all that is needed to remind us of the prominence Cromwells’ daughters once enjoyed. For there, alone of all the Cromwells and Commonwealth grandees who were brutally disinterred from that sacred place and flung into a common pit at the Restoration, Elizabeth Cromwell still lies: the sole representative of her age, left in peace as a princess for eternity.

- ¹ For a fascinating insight into the grandeur of Cromwell’s daughters’ apartments at Hampton Court, see Lee Prosser, ‘Writings and Sources XII: The Inventory of 1659’, reproduced in *Cromwelliana* 2009, Series II No.6, p. 61. For evidence of the contemporary use of the titles Lord Protector and Lady Protectoress, see: Jongestall, to his excellency William Friderick, earl of Nassau, &c., on 28 April 1654 in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Vol 2 1654*, ed. Thomas Birch, p. 257; and *Weekly Intelligencer*, 14–21 March 1654.
- ² *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. Wilbur Cortez Abbott (1947), Vol IV, p. 670.
- ³ Edward Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate* (2008), p. 143.
- ⁴ R. W. Ramsay, *Cromwell’s Family Circle* (1930), p.4.
- ⁵ For a fuller account of the marriage negotiations, see Patrick Little, ‘Cromwell and daughters. Financing the marriage settlements of Mary and Frances Cromwell’, [p. 22 of this volume].
- ⁶ *The Correspondence of Henry Cromwell, 1655–1659: from the British Library Lansdowne Manuscripts*, ed. Peter Gaunt (2007), p. 264.

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- ⁷ *A Collection of the State Letters of the Right Honourable Roger Boyle, the first Earl of Orrery*, ed. Thomas Morrice (1742), pp. 21–2; Mark Noble, *Memoirs of the Protectoral House of Cromwell* (1787), Vol I, pp. 149–50.
- ⁸ Letters from Henry Cromwell to the Earl of Warwick and the Countess of Devonshire on 24 February 1657, in *Thurloe State Papers, Vol 6 January 1657–March 1658*, p. 821.
- ⁹ Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, (1806) p. 295.
- ¹⁰ As previously set out in this journal in my article, ‘Monarchical Cromwellians and the Restoration’, *Cromwelliana* 2016, Series III, No.5, p.60; and more fully in Miranda Malins, ‘Conservative Cromwellians and the Restoration’ (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge 2010).
- ¹¹ *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 November 1657 .
- ¹² Roy Sherwood, *Oliver Cromwell King in All But Name 1653–1658* (1997), p. 119.
- ¹³ Frances and Robert’s marriage certificate is reproduced in Noble, *Memoirs of the Protectoral House of Cromwell*, Vol I, p. 319.
- ¹⁴ Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (1826), vol VII, pp. 211–12.
- ¹⁵ *The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, lieutenant-general of the horse in the army of the Commonwealth of England, 1625–1672*, ed. C. H. Firth, Vol II, p. 41.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ *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), Vol III, p. 127.
- ¹⁸ HMC Fifth Report, App, pp. 177, 183 .
- ¹⁹ HMC Fifth Report, App, p. 177.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ British Library, Harleian MS 991, 23.
- ²² HMC Fifth Report, App, pp. 145, 183
- ²³ *Mercurius Politicus*, 19–26 November 1657.
- ²⁴ John Thurloe to Henry Cromwell on 23 November 1657, in *Thurloe State Papers*, Vol VI, p 628.
- ²⁵ For a detailed analysis of these pieces, see Chapter 6 ‘Soe Honny from the Lyon came’ in Edward Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate* (2008).
- ²⁶ Roy Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell* (1977), p. 144.
- ²⁷ Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate*, p. 144.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 153.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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- ³⁰ *The Clarke Papers*, Vol III, pp.141–2; Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell Our Chief of Men* (1973), p. 641.
- ³¹ *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1658.
- ³² HMC Fifth Report, App, p. 146.
- ³³ James Toland, *The Oceana and Other Works of James Harrington, with an Account of His Life* (1771), ‘The Life’, paragraph 14.
- ³⁴ Noble, *Memoirs of the Protectoral House of Cromwell*, Vol I, p. 136.
- ³⁵ Samuel Butler, ‘A ballad upon the Parliament which deliberated about making Oliver King’, reproduced in *The Poetical works of Samuel Butler* (1835), ed. William Pickering.
- ³⁶ Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, p.294.
- ³⁷ Carrington, *The History of the Life and Death of His Most Serene Highness, Oliver, Late Lord Protector* (1659), pp. 218–9, 263–4.
- ³⁸ Andrew Marvell, *A Poem upon the Death of O.C.* (1658).
- ³⁹ Carrington, *History*, p. 220.
- ⁴⁰ *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1658.
- ⁴¹ ‘Of the Burial of the Dead’ in *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God* (1645); Sherwood, *King in All But Name*, p. 151.
- ⁴² *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1658.
- ⁴³ Noble, *Memoirs of the Protectoral House of Cromwell*, Vol 1, pp. 139–40.
- ⁴⁴ <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/elizabeth-claypole#i13971>
- ⁴⁵ Clarendon, *History*, Vol VII, p.304.
- ⁴⁶ For an examination of the evidence for Cromwell grooming his son Richard to follow him as Lord Protector, see Jason Peacey, “‘Fit for Public Services’: the upbringing of Richard Cromwell’ in *Oliver Cromwell New Perspectives*, ed. Patrick Little (2009).
- ⁴⁷ Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell, Ceremony, Portrait and Print 1645–1661* (2000), p. 133.

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CROMWELL AND DAUGHTERS.
FINANCING THE MARRIAGE SETTLEMENTS OF MARY AND
FRANCES CROMWELL

by Dr Patrick Little ¹

The marriage prospects of his two younger daughters had worried Oliver Cromwell for many years. Even when negotiating the marriage of his son and heir, Richard, in 1649, he had been careful to reserve money to provide for Mary and Frances.² After the marriage of his younger son, Henry, in 1653, the settlement of the daughters became more urgent. In the summer of that year there were rumours that one of his daughters might marry the young duke of Buckingham or, alternatively, Oliver's ward, the wealthy commoner, William Dutton. Neither match was pursued very far. Buckingham married Sir Thomas Fairfax's daughter shortly afterwards; the Dutton match may have lingered on, as it is mentioned in the will of William's uncle, John Dutton, written in January 1656.³ Other possible marriages may have been considered, but it was not until the end of May 1656 that serious negotiations were underway with the Rich family, with the earl of Warwick's grandson, Robert Rich, as a potential husband for Frances Cromwell.⁴

These talks with the Riches were initially conducted by Oliver's close friend and confidant, William Pierrepont.⁵ On 29 May 1656 the council ordered that the deputy major general for Essex, Hezekiah Haynes, must stop any further proceedings against Robert Rich's father, Lord Rich, who had been threatened with the decimation tax imposed on suspected royalists.⁶ There were clearly complications raised by matters other than Lord Rich's political views, however. In June, Mary Cromwell wrote to her brother Henry full of concern at the future of her sister's match: 'for these three weeks I think our family, and myself in particular, have been in the greatest confusion and trouble as ever poor family can be in', she complained, adding that 'my father and my Lord Warwick began to treat about the estate, and it seems my lord did not offer that that my father expected'. Although the protector had expressed some concerns about the character of the groom, who was rumoured to be 'a vicious man, given to play and such like things', he had been assured that this was not true. A more serious problem was created by the groom's father, Lord Rich, who insisted on keeping the right to alienate £500 per annum from the estate. This, Mary thought, 'would be a dishonour' to her father, and 'would show that he was made a fool on by my Lord Rich'.⁷ Nor was this merely Mary's sisterly exaggeration. The protector's son-in-law, Charles Fleetwood, told Henry Cromwell in the same month that money was

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at the root of the difficulty: 'my Lord Warwick not answering his highness's demands upon his giving £15,000 portion prevents at present the consummation'.⁸ Warwick concurred with Mary and Charles, telling his grandson that 'I fear my lord protector does not mean you shall have his daughter, his demands are so high in things that cannot be granted' and 'if my lord protector insists upon these high demands your business will soon be at an end, for I assure you nothing could have made me come to half that I offered but seeing your great affection to my Lady Frances and her good respect to you'.⁹

Further complications followed. In March and April 1657 there were rumours that there 'hath been some troubles' concerning the match (although the cause of these was not spelled out) and it was even said to Henry that, amid the constitutional crisis caused by the kingship debates, the 'troubles about the business of Mr Rich and my Lady Frances ... trouble the minds both of your father and mother more than anything else'.¹⁰ The concern of the protectoral couple was shared by others at court. At the end of August, the Dutch ambassador reported that Secretary Thurloe had failed to turn up to a meeting, as 'he had been hindered by several important affairs', which turned out to be the next round of marriage negotiations: 'his honour was sent with General [John] Disbrowe and Colonel [Philip] Jones to conclude with the earl of Warwick the marriage between his grandchild and the Lady Frances'.¹¹ From the final settlement, concluded at some point during the autumn, we can see the deal that had at last been struck. In return for Frances's handsome marriage portion of £15,000, the earl of Warwick agreed to settle the remainder of his estate of £8,000 per annum upon his grandson (after the deaths of the earl and Lord Rich), with the couple enjoying an interim allowance, depending on the circumstances, of up to £3,050 a year. Lord Rich was allowed to retain £500 per annum as jointure lands for any future wife if he remarried, and this would pass to any sons born of that marriage, or return to Robert Rich if there were none.¹² In effect, it seems that the protector's financial concerns had been answered, and in November 1657 Frances's marriage went ahead.

The correspondence surrounding the match between Mary Cromwell and Thomas Belasyse, Viscount Fauconberg does not survive, but there also seem to have been delays in finalising the deal. The initial negotiations went fairly

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smoothly, at least on the groom's side, as, unlike Robert Rich, Fauconberg had succeeded to the title and was already in full possession of a considerable estate in the north of England. Although Fauconberg had been married before, his first wife had died childless. A possible marriage with the Cromwells had been discussed by Fauconberg and the ambassador to France (and another relative by marriage of the Cromwells, Sir William Lockhart) as early as March 1657, and continued through the summer and autumn, with the wedding taking place in November.¹³ This was not the end of the process, however. The financial settlement still needed to be sorted out, even though it was already well known that Mary had been promised 'the same dowry as her sister', that is £15,000.¹⁴ What followed can be gleaned from a variety of sources. On 2 January 1658 Fauconberg enrolled in Chancery the marriage settlement agreed with his first wife, dated 26 May 1651. By formally entering this earlier deed – which included a portion of £8,000, and in which (perhaps significantly) William Pierrepont acted as one of the trustees – Fauconberg provided the certification needed before a new settlement could be finalised.¹⁵ Fauconberg's income, estimated to be £5,000 per annum,¹⁶ appears to have been acceptable, and it was confirmed that the marriage portion provided by the protector would indeed amount to £15,000. When this sum was paid in full on 15 March 1658, the acknowledgement, signed by Fauconberg, stated that the money was remitted by the protector's master of the board of greencloth and steward of his family's finances, Nathaniel Waterhouse.¹⁷

Both the Fauconberg and Rich marriages had been delayed by financial disagreements, but it is perhaps too easy to blame these on the grooms' families. While the Riches may have held out for as good a deal as possible, this was certainly not the case with Fauconberg – apart from anything else, the portion the new Lady Fauconberg would receive was nearly twice that promised with his first wife. Problems on the Cromwellian side of the equation may have been more important. Oliver had promised the considerable sum of £30,000 as marriage portions for his two daughters, but where was this money coming from? The income reserved for the sisters from Richard's marriage in 1649, £400 per annum, would have generated only a shade over £3,000 by 1657.¹⁸ It is unlikely that Oliver had more than £3,000 per annum from his unassigned estates, and although he retained an income from his other lands once the maintenance of the older children had been deducted, Cromwell's disposable income in 1657 appears to have been not

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much more than £5,000 per annum.¹⁹ The level of Cromwell's expenditure is unknown, but there are hints that he was exceeding his income by quite a margin. The money received as marriage portions with the wives of Richard and Henry appears to have been spent, or used to pay debts, long before. Nathaniel Waterhouse later stated that Cromwell's Irish adventure lands had been assigned to Henry in compensation, 'in consideration of the sum of £4,000, being the said Henry his wife's portion received by the said Oliver, and expended otherwise, and not for the use of the said Henry or his wife'.²⁰ Evidence of Oliver's debts is difficult to find, but there are hints of trouble brewing. In the summer of 1658 Cromwell borrowed £3,500 from the London financier, Sir Thomas Alleyn;²¹ and his son, Richard, inherited debts of £28,000, although at least part of this appears to have been costs incurred by the protectoral household.²² It is difficult to see how the cash-strapped Cromwells could have paid for portions of such magnitude from their own resources.

The key to this conundrum appears to be the manor of New Hall in Essex, which became Mary Cromwell's jointure in June 1658. The estate certainly had great potential. New Hall itself was a huge 'prodigy' house, originally built as a royal palace (christened 'Beaulieu') by Henry VIII. In the 1560s it was sold off by Elizabeth I to the earls of Sussex, and in the 1620s it was purchased by the first duke of Buckingham for the princely sum of £30,000. Confiscated from the 2nd duke in 1648, it was granted to Cromwell in March 1652 as part of the £4,000 per annum awarded to him by a grateful parliament after the battle of Worcester, and at this time it was valued at £1,389 a year.²³ In September 1653 the Commons ordered that Cromwell was to be granted Hampton Court, and in return was 'to part with New Hall in Essex to the state'.²⁴ It has generally been assumed that the swap then took place, but it is plain that Cromwell, while accepting the gift of Hampton Court, retained possession of New Hall – and it is equally plain that he intended to sell it to raise money for his family's benefit. On 29 May 1656 Oliver wrote to Richard outlining his plans: 'You know there hath often been a desire to sell New Hall, because in these four years last past it hath yielded little or no profit at all, nor ever did I hear you ever liked it as a seat'. He went on to tell his son that he might have found a purchaser 'who will give £18,000', and that the proceeds would then go to Richard, or be put 'in trust to be so dispersed' – probably a reference to the need to provide for the younger daughters. Alternatively,

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another of Cromwell's recently acquired estates, at Burley-on-the-Hill in Rutland, could be made available for Richard, bringing an income of as much as £1,300 per annum – although its real value, like that of New Hall itself, was said to be far less than that. He ended by promising that his steward, Nathaniel Waterhouse, would give Richard 'farther information'.²⁵ Oliver implies that New Hall was originally intended to become Richard's, but that he was beginning to make other arrangements; in any case, he was keen to sell up. The timing of the 29 May letter strongly suggests that he had earmarked the £18,000 for marriage portions for one or both of his younger daughters: Oliver wrote to Richard only a day after Warwick wrote his own letter describing the negotiations with the protector over Frances's marriage; and on the very same day the council ordered that Lord Rich should no longer be pursued as a delinquent. The mention of Nathaniel Waterhouse (who would soon become responsible for paying the Fauconberg marriage portion) is also suggestive. It can therefore be postulated that the proposed sale of New Hall in the early summer of 1656 was connected with the forthcoming marriages, and in particular that of Frances Cromwell to Robert Rich. The sale did not in fact take place in the summer of 1656, and nor did the Rich marriage; but there is no doubt that New Hall remained vital to Cromwell's plans.

The next mention of New Hall comes on 23 July 1657, when an anonymous correspondent in London told an English merchant in Paris that 'the protector has sold New Hall to Nowell', meaning the merchant and financier, Martin Noell. This brief statement has been overlooked for two reasons: first, the editor of the *Calendar of State Papers* misread 'Nowell' for 'Powell'; secondly, the entry is indexed as 'Newhall, Kent'.²⁶ There does not seem to be any official record of the sale, but there is no doubt that it took place, as Martin Noell was soon afterwards in full possession of New Hall and its lands, as we shall see. The timing of the original sale of New Hall to the mid-summer of 1657 is again of great importance, as it was at this time that the negotiations for the Rich marriage were finally taking shape, with the assistance of the usual negotiators: John Thurloe, John Disbrowe and Philip Jones. Noell was an obvious man to approach. He had become one of the most important of the government's creditors during the last years of the protectorate.²⁷ In addition, according to Gerald Aylmer, Noell 'was said to act as a personal paymaster, that is broker or money-lender, to the Cromwell family: of this proof is lacking'.²⁸ Contemporary comments show that Noell was close to the

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protector and his family in the summer of 1657. In July Richard Cromwell called Noell 'our very good friend', and asked his brother Henry to advance his interests in Ireland;²⁹ and Noell was described in August (by a friend) as having 'swollen into a much greater person by being a farmer of the customs and excise'.³⁰ He was perhaps the obvious person to fund the marriage settlements of the lord protector's daughters.

The precise details of the agreement with Noell in July 1657 are perhaps inevitably obscure, but it is certain that the sale of New Hall went ahead, and that its fate continued to be intimately connected with the marriage of Mary Cromwell, at least. For in the summer of 1658, the New Hall estate was purchased as Mary's jointure lands by her husband, Viscount Fauconberg.³¹ While this has been mentioned by other historians, the surviving indenture of sale, recorded in the close rolls of the court of Chancery, has never been examined. Dated 29 June 1658, the indenture reveals that Martin Noell and another London merchant, Edward Keeling, granted the manor of New Hall, with the house, park and lands, 'late of his highness and now of the said Martin Noell and Edward Keeling', to Thomas Viscount Fauconberg, and two councillors, Philip Jones and Walter Strickland, acting as trustees. The sum that changed hands is not specified.³² There is a possibility, however, that the purchase price was provided by the money that Noell had paid for New Hall in the first place – a peculiarly circular arrangement – and there are hints that there had been some kind of behind-the-scenes deal, perhaps involving a massive hidden loan, with New Hall as security.³³ If so, Noell had now got his money back, and Lady Fauconberg had acquired a palatial residence suitable for a princess in all but name.

Even if the financial negotiations had been entirely above-board, Cromwell's expenditure of £30,000 on his daughters between November 1657 and March 1658 was hardly politic. In the later 1650s the protectoral regime was under mounting financial pressure. Oliver had long been aware of the importance of appearing to be above suspicion when it came to money, and during the protectorate a certain defensiveness crept into his private correspondence. In May 1654 he wrote to Richard Cromwell's father-in-law, Richard Maijor, concerning plans to buy an additional estate for Richard in Essex, but commented: 'I am so unwilling to be a seeker after the world ... and so unwilling that men should think me so, which they will though you only

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appear in it (for they will, by one means or other, know [of] it), – that I dare not meddle nor proceed therein'.³⁴ As money became shorter, unhappy comparisons were inevitably drawn. On 18 April 1656 the court was attacked for taking money from the army, with one satirical pamphlet saying that the protector 'thought good to take one penny off ten out of the soldiers pay ... His highness being necessitated to raise money to maintain his court, in that splendour which becometh a prince of his extraction'.³⁵ This attack clearly stung Cromwell, as in his letter to his son Henry, written three days after the libel was 'cast about the streets', he warned against 'studying to lay for yourself the foundation of a great estate. It will be a snare to you: they will watch you, bad men will be confirmed in covetousness'.³⁶ Yet such comparisons between the riches of the Cromwells and the poverty of the army refused to go away. In January 1658 Oliver had himself highlighted the plight of the army, when appealing to Parliament for more money: 'But what is the case of this army? A poor unpaid army; the soldiers going barefoot at this time, in this city, this weather! ... Yea, he must be a man that hath a heart as hard as the weather, that hath not a due sense of this'.³⁷ In this very winter, however, Oliver was handing over £30,000 – perhaps funded by a deal with a leading financier – to secure his daughters' future.

On the face of it, the financial dealings discussed in this paper do not do much for our view of Cromwell's integrity. The lord protector's constant denials that he sought worldly gain sit oddly with the evidence that he was busy building up inheritances for his daughters. There are clear parallels between this and his repeated denials that he sought to promote either himself or his children, while preparing them for high office.³⁸ It looks like yet another case of Cromwell saying one thing and doing another. And when these two discrepancies are put into the wider context of the protectorate, and in particular the grandeur of the Cromwellian court, with its fine buildings, expensive interiors and lavish entertainments, peopled with elegantly dressed courtiers, one begins to sympathise with those contemporaries who questioned Cromwell's motives.³⁹ Worse still, a regal court pointed to dynastic ambitions. Even if Cromwell had never considered accepting the crown, there is compelling evidence that during the protectorate he groomed Richard as his successor.⁴⁰ When viewed in these terms, it is difficult not to see Cromwell as a self-seeking, ambitious hypocrite.

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Yet it would be a mistake immediately to jump to such conclusions, for various reasons. First, Cromwell sought husbands for his younger daughters amongst the established nobility, but he never aimed higher still, by looking for matches with the princely courts of Europe. Secondly, the struggle to finance the marriages underlines Oliver's refusal to enrich himself when he had ample opportunity in the late 1640s and early 1650s – indeed, his dealings with Martin Noell were the direct result of his reluctance to indulge in financial self-aggrandisement. As Ian Gentles points out, Cromwell as protector was surprisingly open-handed, giving a private donation of £2,000 to assist the persecuted Protestants of the Savoy in 1655.⁴¹ Cromwell's financial embarrassment over his daughters' marriages also suggests that he was reluctant to raid the resources of the state to fund his private ambitions. The temptation was there; but unlike the great sums apportioned to refurbish the former royal palaces, Cromwell appears to have been scrupulous in using only his own money to pay for the marriage portions of 1657. Few early modern heads of state showed such restraint. As John Morrill puts it, 'what other self-made ruler with the world at his feet has ever taken less for himself and his family of what the world has to offer in goods and services?'⁴²

- ¹ This article is part of a longer, as yet unpublished, paper entitled "Would not the Lord Protector make himself great, and his family great?" Marriage, Money and the Ambitions of Oliver Cromwell'. For a précis, see Ian Gentles, *Oliver Cromwell: God's Warrior and the English Revolution* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 139–42. I am grateful to Professor Gentles for discussion of Cromwell's finances generally.
- ² W.C. Abbott, *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols., Harvard, 1937–47), ii. 40–1.
- ³ Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, iii. 76–7, 80–1; The National Archives [TNA], PROB11/265/700.
- ⁴ For the legal background see John Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System: English Landownership, 1650–1950* (Oxford, 1994); and Lloyd Bonfield, *Marriage Settlements: the adoption of the strict settlement* (Cambridge, 1983).
- ⁵ Roy Sherwood, *Oliver Cromwell, King in all but Name, 1653–1658* (Stroud, 1997), p. 112; *Historical Manuscripts Commission [HMC], Frankland-Russell-Astley MSS*, p. 21.

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- ⁶ *Calendar of Committee of Compounding*, p. 1729. The case may even have been intended to put pressure on the Riches during the negotiations; Haynes's superior was Oliver's son-in-law, Charles Fleetwood.
- ⁷ *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, ed. Thomas Birch (7 vols., 1742) [Thurloe SP], v. 146.
- ⁸ *The Correspondence of Henry Cromwell, 1655–1659*, ed. Peter Gaunt (Camden Soc. 5th series, vol. 31 (2007)), p. 149.
- ⁹ *HMC Frankland-Russell-Astley*, pp. 21–2.
- ¹⁰ *Henry Cromwell Correspondence*, ed. Gaunt, p. 264; for further examples see Sherwood, *King in all but Name*, pp. 75–6, 86.
- ¹¹ *Thurloe SP*, vi. 477.
- ¹² *Thurloe SP*, vi. 573.
- ¹³ For the details see Sherwood, *King in all but Name*, pp. 114–5.
- ¹⁴ *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, 1657–9*, p. 131.
- ¹⁵ TNA, C54/3696/24.
- ¹⁶ *Thurloe SP*, vi. 599–600.
- ¹⁷ *HMC Various Collections*, ii. 115.
- ¹⁸ Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, ii. 40–1.
- ¹⁹ These figures are based on Little, 'Marriage, Money and the Ambitions of Oliver Cromwell'; see Gentles, *Oliver Cromwell*, pp. 137–8, 141–2. Without any surviving personal financial records, it is difficult to reconstruct Cromwell's finances. For a discussion of the problem see Stephen Roberts, 'The Wealth of Oliver Cromwell', in *Cromwell 400*, ed. P. Gaunt (Brentwood, 1999).
- ²⁰ Huntingdonshire Record Office, Cromwell-Bush MS 731/148 (dated 1661). As a result, the income from these Irish lands (1,257 acres in King's County, granted in 1653–4) cannot be added into the calculation. The original investment was £850, but their value in terms of income is impossible to calculate: see K.S. Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land: the 'Adventurers' in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 70, 179.
- ²¹ TNA, E 404/238, unfol. (reference to loan of 10 Aug. 1658).
- ²² *House of Commons Journals [CJ]*, vii. 664.
- ²³ For the details see Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, i. 622, 495; iii. 105; for the valuation see TNA, C54/3721/6.
- ²⁴ *Thurloe SP*, i. 477.
- ²⁵ Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, iv. 174; the sum £1,300 was apparently corrected to £1,260.
- ²⁶ TNA, SP 78/113, fo. 261; *Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1657–8*, p. 40.

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- ²⁷ For Noell's involvement in government finance see *Thurloe SP*, vi. 588–9; *ibid*, vii. 481, 483–6.
- ²⁸ Gerald Aylmer, *The State's Servants: the civil servants of the English Republic, 1649–1660* (1973), pp. 250–1.
- ²⁹ *Henry Cromwell Correspondence*, ed. Gaunt, pp. 307–8.
- ³⁰ British Library, Additional MS 11411, f. 39v. The award of the lucrative customs farm to Noell and his associates at the time of Cromwell's financial difficulties may have been a coincidence.
- ³¹ Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, i. 622n.
- ³² TNA, C54/3996/17.
- ³³ The schedule of Richard's debts of 25 May 1659 states that New Hall had been 'settled for security of £15,000 for a portion for my Sister Frances' (*CJ*, vii. 664–5). Had Noell mortgaged New Hall in return for funding the Warwick match? Or was Frances a mistake for Mary?
- ³⁴ Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, iii. 280.
- ³⁵ *The Picture of a New Courtier* (1656), p. 10.
- ³⁶ Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, iv. 146.
- ³⁷ Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, iv. 717–8.
- ³⁸ See Patrick Little. 'Cromwell and Sons: Oliver Cromwell's *intended* legacy?' in *Cromwell's Legacy*, ed. J A Mills (Manchester, 2012).
- ³⁹ For recent investigations, see Paul Hunneyball, 'Cromwellian Style: the architectural trappings of the protectorate regime', in *The Cromwellian Protectorate*, ed. Patrick Little (Woodbridge, 2007); Andrew Barclay, 'The Lord Protector and his Court', in *Oliver Cromwell: New Perspectives*, ed. Patrick Little (Basingstoke, 2008); Patrick Little, 'Music at the court of King Oliver', *The Court Historian* xii (2007); *idem*, 'Fashion at the Cromwellian court', *The Court Historian* xvi (2011).
- ⁴⁰ Jason Peacey, "'Fit for Public Services": the upbringing of Richard Cromwell', in *Oliver Cromwell*, ed. Little. For an alternative view, see Jonathan Fitzgibbons, "'Not in any doubtfull dispute"? Reassessing the Nomination of Richard Cromwell', *Historical Research* 83 (2010).
- ⁴¹ Gentles, *Oliver Cromwell*, pp. 139, 168.
- ⁴² John Morrill, 'Introduction', in *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, ed. John Morrill (Harlow, 1990) p. 2.

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CROMWELL – THE WOMEN IN HIS LIFE

by Julian Whitehead

In June 1617 Oliver Cromwell was enjoying the freedom of being an 18-year-old undergraduate at Cambridge. He was in his second year at Sidney Sussex, a college which we may assume suited him in many ways. It had a Puritan ethos, which accorded with his upbringing and was only three years older than Oliver himself. Being recently founded, Sidney Sussex was not a rich or fashionable college, but one likely to attract members of the gentry like himself. Oliver's family were by no means rich, but his father Robert was the younger son of a prominent local knight and had been a member of parliament. We may assume Oliver had made some good friends among the young and no doubt boisterous gentlemen of his own age. He had to spend some time in study, but other university pursuits such as hunting, hawking and playing football may have been more to his taste. However, it was in June 1617 that this pleasant carefree existence was brought to an end. He received news of his father's death and the request to return home immediately.

Oliver was Robert Cromwell's only son, so when he came home to Huntingdon it was as the nominal head of his family. There was his mother Elizabeth, then sisters, Elizabeth, Anna, Catherine, Margret, Jane and Robina. Another sister, Margaret, had left home just the month before to marry Valentine Walton, the son of a local family. Oliver was therefore surrounded by female family members, not to mention the women servants that such a large household required. There is some evidence that being head of his family may have gone to the teenage Oliver's head. He had money and local status, so it would not be surprising if he wanted to show off his new position to his former school friends in Huntingdon. There are stories of him having a reputation for gaming, wenching, and generally carousing to excess.

Whether or not Oliver was getting out of hand, a year after he had returned home it was decided that he should attend one of the Inns of Court. It may be that his mother Elizabeth encouraged him in this to make him more mature. Indeed, it was the normal rite of passage for someone of his class, and he probably went to Lincoln's Inn which had been attended by his father and grandfather. Oliver was away for three years in London, returning in the holidays between terms. This meant that Elizabeth would have been left to run the family estate. She was the daughter of Sir William Steward, a

gentleman of some fortune, who farmed the lands of Ely Cathedral. Her first husband had died young and with Robert's death she was a widow for the second time, with the responsibility of managing everything on behalf of her absent son.

There can be little doubt that Elizabeth rose to the occasion. She was a lady of some character, and the existing records of those who describe meeting her attest to her sound common sense and judgement. Oliver had a deep affection and respect for his mother, who would live with him for most of his life. Even when he became Lord Protector in the vast Palace of Whitehall, and with all the burdens of being 'king in all but name', he would visit her apartments to talk to her on most days. How much of her advice he took whether as a young man or later as a great leader, who can tell. However, an indication of the strength of Oliver's regard for his mother is that when she died in 1654 he gave her a state funeral in Westminster Abbey.

When Oliver reached twenty, it was very probably Elizabeth who decided that he needed the steadying influence of a wife, and went about seeking a suitable match through one of the family connections. The lady eventually identified was a daughter of Sir James Bouchier, called Elizabeth. It is not known for certain how this connection was made except that it was almost definitely through one or more of their female relations. It might have been through Oliver's paternal aunt Joan who was married to Sir Francis Barrington and who may have known the Bouchiers as they both lived in Essex. Or more likely Eluzai Crane who was Elizabeth Bouchier's aunt and married to Oliver's uncle, Henry. Whoever it was, Oliver and Elizabeth were married in London in August 1620 and then moved to Huntingdon.

It is unlikely that Oliver and Elizabeth knew each other for long before their arranged marriage. Elizabeth's father was a rich merchant and on marriage Elizabeth exchanged a reasonably refined life living at Little Stambridge Hall in Essex, for the Cromwell house in Huntingdon High Street. What was more, as the Cromwells were not grand enough to own a dower house, she was sharing her new home with her mother-in-law, Elizabeth. Having both Elizabeths under the same roof must have had the potential for domestic tension. Both might have vied with each other for Oliver's attention and the position of mistress of the house. If there was any friction we may assume

that it soon passed. Both ladies were sensible, practical women, and no doubt found a formula for cooperation. Indeed they must have, as the two would live together for many years to come.

When Oliver's wife Elizabeth arrived at her new Huntingdon home she was also sharing it with her sisters-in-law. There was Jane who was 15, Robina only 10, who both probably looked on Elizabeth as an older sister. Then there was Elizabeth who was five years older than Oliver's wife and Anna who was three years younger. It was probably with these two that she found some companionship, as well as Oliver's sister Margaret (Walton) living just a short ride away. The next eight years appear to have been a reasonably stable time. Oliver was busy managing his arable lands, and the two older Elizabeths were sharing the management of the household. That was in itself a major task in those days. Water had to be drawn from a well, firewood brought for heating, together with the chores of laundry, cleaning and cooking. Fortunately, there would have been maids, and as the Cromwell house was in the town they would be able to purchase items such as candles, rather than making them themselves. Even so, there was plenty of work to carry out or supervise in order to maintain a family of seven with a limited income of about £250 a year – assuming there was a good harvest.

The Cromwell family grew during the first eight years of their marriage as Elizabeth produced the first five of her, ultimately, eight children. That was Robert, followed by Oliver, Bridget, Richard and Henry. More mouths to feed; but the main financial concern during this period was finding husbands for Oliver's unmarried sisters and the dowries that would be required. Identifying suitable husbands fell to Oliver's mother. That was difficult enough, but then there was the protracted negotiations with the potential father-in-law to agree the dowry and the jointure.

By 1624 Oliver's eldest sister Elizabeth was already thirty, and Oliver and his wife probably regarded her as a lost cause. She would be considered 'over the hill,' at a time when young women were often married before they were twenty. As Catherine was by then 27-years-old, she became the priority. During the next few years, Oliver's wife Elizabeth eventually managed to pull-off a match for Catherine with a Roger Wetstone, from a reasonably prosperous gentry family. Elizabeth also found a match for Anna with John

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Sewster, the nephew of her first husband, William Lynne. Roger was a small landowner but from a knightly family. This was all very satisfactory, but both these marriages required the expense of providing a dowry.

Money may well have become a worry to Cromwell by 1628. It was a time when he could take some pride in being a sufficiently prominent citizen to be elected as one of the two MPs for Huntingdon in the parliament called for March that year. On the other hand, there was the added expense of living away from home. He had to pay for his food and lodging in London and was obliged to keep up appearances among his 400 fellow MPs, the majority of whom had considerably greater incomes than his. As it happened, this parliament only sat for three months before being prorogued, and then merely sat again in January 1629 for two months before being dissolved. Oliver must have been downhearted that he was no longer an MP, and had made little or no impact in his first experience of politics.

However, Oliver had a bigger problem than loss of status and financial concerns. While in London he had been unwell and consulted one of the great doctors of his day, Sir Theodore Mayerne. The doctors had prescribed a cocktail of drugs because, as he recorded in his notes, Oliver suffered from *valde melancholicus*, severe clinical depression. When Oliver returned home in March 1629 he was by no means cured and began seeing Dr Simcott, his doctor in Huntingdon, who later recorded that Oliver had the strange notion that he was dying. It must have been hard for the two Elizabeths and the rest of the family to cope with the change in Oliver's personality. At the very least he would have been likely to have exhibited a degree of listlessness, lack of interest, anxiety and loss of confidence. If this was the case, as well as an emotional burden, there would be worry about the management of the family estate. The bouts of depression might help to account for why his life began to slip into crisis.

Not long after he had returned to Huntingdon, Oliver became involved in a very acrimonious dispute with the Huntingdon Borough Common Council, of which he was probably a member. This was about the disposal of a bequest made by a rich former Huntingdon resident, Richard Fishbourne. The issued boiled down to the Council wishing to spend the money on paying Dr Thomas Beard to preach at Huntingdon's All Souls Church. Oliver wanted

the money to be used on a work creation programme for the poor of the borough. By opposing the appointment of Beard, Oliver found himself opposing a man who had previously been his headmaster and more importantly, a very close friend of his parents; indeed, Beard had even been a witness to Robert Cromwell's will. The whole case dragged on with Oliver in conflict with the rest of the council and the case going to the Court of Mercers and eventually leading to a new royal charter for the town, which put control in the hands of the mayor and aldermen who had supported Beard.

When the mayor and his cronies began using the charter to further their self-interest, Oliver made a speech denouncing them in a passionate and vitriolic manner. They responded by reporting him to the Privy Council for a speech that was 'disgraceful and unseemly'. In November 1630 Oliver was summoned to the Privy Council and had the indignity of being remanded in custody for six days. When his case was heard, Dr Beard gave damning evidence against him by suggesting that Oliver had only opposed the charter because he had not been made an alderman. The resulting judgement was that the mayor was exonerated and Oliver was required to make him a cringing apology.

Oliver returned to Huntingdon a very public loser. Having been a respected figure in the town from a prominent local family, he became a figure of scorn. One can only imagine the effect this had on his family. It would have hit his wife hard, and would also have been felt by their children at home, young as they were. The person most seriously affected was Oliver's mother. She had lost respect in the town she had lived in for so long and probably imagined many snide remarks being made behind her back. Of equal hurt was that the long and close family relationship with Beard was over. Life in Huntingdon became unbearable for Cromwell and his family, so he sold up and they moved to St Ives in May 1631, a small town on the Great Ouse between Huntingdon and Ely.

Oliver had sold all but four acres of his land in Huntingdon for £1,800. As this small sum probably provided an annual income of only £100, his financial circumstances brought him well below the gentry level, and he became a tenant farmer. He being a yeoman working-farmer reduced the status of the family to what was described as 'the middling sort'. This must have been

difficult to bear for his wife Elizabeth, the daughter of a knight. Oliver's mother was also the daughter of a knight and being of the older generation, might well have felt the change even more keenly. In fact, for whatever reason, she decided not to move, and stayed in Huntingdon.

The land that Oliver tenanted was part of the Slepe Hall estate and, being water meadows, meant he had to change from arable farming to being a sheep grazier. The house he rented was probably Wood Farm, now long gone, but very unlikely to have been as big as the Huntingdon house. Living there with Oliver and Elizabeth were by then their six children: Robert, Oliver, Bridget, Richard, Henry and Elizabeth (known as Betty). In addition there were Oliver's unmarried sisters: Elizabeth, Jane and Robina. This was a large family to look after and the responsibility fell very squarely on Elizabeth's shoulders. Money was tight and so there would have been few, if any, servants. It is probable that some of the hard work, such as doing the laundry and scrubbing floors, which had been carried out for them by servants in the past, was having to be shared between Elizabeth and her sisters-in-law.

On top of the challenge of living in reduced circumstances, were Oliver's bouts of depression. His wife Elizabeth had no option but to try to make the most of a very difficult situation. She had given birth to six children and was by then 33-years-old, which in those days would be regarded as middle-aged. Uprooted from friends in Huntingdon she was now living on the outskirts of a small town where newcomers might not be welcome. Having been brought up a lady in a prosperous household she might have regarded her new, depressing state as too much to bear. However, Elizabeth appears to have been made of sterner stuff, and appears to have been a rock of stability for the family.

Unlike Elizabeth, Oliver already had a friend in St Ives. This was the rector, Henry Downhall, with whom Oliver had been a close companion at Cambridge. Having Downhall as a neighbour in St Ives would have given Oliver someone to confide in, and could have helped alleviate some bouts of depression. It may be the influence of Downhall, but more likely that of two local Calvinist preachers which brought about Oliver's dramatic spiritual awakening. Oliver was, of course, a practising Christian, as was virtually the whole population. He was a member of the Anglican Church, but had been

brought up in the Puritan tradition. What happened to him in St Ives changed him from being a ‘middle-of-the-road’ Puritan, to being overwhelmed by a wave of religious zeal which was to shape the rest of his life. As a Puritan, Oliver wanted to purify the church of papist practices such as the use of candles. However, of much greater importance to him was the conviction that, sinner though he was, God had chosen him as one of his elect, graced with the certainty of salvation. Henceforth he would be constantly aware of his unrepayable debt to the Almighty, to whom he would place his complete trust and act as His instrument on earth.

Elizabeth and his sisters would have been surprised by the changes in Oliver once he had been seized by the Holy Spirit. He had never been one for reading but began to bury himself in the Bible and, over time, built up a very detailed knowledge and the ability to quote it at length. It might be said that it was good that Oliver had found this compelling scholarly interest, but it had the effect of him punctuating much of what he said with biblical references. Although such references were apt and informative, the habit could have been slightly wearing for those close to him.

Oliver would have been overflowing with awe and excitement about his seismic religious awakening, and this change in him must have had a major effect on his family. Elizabeth came from a Puritan leaning, God-fearing stock and was probably a dutiful Christian who shared the same type of faith as Oliver before his conversion. Yet, Oliver’s absolute conviction about God’s salvation was a different order of faith, and there can be little doubt that he talked to Elizabeth and the rest of the family at great length about his revelation. Having found God’s grace himself, it would be imperative for him to ensure that his loved ones were able to share in the Divine knowledge that they could be selected for redemption.

At first Elizabeth may have thought that this was a passing phase, perhaps somehow related to his bouts of depression. She and the other adult members of the family may have humoured him by going along with his views, as was their duty to the head of the household. However, after a while it became clear that Oliver’s religious conviction was a permanent fixture and seemed to have dispelled his clinical depression. Elizabeth and the family appear to have genuinely changed to accept Oliver’s view on faith. They would never

have his level of religious zeal, but their subsequent extant letters show that, at the very least, they joined him by placing their whole trust in God.

Elizabeth's complete trust in God would have helped in accepting the mysterious ways in which the Lord had moved to bring setbacks and tragedy to their lives. During their first year in St Ives, Elizabeth gave birth to her seventh child, James, but he died soon after he was born. Sad though this was, Elizabeth may have found some consolation in the acceptance of God's will. With Oliver's periods of depression over, Elizabeth and the family gradually adjusted to the hardships of their new life, and lived a reasonably happy, uneventful existence. Oliver would have visited Huntingdon now and again to see his mother and check on his few remaining acres there. His erstwhile friend and later nemesis, Dr Beard, died in 1632, so it would be a relief that there was no longer the chance of bumping into him in the street. With the passage of time, townsfolk probably began to forget that Oliver had left under a cloud and he and the family may have re-established good relations with some. All this was positive, but there was no getting away from the fact that Oliver had gone down in the world and would live his life in obscurity. Then out of the blue, in 1636, the Cromwell family's humdrum existence experienced a dramatic change.

Sir Thomas Steward, the brother of Oliver's mother, died childless and left his estate to Oliver. It is probable that this potential legacy had been known about for some time and may even have been taken into account in Elizabeth's marriage settlement. However, neither Oliver, nor anyone else would have taken the expectation of the legacy into account. After all, Elizabeth was Sir Thomas's elder sister and she would live for another eighteen years. Sir Thomas's estate was by no means large, but it was sufficient to transform the lives of Elizabeth and Oliver. What Sir Thomas had left was not freehold land, but a reversion of long leases of the tithe and glebe land from the Dean and Chapter of Ely Cathedral, together with the lease of the Manor of Stuntney and the church lands and tithes of the Ely parishes. These provided Oliver with an income of about £200 a year and came with a reasonably substantial house in Ely, at 29 St Mary's Street.

Oliver wasted little time in moving with his family to Ely and taking up his new responsibilities, which were more akin to being an estate manager rather

than a farmer. Oliver's mother came to live with them at 29 St Mary Street – in the very house she had spent her childhood. The two Elizabeths were once again under the same roof and we must assume they came to an accommodation over responsibilities for household management. Through Oliver's mother, the family had been transformed from mere yeoman farmers to minor gentry. In time, Oliver expanded his lands by becoming the tenant of some Cambridge university lands. With this additional revenue, Oliver's annual income would probably have come to £250.

Just as Oliver's household had increased with the return of his mother, so it decreased with the departure his 30-year-old sister, Jane. While still in Huntingdon, Oliver's mother had continued her search for a suitable husband for Jane and alighted on John Desborough. John was a tall burly fellow whose father was a prosperous local landowner, but being a second son he had become a practising lawyer. However, he had some prospects, because he would inherit a small estate when his father died, which he did two years later. Elizabeth had done well to make this match when the family status was in decline and it was fortunate that the financial improvement of moving to Ely meant that finding the dowry was less of a problem. This was just as well, as another dowry was required at roughly the same time, when it was agreed the 26-year-old Robina should marry an academic called Dr Peter French, a cannon of Christ Church, Oxford. Oliver's last unmarried sister, Elizabeth, was by then aged 42, and continued to live with them.

Despite Robina's move to Oxford, the Cromwell household numbers remained the same as Elizabeth gave birth to a baby girl – Mary. Two years later Elizabeth would have her ninth and last child, another girl, who was christened Frances. Meanwhile Elizabeth and Oliver's two elder boys, Robert and Oliver, had been sent away to Falstead School in Essex, close to Little Stambridge Hall, the home of Elizabeth's father Sir James Bouchier. Sadly, in May 1639, news arrived from Felstead that Robert had died. He was only 17-years-old and it seems that he had succumbed to a sudden fever. Elizabeth and Oliver had no sooner been blessed by the birth of healthy baby Frances, than they lost their firstborn. Oliver would later describe Robert's death as 'it went as a dagger to my heart'. No doubt that described Elizabeth's feelings too.

During Oliver's years in Ely he began taking part in local affairs. These included supporting the commoners of the Fens whose ancient grazing rights were being removed by the investors of a drainage scheme. Oliver, with his new status, had also been coming into contact with some prominent people of Puritan persuasion, largely through his female family connections. There was John Hampden, his aunt Elizabeth's son, and Edmund Dunch, son of his Aunt Mary, both of whom refused to pay Ship Money and were defended by an up-and-coming barrister, Oliver St John, who was married to the daughter of his Aunt Jane. With his boys attending Felstead School, Oliver would have had more to do with his wife's father, Sir James. Oliver's father-in-law was well connected with Puritan gentry in Essex and London, including the Earl of Warwick who was a friend of John Pym.

Through his family contacts Oliver was on the outer perimeters of a web of influential Puritans who would go on to challenge the king's authority. It may have been through these connections that Oliver was selected as one of the two MPs for Cambridge in 1640. Quite how Oliver was selected remains something of a mystery and may well have come as rather a surprise to Elizabeth. It could also have caused some anxiety when she remembered that his depression had first occurred when he had been an MP, twelve years earlier. In April Oliver left for London to take his seat in the Commons, and prior to leaving seems to have begun to sell up his cathedral leases, presumably on the assumption he would have long absences in parliament. As it happened, what became known as the Short Parliament was dissolved after less than a month. Oliver found himself back in Ely, no longer an MP. The sale of his leases had probably gone through by then, so at the age of 43 he appeared to have no obvious future. We might spare a thought for Elizabeth and the family having to deal with an emotional man in distress.

Fortunately, parliament was summoned again in November of that year and Oliver was re-elected for Cambridge. For the next two years Oliver would work hard on numerous Commons committees, helping to further the Puritan cause. After the dramatic departure of King Charles from London in January 1642, Oliver remained active, particularly in organising Parliamentary troops to put down the Catholic rebellion in Ireland. The two Elizabeths would no doubt have been horrified to learn that Oliver was 'investing' his own money in this venture. In fact he may have 'invested' about £2,000, of

the approximately £3,000 he had made from the sale of his leases. Despite Oliver's dedication to the Parliamentary cause, he was still far from being a part of Pym's inner circle and could have remained a bit part player had it not been for an event in August 1642.

In August the king had ordered the two universities to send their plate to him in Nottingham. Oliver and his sister Margaret's husband, Valentine Walton, decided to intercept the convoy carrying the Cambridge plate. They gathered some supporters and took possession of the plate for parliament, and then went on to seize the magazine and arms in Cambridge Castle. When Oliver sent word to the Commons of his success he was instructed to man all bridges between Cambridge and King Lynn to stop horses, weapons or plate reaching the king. Oliver, a middle-aged Fenland farmer with no previous military experience had inadvertently become a soldier, destined to become one of England's greatest generals.

When news of Oliver's exploit reached the two Elizabeths in Ely, they must have been deeply concerned. Oliver had taken part in highway robbery and his action might even be regarded as traitorous and have horrendous consequences for himself and his family. Just a few weeks later the situation became even more alarming when Oliver went to Huntingdon to raise a troop of horse. The troop soon numbered eighty, with Walton, and John Desborough, husband of Oliver's sister Jane, among the officers as well as Oliver's eldest son, Oliver. There then began a period of military service that lasted nineteen years. The Elizabeths must have been deeply worried that Oliver would be regarded by the king as a traitor and could expect little mercy once Charles regained control. Also, like everyone else, they would have the anguish of the civil war dividing friends and families into opposing sides, such as Oliver's uncle remaining a staunch Royalist. Most of all, they would have been concerned that Oliver and young Oliver would be going into combat and quite likely be killed or wounded.

The worry of the dangers faced by Oliver would remain until his active service ended following his victory at Worcester in 1651. When Henry joined his elder brother Oliver in the field, these worries increased, and not without reason, for Oliver was to die of smallpox while stationed at Newport Pagnell in 1642. There was another person to worry about when their daughter

Bridget married Henry Ireton – he was to die of fever five years later in Ireland. On top of these worries was that of running the household in Ely. Oliver's military career was blossoming and he was receiving promotion but the pay for his rank either never appeared or was severely delayed. In 1643 Oliver's 78-year-old mother was forced to send a begging letter to a cousin asking for £50 to help the family make ends meet.

Once Oliver became a general the finances improved, but with his military prominence came the downside of him being the object of vicious Royalist propaganda and Elizabeth herself being mocked in their pamphlets. The Cromwell family had to put up with a great deal, including having to leave Ely and move to London in 1646 to join Oliver while he took part in negotiating a peace settlement. This would be the beginning of Elizabeth having a ringside seat for the momentous events of the time. These included joining Oliver and the Fairfaxes for dinner with Charles I at Hampton Court, to living in King Street and being able to hear the crowd as it witnessed the king's execution, and later being known as the wife of the Lord General, acclaimed for his victories in Ireland and Scotland. When Oliver was at home he was often busy with meetings, but he remained very much a family man. Even when he had been exceptionally busy preparing for the Irish campaign, he had spent an inordinate amount of time negotiating a good and godly marriage for his son Richard.

After Oliver's victory at Worcester, Parliament awarded him lands in Ireland and the residence of the Cockpit in the Palace of Whitehall which had formerly been the apartments of James I's daughter, Elizabeth of Bohemia. The Cromwells became a prominent family, and Oliver's wife began to be referred to as 'Lady Cromwell'. Three of their children were living outside London: Henry in Ireland, Richard with his wife in Chippenham and Betty with her husband in Northborough. However, Oliver's household at the Cockpit still consisted of the two Elizabeths, the unmarried daughters Mary and Frances, together with Bridget and her three children, also Oliver's widowed sister Catherine Whetstone and her daughter Lavinia. As so often in his life Oliver was surrounded by females. Busy though he was with affairs of state, Oliver did not forget his sister Elizabeth who had remained in Ely and sent her £20 'as a small token of my love'.

Oliver Cromwell's domestic life was spent mainly in the company of female members of his family; but how much influence did they have upon him? It is unlikely that they had any influence on his decisions other than those concerning the family. That said, he might not have achieved all he did without them. It was the inheritance through his mother that provided the funding and status to return to gentry level in Ely. It is probable that the family connections of his mother and wife assisted him in gaining an entree to the Puritan parliamentary leadership. Most of all it was his wife Elizabeth who supported him through his dark times in St Ives, his religious torments, the death of two sons, the anxieties of war and the frustrations of politics. It was she who was often left to hold the family together while he was away and provide the rock of stability when he returned home. Their relationship can be summed up in these words he wrote to her from Scotland in 1650: 'Thou art dearest to me than any creature'. Oliver Cromwell had many natural abilities but achieved what he did by being inspired by the certainty of God's love. Important though this was, he was also sustained by the love and support of his wife and family.

Content derived from *Cromwell and his Women* (published 2019) by Julian Whitehead.

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'AN HUNDRED TIMES FITTER FOR A BARN THAN A PALACE':
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OF ELIZABETH CROMWELL AND HER DAUGHTERS

*by Lisa Nunn*¹

Readers of this journal will be all too aware that Oliver Cromwell excites deeply divided opinions. Popularly admired as a military and republican hero, he is equally reviled as an iconoclast and hypocrite.² Historians have grappled with the enigma of a godly country gentlemen thrown, at middle-age, into the maelstrom of revolution and regicide, emerging as head of state in the 1650s. When Cromwell died as Lord Protector in 1658 his state funeral was certainly elaborate and on a grander scale than that of many of the monarchs who had preceded him.³ The life-size wax effigy that lay on his coffin signified the medieval concept of the king's two bodies. One, a mortal body subject to decay, and the second, a social body or body politic which endures as the office of king endures.⁴ Oliver Cromwell's effigy was vested with the symbols of sovereignty: a richly decorated crown placed on the head and an orb and sceptre in the hands.⁵

The case for making Oliver Cromwell king had been advocated in parliament in February 1657, where the proposal was vigorously debated. A modified and renamed Humble Petition and Advice was submitted to the Lord Protector on 31 March. After an agonising period of deliberation and prayer, Cromwell refused the crown, telling members of parliament that he was 'ready to serve not as a king, but as a constable'.⁶ The level of contemporary speculation over whether or not Cromwell would accept the crown has surely been matched by the subsequent interest of historians in Cromwell's motives for refusing it. According to Cromwell's own letters and transcribed speeches, he represents himself as a man of principle, the humble instrument and servant of God. The contrary view from his contemporary critics that he was fuelled by a ruthless ambition manifestly raises the question of interpretation and, as John Morrill has noted, makes Cromwell's 'near universal positive press from scholars and popular biographies' problematic.⁷

Many have stressed the role of the army during the 1650s.⁸ It is undeniable that the regimes headed by Cromwell were reliant on the support of the army, but recent research by historians, including Andrew Barclay and Patrick Little, demonstrates that the relative neglect of political culture has led to a view of politics under the Protectorate which is overly formal and institutionalised. My research uses non-traditional sources to contribute to this understanding

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of the Protectoral court as a social and cultural point of contact. My fundamental question relates to the nature of authority and power during the Protectorate. There seems to be a central contrast between the republican ideals espoused by the regimes of the 1650s and the monarchical style which was increasingly adopted through quasi-regal genres and forms.⁹ David Smith's re-use of Patrick Collinson's term, 'monarchical republic', seems to me judicious.¹⁰

Image, visual expression and display suffused the early modern court. Palaces, richly decorated with awe-inspiring furnishings and artwork, created a spectacular platform for the display of power and authority. Dominating the display were images of the ruler and his (or occasionally her) family, represented in portraiture. In this paper I will demonstrate one of the means by which the Cromwellian court tried to move away from an over-reliance on the army after the kingship debates of spring 1657 and to cultivate legitimate forms of authority acceptable to broader English civil society, especially important after the damaging major-generals experiment in 1655–56. My analysis considers the material culture depicted in portraits of female members of the elite ruling family and explores the use of these portraits by the Cromwellian regimes to amplify the family's ascension to their pre-eminent social position, at the centre of the complex life of the Protectoral court. The Cromwells are known to have patronised English painters, frequently Robert Walker but also Peter Lely, Cornelius Johnson, John Michael Wright and Samuel Cooper, to make portraits of family members.¹¹ This use of visual media to represent the Cromwell family can be considered dynastic and personal and might seem incongruous with Cromwell's rejection of the title of King.¹² Female portraits such as those considered here can offer a different perspective on political culture which is interrelated with those of men. A century before Cromwell's reign as Lord Protector, Cosimo I de Medeci and his wife Eleanora of Toledo pursued a campaign of artistic patronage in order to promote their hold on the territories of Florence and Tuscany and to turn their title into a hereditary one. Portraits of Cosimo created images of the perfect ruler demonstrating power, courage and military valour. Those of Eleanora suggested her refinement, elegance and grace, crucial 'soft power' qualities influential to the success of any court.¹³ Whether painted to honour the memory of the dead or to celebrate the status of living women, female portraits were instruments for the display of prestige which

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demonstrated a form of power that was different from that of portraits of male subjects.

Visual representations of Oliver Cromwell and his family have been an underutilised resource. Portraiture was a prevalent genre of seventeenth century visual arts and can inform us about ways that the new government sought to establish itself as a ruling dynasty. Walpole's later stated view that 'the arts were in a manner expelled along with the Royal Family from Britain' had emerged during the Restoration.¹⁴ This view of the incompatibility between a magnificent visual culture and the non-conformist religion of the Protectorate was allowed to continue largely unchallenged until this century when recent scholarship detailed a more complex understanding of the part played by members of the ruling godly elite in preserving and patronising the art of painting.¹⁵ This paper examines portraits of Oliver Cromwell's mother, his wife the Lady Protector and their daughters, and considers these portraits as markers of the identity, dignity and status of the parvenu Cromwell women.

The images of the Cromwell women are not necessarily direct representations of the reality of what the women looked like or what their painters saw when they sat for portraits. Rather they are 'the embodiment of a set of ideals and values, both aesthetic and social, shared by the artists and by the patrons who commissioned the paintings', a joint enterprise between sitter, artist and patron.¹⁶ Analysis of the language of the portraits, therefore, leads to a more profound appreciation of the culture in which they were created. The subject's pose, setting and clothing, including jewellery, are aspects which are not simply gestures of vanity but a means of signalling a woman's rank and standing. It is important to be mindful that early modern fashion was not selected 'off the peg'. Ulinka Rublack has demonstrated that clothing offered choice as well as visual appeal, in materials, cutting and sewing techniques and accessories.¹⁷ The women depicted in these portraits were not passive; they had agency over the way they were depicted. The later portraits of the Cromwell family represent the material embodiment of power; they were the means by which the Cromwell women made their status visible.

There are some drawbacks to working with portraits though. As well as offering information garnered from these features, some of the best portraits are intense psychological studies which seem to reveal the innermost thoughts

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of the sitter. It is important to remember that as a viewer we should be wary of projecting emotions and judgements onto our subject. This is one reason to move away from a fixation on the subject's face and focus instead on their dress, a potent analytical tool which reveals the importance of clothing to the aesthetics and everyday culture of the early modern period.¹⁸ One must also be aware of complex layers of interpretation and subjectivity as the portraits were bound by conventions which had developed over centuries, especially in the formal, etiquette-dominated environment at court. Although the subjects are 'real' women for whom we have some sources of historical information, the portraits are not 'real' in the sense that the women are to some degree ciphers for ideals of beauty, of behaviour and of display.¹⁹ Representations of clothing and jewellery in particular were vehicles for the display of wealth and status. As members of the Lord Protector's family, this display went beyond vanity and was crucial to successfully demonstrating the authority and dignity of their position as part of the elite ruling family.

Art historians have demonstrated that early modern portraits of women idealised femininity.²⁰ We can begin by questioning the extent to which the female Cromwell portraits exemplify seventeenth-century ideals of femininity, most particularly the ideals of the godly community of which the Cromwells were members.²¹ The disruption to seventeenth-century discourse around sexual politics during the civil wars and Interregnum has long been established by scholars and is attested to by the writings of women themselves.²² As family members of the ruling godly regime, the Cromwell women may have played a significant role in settling and soothing the anxieties caused by changing gender roles by themselves representing the Christian feminine virtues established by scriptural sources and classical texts.²³

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Plate 1: Elizabeth Cromwell née Steward (1565–1654), mother of the Lord Protector, c.1654.
Robert Walker (c.1599–1658) oil on canvas, h.75cm x w.62cm, Museum of London.²⁴

Robert Walker was the principal painter employed to paint a number of (now well-known) portraits of Oliver Cromwell and his family.²⁵ In his time Walker was regarded as highly accomplished and he was the most important painter of the parliamentary elite during the civil wars and Interregnum, but his skills have often been dismissed as ‘dull and derivative (mainly of Van Dyck)’.²⁶ Walker himself was happy to concede that he was not innovative in composition or in his subjects’ pose: ‘if I could get better (compositions) then I would not do Vandikes’, and he is known to have worked as a copyist of Italian Old Masters including Caravaggio and Titian.²⁷ Nonetheless, Angus Haldane describes Walker’s ‘fluidity and technical skill’ and attests to the high regard of Walker’s contemporaries.²⁸

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Elizabeth Steward Cromwell died at Whitehall in 1654 at the great age of 89 or 90 and was buried at Westminster Abbey, in the company of Parliamentarian, Commonwealth and Protectoral dignitaries in the Chapel of the Kings.²⁹ The exact date of commission of this painting, held now by the Museum of London, is uncertain but it is reasonable to surmise that it was painted by Robert Walker during 1653–54 as it is likely to have been completed before Elizabeth's death or soon after, *in memoriam*. The function of portraits in keeping alive the memory of those deceased by providing a 'visual aid' for the viewer's meditations on, and imaginative conversations with, their ancestors was well established by the seventeenth century.³⁰ Oliver Cromwell appears to have had a tender and devoted relationship with his mother Elizabeth, who was widowed in 1617, when Oliver was just eighteen years old.³¹ The sheer number of years that they shared and her continued membership in his household, from Ely farmhouse to Whitehall Palace, must testify to that; commentators corroborate Cromwell's habit of visiting her chambers regularly when he was resident in London.³² The oval-shaped surround of the painting allows Elizabeth's head to dominate the portrait convincingly from the upper central focal point.³³ The shape was frequently used in miniature portraits, and although in this case the painting is much larger, the shape could have been chosen to evoke the intimacy between the subject and the patron.

Elizabeth Steward Cromwell's portrait is exceptional among those of the Cromwell women in that she is the only one depicted wearing solely black and white clothing often associated with the self-consciously godly. Of course Elizabeth spent much of her adult life in widowhood and her 'harshly modest' clothing closely resembles the 'widow's weeds' described by Alessandro Nicola Malusa.³⁴ Patrick Little has shown that black dye was both expensive and highly fashionable from the 1630s onwards, but the colour was regarded as serious and denoted the prestige and wealth of the wearer.³⁵ Elizabeth's appearance is in accordance with an account of her upright and modest character; according to Ludlow she had complained when moved from the Cockpit to Whitehall Palace for 'she was not so easily flattered by these temptations'.³⁶ It is incumbent to consider that Elizabeth's portrait provided an idealised representation of her both as an individual, and in her role as the long-standing matriarch of the Lord Protector's family. In this way her

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portrait was an emblem which displayed the piety of the family to visitors and also set a standard for the younger women of the family to venerate.

The difficulty of defining the religion of the Cromwell family and the usefulness of the term 'puritan' has been previously debated.³⁷ Patrick Collinson's assertion that puritanism is 'in the eye of the beholder', a fluid concept formed by perception and self-perception, is pertinent when looking at portraits and visual representations.³⁸ The overlap between those who recognised one another by their piety and the common godly stereotype of the *ideal* of plain and sober dress is sustained by the evidence of scripture and underlined with sermons given by contemporary preachers who repeated the command for women to be covered.³⁹ For many of the godly the most suitable apparel was that which promoted an image of moderate decorum and Elizabeth Steward Cromwell's attire largely accords with this ideal.⁴⁰ Elizabeth is here wearing a simple black bonnet tied under her chin and her shoulders are covered by a plain white collar, fastened with ribbons. Her only adornment is the single string of pearls worn at her neck. Pearls as an emblem of wealth and taste had become supremely fashionable in England as a tribute to Elizabeth I who wore them in abundance.⁴¹ Nearly a century later pearls had retained their association with trimmings of authority and additionally had biblical associations with purity and high value that made them even more desirable.

The portrait of Elizabeth Bouchier Cromwell (Plate 2), Oliver's wife, triumphantly celebrates Elizabeth's position as Lady Protectress, following the majestic ceremony to reinstall Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector on 26 June 1657. Elizabeth's three-quarter pose has a self-possessed, regal air, with her shoulders and bust diagonal to the plane of the picture; it conveys a sense of the physical space around her. Glimpsed through an opening to the left is a pastoral outdoor scene fading into the distance. The inclusion of a natural landscape scene allowed Walker to demonstrate his skill in drawing the viewer's eye through close study of different textures and reflected light, as well as evoking the sense of distance. However, it can also be viewed as a means of, quite literally, grounding the subject.⁴² This technique could be of significance for Elizabeth Cromwell as she was subject to a great deal of contemporary criticism, accusing her of pretension in her role as Lady Protectress since occupying the royal palaces at Whitehall and Hampton

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Plate 2: Elizabeth Cromwell née Bourchier (1598–1665), Her Highness the Protectoress, c.1657.
Robert Walker (c.1599–1658) oil on canvas, h.124cm x w.100cm, Cromwell Museum.⁴³

Court.⁴⁴ Her right hand posed across her belly is perhaps a reference to her fertility. Elizabeth had nine live births, of which eight children survived infancy. The success of the Cromwell's marriage is well attested by the few surviving letters between them.⁴⁵ Her left hand gesturing outwards seems to share space with the viewer; together with the direction of her gaze this hand invites the viewer to engage with her.⁴⁶ Elizabeth Cromwell's critics were cruel in their attacks, which ranged from labelling her 'Protectresse Joan', to mocking her plebeian tastes, to accusations of using her position to hoard and extort gifts, and even of adultery.⁴⁷ The title of this paper is an example of the derisive tone used.⁴⁸ Commissioning this impressively large portrait afforded

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an opportunity to answer her critics by demonstrating modesty, decorum and taste while honouring her standing as the enduring consort to the head of state.⁴⁹

Elizabeth Cromwell was not a passive subject or spectator but an active participant in the process of creating the public image not just of herself but of her husband and family. Her assumption of this aspect of her role as Lady Protectress is demonstrated by a crucial manuscript receipt signed by Mr Walker, which is held at the Cromwell Museum:

Mr Waterhouse

My Lady desire you to pay to Mr Walker the Limner the some of twenty
four pounds for the draught of his highnesse picture soe I rest
your loving friend

Simon Cannon

Whitehall 15th of June 1655⁵⁰

Laura Lunger Knoppers has asserted that Oliver Cromwell 'did not tightly control the production of his own image' and no manuscript evidence has been found indicating that he personally commissioned portraits.⁵¹ Evidently, in commissioning portraits herself, Elizabeth Cromwell not only colluded with the artist as sitter in her own self-presentation, she influenced the presentation of other members of her family.

Walker's portrait of Elizabeth closely observes her clothing and jewellery, thus indicating the desire to present herself as a social being.⁵² As well as the ubiquitous pearls around her neck, Elizabeth is wearing large double pearl earrings recalling notions of chasteness, purity and good taste. The pendant brooch worn ostentatiously at Elizabeth's breast has survived and is also displayed at the Cromwell Museum. The central black onyx has a cameo portrait of Oliver surrounded by rubies, the gem long associated with love, passion and devotion and another reference to the Cromwell's long and fruitful marriage.⁵³ All are mounted on gold, engraved on the back with the Protectoral coat of arms and the inscription effectively dates the painting:

Oliver Cromwell Ang. Sco. Fran. et Hib. Pro. An. Dom.1657⁵⁴

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Like her mother-in-law's, Elizabeth's dress is black, and no doubt she deliberately chose the colour to imbue herself with the same attributes of seriousness married with prestige. Here though, the overall effect is dramatically different, as the deep black fabric provides a foil for her radiant skin.⁵⁵ Walker's early career as a copier of Caravaggio seems to have inspired the dramatic interplay of light on Elizabeth's bare shoulders, chest and forearms, revealing her fashionably white skin, characteristic of elite European women.⁵⁶ Erin Griffey's study of Henrietta Maria's wardrobe confirms Patrick Little's claim that black was a highly fashionable choice.⁵⁷ As a woman of nearly sixty and grandmother to at least twenty children, this determination to present herself *à la mode* is striking. Rather than wearing a plebeian bonnet she is wearing her hair in highly fashionable and luxuriant curls. Elizabeth's gold silk outer robe again reflects her prestige and her desire to present herself as a powerful and elegant woman at the apex of a hierarchical social order.

Cornelius Johnson produced numerous portraits of a consistently high technical standard of gentry, professional, and court sitters in England until the mid-1640s when he moved to the Netherlands to escape the civil wars.⁵⁸ Bridget (Plate 3) wears a dress with a square-cut neckline exposing her upper shoulders and décolletage, a fashionable style from the 1640s not unlike those worn by Queen Henrietta Maria, but not cutting edge in the 1650s, so the painting is unlikely to have significance for the Protectorate period. The colour yellow was thought to express joy; it is possible that the portrait dates from when Bridget became engaged to her first husband, Henry Ireton.⁵⁹ The pearls worn not just at her neck and ears but also generously adorning her dress would have been expensive and the portrait conveyed a message of status and beauty.

Interestingly, Bridget is the only one of the Cromwell daughters that Lucy Hutchinson had a kind word for. Referring to Bridget by her second husband's name, Hutchinson recalled that 'His daughter Fleetwood was humbled, and not exalted with these things, but the rest were insolent fools'.⁶⁰

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Plate 3: Bridget Fleetwood née Cromwell (1624–1660), the Lord Protector's eldest daughter, c.1646.
Cornelius Johnson (1593–1661) oil on canvas, h.73.6cm x w.61cm, Chequers Court.⁶¹

Elizabeth, known by her family as 'Betty', was reputedly Oliver Cromwell's favourite but caused her father some anxiety due to her 'worldly vanities and worldly company'.⁶² It is tempting to see in her expression in this portrait (Plate 4) some of the determination and strength of will for which her father is famous.

Betty Claypole's dress is, at first glance, similar in style to her sister's in the preceding portrait. Closer observation shows a tight-cut bodice with more low-set sleeves which restricted the movement of the wearer's arms, thought to be more sexually appealing 'because the wearer was captive'.⁶³ This style

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Plate 4: Elizabeth Claypole née Cromwell (1629–1658), the Lord Protector's second daughter, c.1653.
Circle of Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680) oil on canvas, h.66cm x w.48cm, Cromwell Museum.⁶⁴

is often associated with the seductive women at the court of Charles II but ironically first appeared in the 1650s, when puritan clergyman Thomas Hall protested against 'laying out of naked breasts' as a 'temptation to sinne'.⁶⁵ The portrait has an informal air. Betty is unadorned by jewellery, her luminous skin is complemented by the dark curls around her face and the ringlets falling over her shoulders. A simple line of pearls highlights the fashionable cut of the sleeves of her dress.

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Plate 5: Mary Belasyse née Cromwell, Lady Fauconberg (1637–1713),
the Lord Protector's third daughter.

Circle of John Michael Wright (1617–1694) oil on canvas, h.66cm x w.58cm, Cromwell Museum.⁶⁶

Angus Haldane, who conducted a survey of the paintings held by the Cromwell Museum, has cast doubt on the provenance of this portrait and asserted that 'the features of the lady in this portrait (Plate 5) do not fit convincingly with the known iconography for Mary who married Thomas Belasyse, 2nd Viscount Fauconberg in 1657'.⁶⁷ The style is perhaps more redolent of the circle of Sir Peter Lely than those of John Michael Wright, but I suggest that in fact the physiognomy of the young woman in this portrait, with curved eyebrows over prominent upper lids, long nose and slightly pursed lips above a narrow but rounded chin, can be recognised as a younger presentation of the grand lady shown in a much later portrait which Haldane accepts as authentic.⁶⁸

Mary is depicted here in an apparently simple white gown but in fact her dress is significant. She is wearing a shift, the basic female undergarment, worn

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closest to the body. The fabric is gathered in a drawstring around her neckline and draped loosely around her form. The style was highly fashionable, known as 'dishabill' (from the French *déshabillé*) and later featured prominently in portraits of the beauties of the Restoration court. Although Mary's breasts are not visible like those of women in later portraits, this image of Mary should be read as an image of a highly desirable young woman, daughter of the sovereign. Mary's marriage in summer 1657 to Thomas Belasyse, Viscount Fauconberg, whose family were noted Royalists, caused universal amazement.⁶⁹ The union was a triumph for the bride's father who 'gave his unconditional support' and paid a dowry of £15,000.⁷⁰ The wedding was conducted at Hampton Court Palace. The celebrations featured works by poets Andrew Marvell and Sir William Davenant, thus reviving an art form which had helped to make the Stuart courts 'amongst the most extravagant in Europe'.⁷¹ Roy Sherwood suggests that the Lord Protector himself may even have played a part.



Plate 6: Frances Russell née Cromwell (1638–1720), the Lord Protector's youngest daughter, c.1657.
John Michael Wright (1617–1694) oil on canvas, Kelvingrove Art Gallery.⁷²

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At the time this fascinating portrait of Frances (Plate 6) was created, John Michael Wright had spent ten years working in Rome and had also travelled through France and the Netherlands, thus 'he had furnished himself with a variety of experience far wider than that of any other painter working in Britain during the second half of the seventeenth century'.⁷³ The choice of artist here is interesting to note as Wright was Roman Catholic and his subjects included many of those on the other side of the political divide from the Protectoral court.⁷⁴ The celebrated skill of the artist seemingly trumped any qualms about religious and political sensitivities.

The portrait of Frances, the youngest of all the Cromwell children, is notably different to those of her oldest sisters. Headstrong Frances conspired to marry a man of her own choosing in spite of her father's misgivings, so we can safely assume that the style of dress she is depicted wearing is also entirely of her own choosing. Frances' dress has taken the loose, unstructured *déshabillé* form to the extreme of 1650s fashion, presaging the styles of garments worn by women at the forefront of English aristocratic society over the subsequent two decades.⁷⁵ The luxuriant fabric of her dress, the long loose strings of pearls, casually tied and draped over her long hair, all suggest extravagance. Her hair, which is curled at the front, the rest seeming to escape and flow over her shoulders, contributes to the sense of opulence which is far removed from the modest appearance of Frances' grandmother, or even the carefully balanced decorum of her mother's portrait. On her wrist she wears a black silk bracelet, in vogue as a means to draw attention to the beauty of a woman's arm.⁷⁶ Frances is holding, almost in a protective gesture, a white dove, the timeless symbol of love and classically the sacred animal of Venus. She is situated in an unusual natural landscape which seems to herald a more romantic era.

This portrait was probably painted at the end of protracted negotiations which led to Frances Cromwell's wedding to Robert Rich, grandson of the Earl of Warwick. These had taken place during a period of well over a year, complicated by the hostility of both the bride's and the groom's families.⁷⁷ The marriage finally took place at Whitehall and the entertainment was lavish and continued for several days. As well as a masque written for the occasion, the festivities included music provided by a large orchestra with mixed dancing, bell-ringing and firing of the Tower guns.⁷⁸

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Plate 7: Elizabeth Claypole née Cromwell (1629–1658), the Lord Protector's second daughter, c.1658. John Michael Wright (1617–1694) oil on canvas, h.101.5cm x w.112cm, National Portrait Gallery (a copy by W.M. Stanley is held at the Cromwell Museum).⁷⁹

This magnificent portrait of Elizabeth Claypole (Plate 7) shows her in the image of Minerva, Roman goddess of wisdom, protector of peace and daughter of Jupiter. The depiction of a sitter in an allegorical role was characteristic of the early modern period and was a way of representing particular qualities or virtues which were associated with the sitter.⁸⁰ It was not incompatible to the classically educated puritan mind to use pagan mythology in this way.

This striking portrait was probably executed posthumously after Betty's premature death in August 1658.⁸¹ The parting rays of the setting sun behind

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her reminds us of her death. Many contemporaries noted Oliver's despair at the loss of his daughter. Her oldest brother Richard wrote, 'It is one thing to have the greatest bough lopt off, but when the axe is laid to the root, then there is no hope remaining; such was our fear'.⁸² Indeed, Oliver's death followed just one month after his daughter's and many peers believed that he died from grief.

The portrait can be read as a panegyric of Elizabeth Claypole and her father. She is leaning against a carved relief of the goddess springing from the head of Jupiter with the Latin inscription *Ab Jove Principium* 'From Jove is my beginning', referencing her father. In her left hand Betty holds a cameo which is very likely to be the one of Oliver shown earlier on her mother's portrait and now held at the Cromwell Museum. Placed on the stone are two crowns representing those awarded to victorious Roman generals, alluding to Cromwell's many military victories. Behind the stone an olive tree rises, an obvious link to Cromwell.⁸³ Although the image makes many symbolic references to Cromwell, it is Elizabeth Claypole herself who gazes out at us from the portrait. Elizabeth is dressed in magnificent swathes of bright, bold silks over her clearly visible loose shift. These garments are suitable not only for a baroque representation of a goddess, but also for a princess.

Throughout the crucial year of 1657, following the harmful major-generals experiment and the unsettling kingship debates, Oliver Cromwell and the Protectoral authorities attempted to consolidate and build on relations with the civilian elite and promote the return to a courtly government that was smooth and bloodless. In marrying his youngest daughters into the old nobility, Cromwell had risked alienating those of his supporters in the army and other republican quarters who were appalled by the increasing courtliness of the Protectoral household. The calculation was that this risk was counterbalanced by soliciting support for the Protectoral regime from parts of the nobility and gentry who had so far been resistant to republican government. The newly revised constitution of 1657, in which the protectorship ceased to be elective, signalled to the old nobility that Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, was the founder of a new dynasty.

My study builds on the work of art historians including Karen Hearn who have demonstrated the importance in the early modern court of extending

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authority outwards from the sovereign, by means of visual representations to encompass the physical bodies of other members of the court.⁸⁴ My evidence suggests that Oliver Cromwell himself may not have been the prime architect in using this courtly device. The receipt, issued on behalf of his wife, Elizabeth Bourchier Cromwell, verifies that Elizabeth took a leading role in commissioning portraits and was, therefore, the third part of the joint enterprise between artist, sitter and patron.

The Cromwell women made intentional choices over the way they were represented by artists. The women knew that the setting of their portraits, the clothing and jewellery they wore for them, and even their poses were heavy with meaning for early modern beholders. The Cromwell women were more active agents in creating a visual culture that supported the new dynasty than has previously been recognised. Further archival research and analysis of the portraits of the male Cromwells will shed further light on the nature of this elite civilian regime.

- ¹ Note on the quote in the title of this paper: *The Court & Kitchen of Elizabeth, Commonly called Joan Cromwel, the Wife of the Late Usurper, Truly Described and Represented, and now Made Publick for general Satisfaction*. London, (1664). A reprint of the original text has been published by the Cromwell Museum.
- ² Jonathan Fitzgibbons discusses the mythologising of Oliver Cromwell's reputation in *Cromwell's Head*, (Kew, 2008), ch. iv 'Warts and all?', pp.147–150.
- ³ Roy Sherwood, *Oliver Cromwell: King in all but name 1653–1658*, (Stroud, 1997), ch.12 *passim*.
- ⁴ Cromwell's body was interred in Westminster Abbey within two or three days of his death, John Morrill, 'Cromwell, Oliver (1599–1658), lord protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 Sep. 2004.
- ⁵ *Mercurius Politicus*, 443 (18–25 November 1658), p.30. Following Cromwell's funeral the monarch's effigy was never again placed on top of the coffin during the procession.
- ⁶ W.C. Abbott, *Writings and speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (Cambridge MA, 1937–1947) vi, p.470.
- ⁷ John Morrill, 'Introduction: Cromwell Redivivus' in Jane A. Mills (ed.), *Cromwell's Legacy*, (Manchester, 2017), pp.2–3.

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- ⁸ For example, Austin Woolrych, 'The Cromwellian Protectorate: A military dictatorship?' in *History*, 1st June 1990.
- ⁹ Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic: The political culture of the English Commonwealth, 1649–1653*, (1997); Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, portrait and print, 1645–1661*, (2009), p.194; Roy Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell*, (Cambridge, 1989) *passim*.
- ¹⁰ David L. Smith, 'The Monarchical Republic of Oliver Cromwell' in *Cromwelliana* 2016, series III no 5, pp.5–13. Patrick Collinson, 'The monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I' in *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 69 (1987), pp. 394–424.
- ¹¹ The artists are considered along with analysis of their paintings.
- ¹² Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England*, (London, 2013), p.175.
- ¹³ Konrad Eisenbichler (ed.), *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici*, (London, 2001), *Introduction*, xi; Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance art: Gender, representation, identity*, (Manchester, 1997), p. 111.
- ¹⁴ Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England: With some account of the Principal Artists*, (1762–1780), 4 vols., III, pp.1–2.
- ¹⁵ Helen Pierce, 'The Bold Adventures of All': *Reconstructing the place of portraits in Interregnum England*, *British Art Studies*, Issue 16, (June 2020).
- ¹⁶ Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance art: Gender, representation, identity*, (Manchester, 1997), p. 2.
- ¹⁷ Ulinka Rublack and Maria Hayward, *The First Book of Fashion: The Book of Clothes of Matthaeus and Veit Konrad Schwarz of Augsburg*, (London, 2015), *Introduction I*, *passim*.
- ¹⁸ Rublack and Hayward, *The First Book of Fashion*, (2015), *Introduction I*, p.2.
- ¹⁹ Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance art*, (1997), p. 4.
- ²⁰ Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance art*, (1997), *Introduction*, chapters two and three, *passim*.
- ²¹ A useful survey of Puritan conduct literature is provided by 'Gender construction in early modern England and the conduct books of William Whately, 1583–1639' in R.N. Swanson, ed., *Gender and Christian Religion*, (Martlesham, 1998).
- ²² For example, Keith Thomas, 'Women and the civil war sects', in *Past & Present*, April 1958, No.13, pp.42–62. Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the life of Colonel Hutchinson*, cited in N.H. Keeble, *The cultural identity of seventeenth century woman - a reader*, (London, 1994), pp.191–193; Brilliana Harley, letters, cited in Keeble, *ibid*, pp.197–200).

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- 23 Keeble, *The cultural identity of seventeenth century woman*, (1994), p.96.
- 24 Permission to reproduce image courtesy of the Museum of London, 150 London Wall, London, EC2Y 5HN.
- 25 Angus Haldane, *Portraits of the English Civil Wars*, (London, 2017), p.135.
- 26 Chilvers, I. 'Walker, Robert' in *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*, Oxford University Press. Retrieved 14 Apr. 2021, from <https://www-oxfordreference-com.uea.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acref/9780191782763.001.0001/acref-9780191782763-c-2587>.
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- 28 Haldane, *Portraits*, (2017), pp.132–134.
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- 30 Ann Jensen Adams, *Public faces and private identities in seventeenth century Holland: Portraiture and the production of community*, (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 42–43. Further discussion on the significance of portraits as memorials below in the section on Elizabeth Claypole.
- 31 No letters written directly to or from her exist, but Cromwell extends his solicitations to his mother in letters to other family members.
- 32 According to the Venetian secretary, 'Never a week passed but he went to see her, treating her with filial affection and great respect', Venice: December 1654, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, Volume 29, 1653–1654, ed. Allen B Hinds (London, 1929), pp. 280–293. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol29/pp280-293>.
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- 34 Alessandro Nicola Malusà, 'Mourning, Dress and Representation in the Widowhood of Two Seventeenth-Century Savoy Regents: Christine of France and Marie-Jeanne-Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours', (2019), *The Court Historian*, 24:1, pp.27–28.
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- 36 C.H. Firth (ed.), *Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow*, (1894), vol. I, p.379.
- 37 J.C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, (London, 2010), pp.16–17. More recently, Joel Halcomb, 'Was Cromwell an Independent or Congregationalist?' in *Cromwelliana 2016*, series III no 5, pp.27–28.
- 38 Patrick Collinson, *The Puritan Character: Polemics and polarities in early seventeenth century English culture*, (Los Angeles California, 1989), p.15.

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- 39 Corinthians 1, chapter 11 v.4–7. Jacqueline Eales, 'Gender construction in early modern England and the conduct books of William Whately (1583–1639)', in R.N. Swanson, *Gender and Christian Religion*, (Woodbridge, 1998), pp.163–174.
- 40 Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, (Oxford, 2003), p.85.
- 41 Aileen Ribeiro, *A Portrait of Fashion: Six centuries of dress at the National Portrait Gallery*, (London, 2015), p.60.
- 42 Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance art*, (1997), pp.87–88.
- 43 Permission to reproduce image courtesy of the Cromwell Museum, Grammar School Walk, Huntingdon PE29 3LF.
- 44 'Either she overfed a commonwealth meant to be slimly republican, or she starved what was supposed to have been a jolly fat monarchy fit for a king. In both cases, she was a rotten cook whose unappetizing fare was said to have sickened the body politic.' Katherine Gillespie, 'Elizabeth Cromwell's Kitchen Court: Republicanism and the consort', in *Genders*, Issue 33: *First Ladies? Political Wives in Seventeenth-century England*, (2001).
- 45 For a summary of the correspondence, see Peter Gaunt, 'Cromwell [née Bourchier], Elizabeth (1598–1665), lady protectress of England, Scotland, and Ireland, consort of Oliver Cromwell', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 Sep. 2004.
- 46 Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance art*, (1997), pp.94–95.
- 47 N. Keeble (ed.), Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the life of Colonel Hutchinson*, (London, 1995), p.256; *The Court & Kitchen of Elizabeth, Commonly called Joan Cromwel, the Wife of the Late Usurper, Truly Described and Represented, and now Made Publick for general Satisfaction*, (1664); *News from the New-Exchange: or, the Commonwealth of Ladies: drawn to the Life, in their several Characters and Concernments*, (1650).
- 48 *The Court & Kitchen of Elizabeth*,... (1664).
- 49 At 124cm x 100cm the three-quarter length painting is approximately life-sized.
- 50 *Autographed receipt for a painting of Oliver Cromwell by Robert Walker*, B59, The Cromwell Museum. Nathaniel Waterhouse was Household Steward and Master of the Greencloth, a trusted servant critical to the running of the Protectoral court; he had lodgings at both Whitehall and Hampton Court Palaces, Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell*, (1989), ch.2 *passim*.
- 51 Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, (2009), p.3.
- 52 Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance art* (1997), p.95.
- 53 Cassandra Auble, *The Cultural Significance of Precious Stones in Early Modern England*, (Nebraska, 2011).
- 54 *Pendant with onyx cameo and ruby surround*, The Cromwell Museum. The artist died the following year.

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- ⁵⁵ Erin Griffey, *On Display: Henrietta Maria and the Materials of Magnificence at the Stuart Court*, (Yale, 2015), p.146.
- ⁵⁶ Portraits of Queen Henrietta Maria are the first appearance in portraits of the nobility with bare forearms, Ribeiro, *A Portrait of Fashion*, (2015), p.87. Walker encountering the Chiascuro style popularised by Caravaggio is mentioned by Haldane, *Portraits*, (2017), p.132.
- ⁵⁷ Although Henrietta Maria was often painted in white or sumptuous jewel colours, black was in reality the colour most frequently shown in her clothing bills and which she chose to wear to celebrations such as weddings, as well as for mourning, Erin Griffey, *On Display: Henrietta Maria and the Materials of Magnificence at the Stuart Court*, (Yale, 2015), p.146.
- ⁵⁸ Karen Hearn, 'Johnson, Cornelius [Cornelius Jansen, Janssen, or Jonson van Ceulen] (bap. 1593, d. 1661), painter', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 4 Sep. 2004.
- ⁵⁹ Bridget married Henry Ireton in 1646, Peter Gaunt, 'Fleetwood [née Cromwell; other married name Ireton], Bridget, Lady Fleetwood under the protectorate (bap. 1624, d. 1662), daughter of Oliver Cromwell', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004.
- ⁶⁰ Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, (1995), p.256.
- ⁶¹ Permission to reproduce image courtesy of the Chequers Trust, Butler's Cross, Aylesbury, HP17 0UZ.
- ⁶² Letter, Oliver Cromwell to Elizabeth Cromwell, Edinburgh, 12th April, 1651, in W. C. Abbott and C. D. Crane (eds.), *The writings and speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 4 vols. (1937–47) vol.2, p.405.
- ⁶³ Aileen Ribeiro, *A Portrait of Fashion*, (2015), p.97.
- ⁶⁴ Permission to reproduce image courtesy of the Cromwell Museum, Grammar School Walk, Huntingdon PE29 3LF.
- ⁶⁵ Ribeiro, *ibid.*, p.97. Thomas Hall, *The loathsomnesse of long haire with an Appendix against Painting, Spots, naked Backs, Breasts, Arms, etc.* (1654).
- ⁶⁶ Permission to reproduce image courtesy of the Cromwell Museum, Grammar School Walk, Huntingdon PE29 3LF.
- ⁶⁷ Angus Haldane, *Cromwell Museum Art Catalogue*, (2010), HUTCM 4 *Portrait of a lady, traditionally identified as Mary Belasyse, Lady Fauconberg (1637–1713)*.
- ⁶⁸ The later portrait is also held at the Cromwell Museum, HUTCM B5 *Portrait of Mary, Lady Fauconberg (1637–1713) née Cromwell, 3rd daughter of Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector*. There is also a miniature of Mary Cromwell in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch, signed and dated 1651, by John Hoskins; the features of the lady in this miniature also corroborate my assertion.

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- ⁶⁹ The groom's uncles had been 'in the thick of the disastrous 1655 uprising', Edward Holberton, 'Soe Honny from the Lyon came': The 1657 Wedding-Masques for the Protector's Daughters, (2005), *The Seventeenth Century*, 20:1, p.97.
- ⁷⁰ Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell*, (1989), pp.143–144.
- ⁷¹ Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell*, (1989), p.144. Edward Holberton, 'Soe Honny' gives a thorough examination of the masques.
- ⁷² Permission to reproduce image sought from Glasgow Museums.
- ⁷³ Duncan Thomson, 'Wright, John Michael (bap. 1617, d. 1694), painter', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 Sep. 2004.
- ⁷⁴ For example, he painted Colonel John Russell, who was active in the 'Sealed Knot' conspiracy, Haldane, *Portraits*, (2017), pp.124–125. Later he painted the powerful full-frontal portrait of monarchy restored, Charles II, held at the Throne Room, Palace of Holyroodhouse.
- ⁷⁵ See John Michael Wright's c.1670 portrait of Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland and mistress of Charles II, in the 'French' style with great attention to fabrics and strongly individualised facial features, Catharine Macleod and Julia Marciari Alexander, (eds.), *Painted Ladies: Women at the court of Charles II*, (London, 2001), pp.132–133.
- ⁷⁶ Ribeiro, *A Portrait of Fashion*, (2015), p.87.
- ⁷⁷ Peter Gaunt, Russell [née Cromwell; other married name Rich], Frances, Lady Russell (bap. 1638, d. 1720), daughter of Oliver Cromwell. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 3 January 2008.
- ⁷⁸ Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell*, (1989), pp.141–145.
- ⁷⁹ Permission to reproduce image courtesy of the Cromwell Museum, Grammar School Walk, Huntingdon PE29 3LF.
- ⁸⁰ Diana Dethloff, 'Portraiture and concepts of beauty in Restoration painting', in Macleod and Marciari Alexander, (eds.), *Painted Ladies*, (2001), pp.24–25.
- ⁸¹ It is unclear whether this portrait was commissioned by Betty's husband, John Claypole, or her mother, Elizabeth Cromwell, both of whom were mourning a double loss.
- ⁸² Richard Cromwell, Landsdowne MSS. 823, f.89, cited in Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell Our Chief of Men* (1993), p.666.
- ⁸³ Patrick Little elucidates the cultivation of Oliver Cromwell's image of 'rustic integrity' and the use of tree imagery by poets including Fisher and Marvell in, 'Farmer Oliver? The Cultivation of Cromwell's Image During the Protectorate', *Cromwelliana*, 2012, series III, no.1, p.21.
- ⁸⁴ Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England*, (London, 1995), Introduction *passim*.

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'MY WIFE WAS VERY UNQUIET AND UNCHARITABLE ALSO.
GOD FORGIVE HER!' FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNTS OF WOMEN'S
LIVES DURING THE CIVIL WAR

by Professor Peter Gaunt

There are few surviving contemporary or near-contemporary first person narratives of the lives and lived experiences of women during the civil war written by the subjects themselves. In a patriarchal age, during a period when male literacy was almost certainly much higher than female literacy, and at a time when, with a few rare and well known exceptions, their gender prevented women from becoming combatants or involving themselves directly in the fighting, it is understandable that the roll-call of extant personal accounts of wartime experiences – whether in the form of diaries and journals, autobiographies and memoirs, descriptions of life on campaign and substantial caches of correspondence – is dominated by male authors. As might be expected, there are few, if any, female equivalents of the accounts of active soldiers of the likes of Richard Atkins, Oliver Cromwell, Richard Symonds and Nehemiah Wharton, and, at a time when female religious figures and preachers were only just emerging amongst the radical sects, of ministers and wartime army chaplains such as Ralph Josselin, Adam Martindale and John Shaw. But equally, surviving civilian narratives are dominated by male authors and generally reflect a male perspective. However, close reading just a few of those male accounts can provide a somewhat fuller impression and more rounded picture of women, generally wives, during the war, while the very small number of extant first-person wartime accounts written directly by women are precious and valuable in providing a largely unmediated female perspective. Some of them deserve to be better known. This paper assesses a modest selection of both types of surviving first-person accounts of the war years. The opening section explores a clutch written by male authors and reflects upon the limited and, in a few cases, somewhat more expansive views they can provide of wartime marital relationships and of the lives of women. The second section moves on to examine some accounts written by women themselves, closing with a brace of female sources which deserve to be better known.

In the main, women's wartime lives are viewed in a shadowy and mediated form, portrayed as bit-players in masculine and male-dominated accounts and in the often quite brief and passing references to wives, daughters and other female family members found in the letters, diaries and journals of male authors. For example, the wartime writings of Nehemiah Wallington, a godly

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London woodturner and avid diarist, abound with news and observations relating to the conflict – in the main drawn from reports appearing in the London-based newspapers – interspersed with his own agonised searches for godliness and for signs of the Lord's support for himself, his family and the parliamentary war effort, which he strongly supported, as well as his interpretations of God's providences and divine will, as seen in a range of military and non-military occurrences. News of parliamentary defeats and setbacks caused him particular worry, such as 'the very sad news out of the north parts that the country is almost overrun with those cruel enemies of God' in summer 1643, prompting a frantic search for biblical parallels from which he might draw comfort. The initial reports of a great parliamentary defeat at Edgehill the previous autumn and of 20,000 dead 'caused to be in me many distempered thoughts in so much that I could not keep the day with comfort as I thought to have done', but he was cheered by later and more accurate reports of the outcome – 'praised be God ... Oh I cannot relate the particulars of the great mercy of God to us in this fight but I hope hereafter I shall for the 23 of October 1642 should never be forgotten, in so much that his excellency [the Earl of Essex] said that he never saw less of man in anything nor more of God'.

Wallington was much given to self-reflection, to intense and internalised searching for reassurance that he was leading a godly life and was following the Lord's path; but while he was also clearly a loving husband and father and cared deeply about his wife and children, his substantial wartime writings tell us little about the female members of his family. In one fairly typical example, Wallington noted that in Easter week 1643 his wife and daughter urged him to have a day out with them in Peckham, but although he knew he would have 'much delight to take my pleasure in walkeing in the fresh aire with my deare ones', he refused to join them as he felt it would be inconsistent with 'the sadnesse of the times' and his pledge to 'deny myself of my own outward comforts', feeling it better 'to be in the house of morning then in the house of laughter'. His wife, Grace, their surviving daughter Sarah, in her teens by the time of the civil war, who married a fellow woodturner in 1647, and his wife's widowed sister-in-law, Sarah Rampaigne, also living with them in London at this time, are generally accorded no more than passing comments of this type in Wallington's wartime writings.¹

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Another Londoner, the lawyer and diarist John Greene, who spent most of the war years in the City, though with occasional jaunts into the countryside, recorded in his account, often interleaved within printed almanacs, a wide range of personal and family events and experiences during that period. One of the high points was his marriage, in spring 1643, just as the first full campaigning season of the civil war was unfolding. After a ten-day trip to visit his bride's family on the south coast, during which he viewed Portsmouth and Chichester, he was back in London by 14 April. On the 17th he went to Spring Gardens and bought wedding clothes and 'On the 24th of this April I was married, by Dr Jermyn, to my wife Mary Jermyn, eldest daughter of Phillip Jermyn, sergeant-at-law. The wedding was kept at my father's house in Old Jewry very privately, none but brothers and sisters and a friend or two were at it. My wife expected an ague on Sunday and Tuesday and that was the reason it was done on Monday, the Wednesday after being fast day. On Tuesday, the day after my wedding, we went to The Mermaid in Bread Street to dance and be merry, where music met us'. Greene carefully recorded the births and also the deaths of various children in his family, not least the birth and baptism of his own first three children between spring 1644 and early summer 1646, the excited father noting their development and progress, especially the appearance of teeth.

Despite his new wife and growing close family, more mundane and masculine experiences personal to him and to other male members of his immediate family continued to dominate his diary, including sermons he had attended and heard, his losses at cards, his own and his father's assessments for various taxes and impositions, the settling of bills with his apothecary and others, his observations about the weather, his study of astronomy – in 1643 he and his brother-in-law began to 'learn astronomy and the use of the globes' – and bouts of minor ill-health. Thus he reported that he was 'extreme weary and ill' the day after playing tennis, while at another point 'my teeth ache, not very much, only my gums sore and my face swelled very much, so I stir not out in very cold weather', though eventually he had to call in a doctor who 'let my gums bleed, put something in my ears and gave me somewhat to snuff up in my nose', but 'I think he did but little good [for] my face was swelled 3 or 4 days after'. These entries are interspersed with reports on the progress of the civil war, and Greene reflected upon the general military experience and the state of the war each year from 1643 onwards at the start or close of his annual

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account, repeatedly noting the heavy and negative impact of the 'unhappy' and 'bitter' conflict and the sufferings and burdens it had brought; he also noted down specific war-related events occurring in the course of each year, a mixture of national news, including the outcomes of specific civil war battles and sieges, and key political developments. As a lawyer, he ruefully recorded the dwindling amount of legal business and court activity in the capital. But once again, despite the richness and strong human interest of his diary, striking a generally more worldly and secular tone than Wallington, and despite a keen and evident interest in his family, Greene's entries do not give much insight into the wartime life and experiences of his new wife.²

Contrasting impressions of their relationships with their wives during and immediately after the main civil war can be found in the surviving accounts of Sir John Oglander and Adam Eyre. Oglander, a landowner on the Isle of Wight with a long record of governmental and parliamentary service and of local office both there and in neighbouring Hampshire, was too old to take up arms and fight – he was in his late fifties when the civil war broke out – but he made no secret of his royalist sympathies. As such and in consequence of parliamentary control of the island throughout the war and of his refusal to serve under such control, he was viewed with suspicion and repeatedly arrested and harassed. He spent part of 1643 and most of 1644 either a close prisoner or under looser house arrest in London, and he did not secure his liberty and permission to return home until 1645. Hitherto, his wife Frances, whom he had married in 1606, had made only fleeting and passing appearances in his commonplace book, a collection of notes, observations and records of events intended mainly to enlighten and to instruct his successors and later generations of Oglanders, which Sir John had begun keeping in his early manhood, during the reign of James I. But there is every sign that the marriage had been happy and close. Sir John's feelings for Frances suddenly burst out in his commonplace book in summer 1644, when his arrest and detention in London meant that he was unable to see and to attend her during a serious and, as it turned out, final and fatal illness. In an entry, part of which does appear to be inscribed in now much-faded blood, he wrote that 'my poor wife, overheating her blood in procuring my liberty [from close imprisonment], got the smallpox and died, making me a worse prisoner than before. O my poor wife, with my blood I write it. Thy death has made me most miserable. Indeed, greater grief and sorrow could not have

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befallen any man. No man can conceive the loss, but he that hath had a good and careful loving wife'. Thereafter, even once he was back on the island and at liberty, the entries in his commonplace book amounted to an extended tale of woe, left bereft by the deaths of his wife and of many other members of his family, embittered by the lowly origins and rapacious greed of the new parliamentarian officials running the island and their oppressive taxes and, more generally, disillusioned with the sad state and misgovernment of the Isle of Wight in the wake of 'our unnatural wars'. In a somewhat brighter moment, at some point probably in the late 1640s and a few years before his own death, Oglander reflected on his healthy financial position. 'Had I not God's blessing and a lawful, industrious wife, I could never have done it', he mused. 'I could never have done it without a most careful wife who was no spender, never wore a silk gown but for her credit when she went abroad [ie appeared in public], and never to please herself. She was up every day before me and oversaw all the outhouses: she would not trust her maid with directions but would wet her shoes to see it done herself'. He hoped that his heirs and descendants would do as well and would find such suitable and thriftily industrious wives.³

Adam Eyre was a parliamentarian officer and administrator and a minor landowner in the Penistone area of south Yorkshire. He apparently kept a wartime journal, now lost, but his 'Dyurnall' of the immediate post-war period, a more or less daily account of his life between January 1647 and January 1649 – though it becomes a bit scrappy and with some gaps towards the end – does survive. It blends brief entries about his life at home, the state of the weather and his health, his interests and pastimes; at one point he accompanied a friend 'to see a match played at the football between Penistone and Thurlestone; but the crowd hindered the sport, so that nothing was done, and so we came home again', though playing bowls, taking tobacco, dicing and drinking, sometimes to excess, were more typical of Eyre's social life – with records of his travels and of his income and expenses on church and civil business in his home area, together with occasional business trips to London, a lengthy journey for which he always made careful preparation and which made him uneasy. But amidst all this, Eyre's journal also throws an interesting and, for a male account, unusually full light on his relationship with his wife Susanna, the daughter of a neighbouring small landowner, whom he had married at the beginning of the decade. By this stage there were very

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evident tensions within the marriage. On 20 May 1647 they disagreed over a potential property purchase when she refused to lend or give him £200, but in early June there was a more serious falling out, when 'my wife began, after her old manner, to braule and revile mee for wishing her only to weare such apparrell as was decent and comly, and accused mee for treading on her sore foote, with curses and othes; which to my knowledge I touched not; neverthesse she continued in that extacy till noone; and at dinner I told her I purposed never to com in bed with her till she tooke more notice of what I formerly had sayd to her, which I pray God give mee grace to observe'. An entry of late June closes with the brief comment that 'This night my wife was worse in words than ever', while in late July Eyre recorded that 'This day I stayd at home all day, by reason my wife was not willing to let mee goe to bowles at Bolsterstone'. One night in early August he was woken or could not get to sleep because his wife was being troubled by her bad foot, and lying awake 'sundry wicked worldly thoughts came in my head, and, namely, a question whether I should live with my wife or noe, if she continued so wicked as shee is; whereupon I ris and prayed to God to direct mee a right'. Trouble rumbled on through the month. On the 11th, having spent much of the day out on business, including getting a haircut and buying his wife some tobacco, 'at night [his wife] kept ye yates shut, and sayd shee would be master of the house for that night'.

Over the following week Eyre wrote several times about his 'sore temptation' – presumably further thoughts of leaving his wife or maybe of committing adultery. After a quieter interlude, Eyre returned home in early October to find himself locked out of the house and his wife refusing to open it, so he had to break his way in. Apparently drinking quite heavily as autumn progressed and noting several falls from his horse, by late December some sort of crisis was reached. After attending church on Sunday the 19th, 'my wife was very unquiet and uncharitable also. God forgive her!', while around the Christmas period several entries record Eyre's determination to mend his ways, to spend less time and money in the alehouse and to resolve 'never hereafter to stay out in the night, which God Allmighty give mee grace to observe, even for His mercy's sake'. Reform and reconciliation were cemented on 1 January 1648, and in the wake of a great storm which seemed to have shaken Eyre as much as it did his house, he made it up with his wife, asking her to 'forebeare to tell mee of what is past' and promising 'to become

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a good husband to her for ye tyme to come, and shee promised mee likewise shee would doe what I wished her in anything, save in setting her hand to papers...Now I pray God that both shee and I may leave of all our old and foolish contentions, and joyne together in His service without all fraud, malice, or hypocrisie...'. Although Eyre failed always to maintain the high moral and godly standards he had set himself, several times in the course of 1648 seeking the Lord's forgiveness for occasions of drunkenness, with just a single further spat – on 11 October, when his wife refused to join him in an unspecified business or property transaction, 'I told my wife sith shee would not joyne with mee in sale, shee should keepe the house as she would, neither would I meddle with her at all'. The remaining part of the journal suggests that their married life had become quieter and more harmonious.⁴

Some women who produced contemporary accounts during the civil war itself or who later wrote about the war years are already well known and well studied. Perhaps the two most famous, on either side of the civil war divide, are Lucy Hutchinson and Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle. Well after the civil war was over, both wrote detailed biographies of their husbands: John Hutchinson, the parliamentarian colonel, wartime defender of Nottingham and then a regicide, and William, Duke of Newcastle, the king's leading general in northern England during the first half of the war, until he went into exile on the continent after defeat at Marston Moor in July 1644. Neither work, however, tells us much about the wartime lives and experiences of the author herself, instead focusing very much on the (male) subject of the biography.⁵ The autobiographies of Lady Anne Halkett (Anne Murray as she was when the war broke out) and Lady Ann Fanshawe (Ann Harrison at the start of the war) are also well known and give some insight into how two well-educated and single young women of royalist inclination spent their time in the royalist capital of Oxford during the civil war. However, neither account gives deep or detailed insight into their lives at that stage and both become noticeably fuller and more colourful only once the king had lost the main civil war, with Fanshawe embarking in 1645 on the typical royalist exile's route, moving first into the far west of England and then on to France via the Isles of Scilly and the Channel Isles, while from 1647 Halkett became caught up for a time in the intrigues of the royalist agent Joseph Bampfield, including helping in the successful plot to spring the Duke of York from prison.⁶

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Also very familiar to historians and often heavily drawn upon in military and other studies of the war are the letters of Lady Brilliana Harley, whose wartime correspondence provides the fullest and most gripping account by a woman of being caught up in the civil war and of playing a direct part in the fighting. With her husband, Sir Robert Harley, away in London attending and active in the Long Parliament, it fell to her to respond to the increasingly threatening and hostile position in which she found herself, defending her home and family interests in the Brampton Bryan area of the Shropshire-Herefordshire border. Thus the closing sections of her surviving voluminous correspondence to her husband and, from the later 1630s, to her eldest son Edward ('Ned'), to whom she was also devoted, throw light on her troubled wartime experience, as a parliamentarian and puritan sympathiser in a region which was overwhelmingly royalist in inclination. Her surviving letters dating from the outbreak of the civil war to within a week or two of her own death from natural causes at the end of October 1643 reveal her determination to hold on to her family's interests and property, the delaying tactics she adopted when her main seat of Brampton Bryan castle came under direct royalist threat in early summer 1643, and her organisation of the successful resistance mounted to a royalist siege between July and early September.⁷ In her last letter to Ned she noted that 'I have taken a very greate coold, which has made me very ill these 2 or 3 days, but I hope the Lord will be mercifull to me, in giving me my health, for it is an ill time to be sike in'.

While Harley's letters and her account of her defence of Brampton Bryan during the first year of the civil war are well known to historians, two other female accounts deserve to be better known, even though both are now available in print and their authors receive *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entries. Joyce Jeffreys was, by the outbreak of the civil war, an elderly spinster, residing in a rented house within Hereford, and conducting much of her successful business, principally money-lending, in and around the city. At first glance her surviving financial diary, recording repayments of and interest received on financial loans but also giving monthly accounts of her own personal and household expenditure, might seem a little dry and uninformative, but close reading enables us to reconstruct much of her life during the civil war. The accounts reveal that the onset of the civil war badly disrupted both her professional and her personal life. Her money-lending activities dwindled, as did her financial position, for she was often unable

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during the war to collect interest on existing pre-war loans or to recover her capital. A royalist sympathiser and supporter, in September 1642 she contributed cash 'towards the buying of armour and weapons and artillery to strengthen the city against the parliament' as well as continuing to pay for the training of a member of the local militia, now supporting the king's cause, and helping to equip others who 'went to soldier'. Accordingly, she fled from Hereford later in the month, 'for fear of the coming of the parliament's army from Worcester to Hereford', and shortly before units from Essex's main parliamentary army duly rolled into the city, instead taking up residence in the countryside nearby. She did not escape unscathed, for some of her goods, including cash, two horses, both of them 'bay coach mares', timber and 'much linen', were taken from her by the parliamentarians, who plundered known royalists during their occupation of the city. She did not return to Hereford until the end of the year, once the parliamentarians had withdrawn, whereupon she managed to recover some of her lost property – redeeming 'my 2 black beaver hats and 2 gold bands, out of the thieves' or plunderers' hand' cost her 21s 6d – plus other goods which were still in her house there or were being held for safekeeping by various friends in and around Hereford, such as a neighbour who was paid 20s by her for 'keeping my beds and trunks and boxes from the plunderers'. She moved out of Hereford and so was not there and did not suffer too much when the city was briefly regained and occupied by Sir William Waller's parliamentarians in spring 1643. However, the two parliamentary occupations had cost her more money, for she reckoned that over £70-worth of her food, livestock and other goods had been taken and consumed by parliamentary troops which had billeted in her house during 1642–43, and she had to lay out smaller sums to have repaired the minor damage which the house, standing close to one of the city gates, had sustained during Waller's attack upon and capture of Hereford.

Although Hereford was held fairly securely by the king's men after Waller's departure in May 1643 until spring 1645, Jeffreys incurred further expenses over that period in billeting soldiers from the royalist garrison, as well as contributing to other costs of the garrison. In 1644 she paid 1s 8d towards 'work done in making bulwarks to defend the city of Hereford from invasion', but she drew the line at having her store of timber removed for that purpose and subsequently tipped 'an honest carpenter, for preserving my timber from the governor's knowledge'. Jeffreys herself did not return to Hereford, other

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than for very brief and fleeting visits – her house was, after all, now occupied by soldiers – and she spent the rest of the war living in friends' houses in the Herefordshire countryside or at her own rural property of Ham Castle, near Clifton upon Teme, close to the Herefordshire-Worcestershire border. In spring 1645 she attempted hurriedly to sell other properties she had in the Hereford suburbs, ahead of an anticipated attack or siege by parliament's Scottish allies, while late in 1645, around the time that English parliamentarians under John Birch surprised and captured Hereford, her main residence of Ham Castle may have been threatened, for Jeffreys had some of her valuables hidden, buried in one or more trunks in the grounds.

The civil war did not destroy Jeffreys and some elements of her pre-war comfortable life continued, even at the height of the war. For example, her monthly personal account for August 1644, which she spent mainly in the Bromyard area, included money expended when visiting a friend for dinner at nearby Clifton upon Teme, 3s spent acquiring two quarts of sack at Worcester, 34s for a quantity of tiffany, a fine silk material decorated with flowers, 4s 6d for three pounds of loaf sugar which she sent to a god-daughter who was sick (she always had a soft spot for and enjoyed treating female kinswomen and friends and their children), together with 2s 6d for a new pair of shoes for herself, 6d to a servant of the vicar of Broadway who brought her a basket of his Worcestershire pears, 12s for a felt hat which she intended as a gift for her cousin, and 5s for a jug of 'salit oyle', almost certainly olive oil. While Jeffreys lived on until the end of the decade and her accounts from the post-war period show that she still enjoyed quite a comfortable lifestyle, evidently the civil war disrupted her life significantly for several years, her pronounced royalism caused her to feel threatened at times of parliamentary advance in or control over Herefordshire, and forced her to leave Hereford and shuttle around the county and surrounding area, and the conflict cost her plenty of money and undermined her money-lending business.⁸

Alice Thornton was pro-royalist, having been born in 1626 into a Yorkshire landed family with strong royalist connections – her father was a close friend and distant kinsman of Sir Thomas Wentworth, first Earl of Strafford, and had himself briefly served as lord deputy of Ireland before his death in 1640. The family escaped from Ireland in the wake of the Irish Rebellion, settling first in Chester and then on their estates or with relatives of Alice's mother in

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Yorkshire. According to her later autobiographical account, on returning from Ireland they were initially welcomed in Chester and treated well by 'the gentry of the city' who were 'exceeding courteous and civil to my dear mother and myself ... and such pity and favour we found that she wanted nothing in that place'. But life did not remain so pleasant, for by summer 1643 Sir William Brereton began harassing the city. On one occasion, she was up in a turret in the Chester house they were occupying when, 'as I looked out at a window towards St Mary's church, a cannon bullet flew so nigh the place where I stood that the window suddenly shut with such force the whole turret shook; and it pleased God I escaped without more harm, save that the waft took my breath from me for the present and caused a great fear and trembling, not knowing from whence it came'. Around the same time, her brother fell sick with smallpox and, although he recovered, 'he was very much disfigured, having been a very beautiful child'. Alice herself then fell dangerously ill, probably also from smallpox, though she too recovered, but another boy who was living with them slowly died of the disease.

In late August 1643 the Thorntons decided to move on to Yorkshire, travelling through war-torn and divided territory, via parliamentary Warrington, where they witnessed an alarm of a possible royalist attack, or perhaps just an exercise to keep the defenders on their toes, and on to Wigan, which had been 'sorely demolished and all the windows broken', where they were received with some suspicion. Attempting to cross into North Yorkshire, they were stopped by parliamentary guards at Downham, near Clitheroe, subjected to 'harsh language and abuse by a parliament corporal and his gang', arrested, threatened 'we should be stripped' and held overnight in 'a pitiful house for shelter', before a parliamentary colonel and distant relative heard of their plight, confirmed their pass and ordered that they be allowed to travel on unmolested. For a year or more, they lived quietly with relatives in a small North Yorkshire village, also visiting another relative nearby in Richmond, troubled by nothing more than occasional family illnesses, including an outbreak of food poisoning which, in typical fashion, Alice turned into a highly dramatic and spiritually confirmative incident in her autobiographical account: 'It pleased God to preserve me from death, which I was nigh unto by eating a little piece of lobster. That day I had taken physick, for it turned on my first sleep when I wakened into an exceeding terrible vomiting and purging, and so followed with such violence that they could not

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make me any help, nor could I have so much respite or ease until I could take anything; and this continued all that night and the next day until night, but by the gracious blessing of God upon some respite and things given by Mr Matrum, with my dear mother's care, I escaped that desperate fit and by degrees was cured, only it brought me very weak and faint.'

One brother, Christopher, went off to school in York around this time, but thoughts of the whole family moving to York in spring 1644 were abandoned at the onset of the parliamentary siege. Hearing news of a possible battle on Marston Moor, they feared for Christopher's safety and another brother, George, was sent to fetch him: 'he happily met him riding out of the town to see the fight' and took him up on his horse and carried him away, for a time 'pursued by a party of horse of Scots', though the pair arrived home safely at midnight, 'out of those great dangers of being murdered', as Alice rather dramatically put it. Her brother George, newly returned from France in fact, was wrongly suspected of being a royalist army officer and so he was forced to move on and 'lived obscured from all people' for a while.

The rest of the family, including Alice, stayed on in now parliamentary-controlled Yorkshire, living mainly at Hipswell near Richmond. However, as known royalist sympathisers, their life became tougher, for they were harassed by mainly Scottish troops, occasionally plundered 'of meat and drink', compelled to pay £25 per month to support the parliamentary war effort and required to take in 'a troop of Scots on free quarter'. The family became hard-pressed financially and was forced to borrow money to cover costs and expenses. Alice herself, now in her late teens, kept out of the way of the Scottish soldiers as much as possible, but one day she was surprised in her mother's chamber by a Captain Innis, whose eye she clearly caught and who 'began to be much more earnest and violent to have stayed in the house'. The family managed to get him out, 'who was so vile a bloody looked man that I trembled all the time he was in the house', though he then approached Alice's aunt with an offer of marriage to her niece, only to be rebuffed there. Alice hid herself elsewhere when he paid a return visit to their home, causing 'this villain captain' to threaten cruelty. Financial demands increased and, with his troops, the captain, 'most vile and cruel in his oaths and swearing' against mother and daughter, returned and demanded more money and led off their cattle. The family suffered other losses in the mid 1640s, including the

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lingering death of Alice’s only sister, who was buried quickly and during the night in Masham church ‘by reason of the parliament set and Scots, who would not let a sermon be preached’. But Alice and her mother survived the civil war and were still living together with some of her brothers in Yorkshire as the main war ended and as the Scots pulled out. A long if not always happy life lay ahead of her – both her husband, the son of a middling Yorkshire landowner with parliamentary connections, whom she married in the early 1650s, and six of the nine children they had together, died quite young – and she proved to be the longest-lived of the authors whose works have been explored here. She lived on into the early eighteenth century, dying full of years during the reign of Queen Anne, after a long widowhood taken up with religious and charitable activities and writing ‘my own book of my life, the collections of God’s dealings and mercies to me’.⁹

- ¹ D. Booy, ed., *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618–1654* (Aldershot, 2007); the quotations are from pp. 174, 188, 195, 198. See also P.S. Seaver, *Wallington’s World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (London, 1985) and P.S. Seaver, ‘Wallington, Nehemiah (1598–1658)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter ODNB] (Oxford, 2004).
- ² E.M. Symonds, ‘The Diary of John Greene (1635–57)’, *English Historical Review*, 43 (1928); the quotations are from pp. 391, 598, 599, 601, 602. See also B. Coates, ‘Greene, John (1606–1659)’, ODNB.
- ³ F. Bamford, *A Royalist’s Notebook. The Commonplace Book of Sir John Oglander, Knight, of Nunwell* (London, 1936); the quotations are from pp. 107, 240–41. See also J.M. Rigg revised S. Kelsey, ‘Oglander, Sir John (1585–1655)’, ODNB.
- ⁴ H.J. Morehouse, ‘A dyurnall, or catalogue of all my accions and expences from the 1st of January 1646 [1647], by Adam Eyre’ in C. Jackson ed., *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Surtees Society 65, 1877); the quotations are from pp. 36, 43, 46, 51, 53–6, 66, 80–2, 84, 106, 111. See also A.J. Hopper, ‘Eyre, Adam (1614–1661)’, ODNB.
- ⁵ L. Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (numerous editions, including ed. C.H. Firth, London, 1906) and D. Norbrook, ‘Hutchinson [née Apsley], Lucy (1620–1681)’, ODNB. We gain far greater insight into Lucy herself from her later writings and translations, most of them of a spiritual nature, as summarised and listed in the ODNB biography. M. Cavendish, *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, (numerous editions,

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- including ed. C.H. Firth, London, 1886) and James Fitzmaurice, 'Cavendish [*née* Lucas], Margaret, duchess of Newcastle upon Tyne (1623?–1673)', *ODNB*. Again, we gain greater insight into Margaret's wartime life, at the royalist court in Oxford, down to 1644 when she accompanied the queen to Paris and there met her husband, from one of her other and far less well known writings, 'A true relation' of her early life, included in *Nature's Pictures* (1656), pp. 368–91.
- ⁶ D. Stevenson, 'Halkett [*née* Murray], Anne [Anna], Lady Halkett (1623–1699)', *ODNB* and P. Davidson, 'Fanshawe [*née* Harrison], Ann, Lady Fanshawe (1625–1680)', *ODNB*. Their two biographical accounts have been published together in J. Loftis ed., *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe* (London, 1979).
- ⁷ J. Eales, 'Harley [*née* Conway], Brilliana, Lady Harley (*bap.* 1598, *d.* 1643)', *ODNB*; J. Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: the Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990). Her letters to Edward of 1642–3 can be found within T. Taylor Lewis ed., *Letters of Lady Brilliana Harley* (Camden, 1st series, 58, 1854), with the quotation from p. 209. Much of her wartime correspondence with her husband is transcribed or calendared in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Fourteenth Report, Appendix Part II. The Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Portland, Volume III* (London, 1894), and her written exchanges with her royalist opponents in summer 1643 before and during the siege can be found in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Bath, Volume I* (London, 1904).
- ⁸ J. Spicksley, ed., *The Business and Household Accounts of Joyce Jeffreys, Spinster of Hereford, 1638–1648* (Oxford, 2012); the monthly account for August 1644 is at p. 255. See also R. Tittler, 'Jefferies, Joyce (c.1570–1650)', *ODNB*.
- ⁹ A. Thornton, *The Autobiography of Mrs Alice Thornton*, ed. C. Jackson (Surtees Society 62, 1873), pp. 28–53. See also A. Hughes, 'Thornton [*née* Wandesford], Alice (1626–1707)', *ODNB*.

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THE POLITICAL CAREER OF EDWARD MONTAGU, SECOND EARL OF MANCHESTER, APRIL 1645 TO JANUARY 1649

*by Professor Malcolm Wanklyn*¹

At the battle of Marston Moor fought on 2 July 1644 the Eastern Association Army, commanded by Manchester and his two deputies Oliver Cromwell and Lawrence Crawford, had been largely responsible for inflicting a catastrophic defeat on Prince Rupert. With royalist garrisons in the north of England falling like ninepins, outright victory by the year's end seemed to be within the grasp of the Anglo-Scottish alliance, but it was not to be. The campaign in the south of England that followed ended not in the destruction of the rest of the king's field armies, but in their reoccupation of most of the territory lost during the summer. Unsurprisingly Parliament demanded an explanation, and on 25 November in a pre-emptive strike Cromwell, as an MP, placed the responsibility fairly and squarely on his general's shoulders. With the aim of ensuring that hostilities ended in peace by negotiation not in outright victory, he had first ensured through his inactivity in September and early October that the king's forces were not penned up in Devon and Cornwall. Then, when they advanced eastwards, he deliberately neglected several excellent chances of destroying them on the battlefield.² Manchester counter-attacked in the Lords. He also focused on aspects of his assailant's behaviour that could be classed as treasonable, but in a speech in the Commons on 4 December Cromwell was sufficiently adroit to rubbish his general's claims and to refurbish his own reputation.³ The opportunity this gave for his career to flourish needs no further elaboration. The purpose of this article is to begin assessing the impact on Manchester's career using sources that are currently accessible.⁴

On 9 December 1644 Cromwell played a pivotal role in a debate in the Lower House about remodelling Parliament's armies by passionately supporting the self-denying principle which would require all members of both Houses to surrender their commissions in the armed forces. By that means rivalries between senior commanders that had frustrated hopeful military operations in the past would be prevented, giving Parliament and its war cabinet, the Committee of Both Kingdoms, the chance to concentrate exclusively on winning the war.

The brief accounts that survive of Cromwell's speech mainly focus on wider issues such as the dangers to civilian commitment and morale if immediate

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action was not taken to bring hostilities to a successful conclusion, but when talking about responsibility for setbacks whilst on campaign he was reported as having struck an emollient note:

I would recommend to your prudence not to insist upon any complaint or oversight of any commander-in-chief upon any occasion whatsoever; for as I must acknowledge myself guilty of oversights, so I know they can rarely be avoided in military affairs.⁵

Gardiner and later historians, including most recently Martyn Bennett, have represented this as a statesmanlike attempt to bring the feud with Manchester to an end in the interest of fast-tracking military reform.⁶ There are, however, three very sound reasons for doubting that the earl was the intended beneficiary. First, there is no reason whatsoever for assuming that the offer to forgive and forget was aimed specifically at him. Although commander-in-chief meant army commander or above in the late nineteenth-century when Gardiner was writing, this was not the way in which the term was used in England 250 years earlier. Then it meant nothing more than the officer in independent charge of a body of soldiers, from the governor of a town upwards. Second, the offer referred specifically to accidental mistakes made on campaign. It was irrelevant to Cromwell's principal charge that Manchester's behaviour had been both premeditated and potentially treasonable.⁷ Finally, Cromwell's subsequent behaviour was the reverse of trying to blot out the past. On the very next day when he gave evidence to the Commons' committee preparing the case against the earl, he was as forthright as ever in claiming that Manchester was guilty of the allegations he had made against him in November. Moreover, that was not the end of the matter. Cromwell went on to write a full account of Manchester's misdemeanours in mid-December, whilst witnesses in his support appeared before the Commons' committee until 6 January. In early February it presented the legal case against the earl to the House, and Manchester made ready to answer the charges against him. The impetus slackened in mid-February, but after the ordinance establishing the self-denying principle became law in early April he was treated differently from the other generals. The earl of Essex and Sir William Waller were handsomely rewarded after resigning their commissions, but an attempt to persuade the Commons to compensate Manchester for losses he had sustained whilst holding military

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command failed in the face of a reminder that Cromwell's allegations had yet to be tested in a court of law.⁸

In spring 1645 it would have been easy to take seriously Manchester's future as predicted by the royalist wit Arthur Trevor. He had become '... the owl of the Commonwealth against whom all birds take a peck. If he escape with the loss of his feathers only, his condition will be very much above the expectations of his friends'.⁹ However, escape he did, but seemingly into private life. Ian Gentles described him as being relegated to the shadows, and unsurprisingly devoted only a few brief sentences in the biography in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* to his activities between April 1645 and the king's execution in January 1649.¹⁰ Admittedly, Manchester's name rarely appears in contemporary memoirs and correspondence or in the weekly journals printed in London in the late 1640s, but a search of official records suggests that he played a very active and conspicuous part in national politics as he had done before becoming an army commander in August 1643. Between 5th April and 30th June 1645 Manchester attended 59 out of the 81 meetings of the Committee of Both Kingdoms;¹¹ and in the second half of the year, down to 12 December he was present at 61 of its 93 meetings.¹² He was also a most conscientious member of the House of Lords with an attendance record of over 90 per cent between 4 April and 31 August and again during the last three months of the year.¹³

The earl's determination not to fade into the background after resigning may be explained by the hope that a good attendance record would be sufficient to persuade his enemies to drop the charges against him, but that suggests a fair dose of naivety that does not fit with his previous political experience. Manchester, known as Lord Mandeville or Lord Kimbolton prior to his father's death in November 1642, was an important member of the junto that had combined with Charles I's Scottish opponents to bring about the collapse of royal government in 1640, and between mid-July 1642 and mid-August 1643 he had served as speaker of the House of Lords on many occasions when not on military service.¹⁴ He therefore clearly had plentiful experience of the cut and thrust of life at Westminster and what was needed to escape from the dangerous position in which Cromwell had placed him. The way out

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was to find powerful allies and to provide more convincing evidence that he was committed to winning the war than conscientiously attending meetings.

It must therefore have been a great relief to receive a letter from the earl of Essex hinting at reconciliation. He and Manchester had been rival bidders for military resources in 1644, but the reforms that sidelined them both had removed the cause. Moreover, Essex was now the most senior figure in the grouping in Parliament known as the Presbyterian party because of its interest *inter alia* in bringing the Church of England into close conformity with the Scottish church. Manchester's reply to Essex's letter does not survive but he was a natural recruit being a convinced Presbyterian, and firmly convinced at the time of his confrontation with Cromwell that the Scots' success in defending their church against King Charles I's efforts to end its doctrinal independence during the late 1630s had been a sure sign that they were instruments of God's will.¹⁵

From Essex's political opponents, the so-called Independent party, led by a junto that included Oliver Cromwell, Manchester could only expect hostility that would wax and wane depending on how useful attacks on him might be in attracting non-party support. Initially he did nothing to change their minds. Twice in early June, on occasions when Lord Grey of Wark, his successor as speaker of the Upper House, was absent and he was chosen as substitute, matters were raised that were designed to embarrass Cromwell's colleagues. The earl of Kent was accused of not passing on intelligence in early May that Leicester was under threat of attack, and an intercepted letter between two prominent royalists was discussed which hinted at secret negotiations with prominent members of the Independent party.¹⁶ The response of the House of Commons was to revive a notion which had been in abeyance since 4 April, namely that in accordance with the Self-Denying Ordinance, which covered civilian as well as military appointments, Manchester ought to give up his responsibility for purging the University of Cambridge of royalist dons.¹⁷ In mid-June 1645, however, the harassment campaign in Parliament came to an abrupt end.¹⁸

This reason for this change of heart was not remarked upon at the time, but it is possible that it had something to do with the way in which Manchester had voted in the Committee of Both Kingdoms on 7th and 9th of June. At the

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time, the Independent party's protégé, Sir Thomas Fairfax, commander of the New Model Army created by the military reforms of the previous winter, was under a cloud. The expectation had been that he would try to fight the king's army as soon as possible, but instead he was coming under attack from MPs and from the citizens of London for inactivity, which had allowed the enemy to rampage unchallenged across the north Midlands and capture Leicester by storm. One suggestion for putting fire in his belly was for members of the Committee to accompany him on campaign with authority when necessary to overrule his operational decisions, but after being deadlocked at the first meeting the members decided at the second that the proposal was unworkable and gave Fairfax and his council of war complete operational autonomy. A few days later the general requited the trust placed in him by decisively defeating the royalists at the battle of Naseby with Cromwell as his second-in-command on a temporary commission. We cannot know how Manchester voted but there is a good case for arguing that on the first occasion his vote may have prevented the suggestion being approved, and that on the second occasion he joined the other ex-generals in ensuring that a large majority supported Fairfax being granted his independence.¹⁹

Signs that Manchester was no longer a pariah followed a few months later. First, when a new round of negotiations with the king was being discussed in December 1645, one of Parliament's demands was that he should be promoted from earl to marquis.²⁰ Second, on 19 August and twice in December and January he presided over the proceedings of the Upper House, and on 28 January 1646 he replaced Lord Grey as speaker on what would today be described as a renewable short-term contract. His appointment almost certainly had cross-party support as sitting in the House that day were Essex and Lord Robartes representing the Presbyterian party and Lords Say and Sele and Wharton the Independents. Moreover, no peer declared his disapproval (or dislike as it was termed) by signing his name in the House of Lords Journal, as would surely have happened had Grey, a moderate member of the Independent party, been ousted in a Presbyterian coup.²¹

Speaker of the Lords looks like an empty honour but there were real powers and responsibilities. It is clear from current standing orders instituted before 1646 and still current today that, unlike the speaker in the Commons, he could vote in all divisions and register his dislike when the House voted to pass a

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measure with which he disagreed, but he did not have a casting vote when there were equal numbers of peers for and against. It is also clear from the expectations of the Scottish commissioners in London that Manchester had considerable powers to progress or delay individual items of business, but what these powers were is unclear.²² His most important and very common function, however, was to lead the Lords' delegations in meetings with representatives of the Commons when the two Houses were in disagreement, and to present a detailed account of the outcome to the peers. Additionally, he was the House's spokesman when it needed to address or send a reply to an external body or individual, such as a foreign government or King Charles, though foreign governments tended to send communications to the speakers of both Houses.²³

The earl presumably had complete confidence in his ability to chair the Lords having served as speaker for a year at the start of the Civil War, but when chosen again it seems unlikely that he did not have one major concern. The performance of the New Model Army cavalry under Cromwell's leadership at the battles of Naseby and Langport had enormously increased the prestige of his principal accuser, and by late January 1646 fighting in the First Civil War had every appearance of being nearly over. Within months, Cromwell's military responsibilities would disappear, thus bringing his secondment to the army to an end and with it a return to Westminster where he would doubtless breathe new life into the campaign for justice against the earl. On the other hand, there is a possibility that Manchester may have known that he was safe following some sort of understanding with the leaders of the Independent party that he would not be harassed provided he did not use his new position in a partisan manner. One thing, however, is certain. Cromwell's return to the House of Commons was eagerly anticipated by a former officer intent on revenge.

John Lilburne, the future Leveller leader, who had commanded the regiment of dragoons in the Eastern Association Army, held a grudge against Manchester who had hauled him over the coals after Marston Moor for negotiating the surrender of the garrison at Tickhill without permission, and then taken the credit when writing to the Committee of Both Kingdoms. Later in the year he was the first person to give evidence to the committee

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investigating Cromwell's charges, and later he claimed that his enthusiasm for the military life had been destroyed by the way in which Manchester treated him, and that this explained why he had turned down Cromwell's offer to put his name forward as colonel of the New Model Army troops of dragoons.²⁴

Nevertheless, Lilburne still considered himself Cromwell's confidant, and after visiting the New Model Army during the Langport campaign in July 1645 he was seemingly reassured that they had similar thoughts about pursuing the charges against Manchester. Exactly what Cromwell said at the time is not known, but it is highly likely that he led Lilburne to believe that the judicial proceedings against the earl had ground to a halt in late February because his supporters were outmanoeuvred. The Presbyterian party in the Commons had persuaded the members that Cromwell should immediately leave for the west of England to take charge of the cavalry in an expedition to relieve the besieged town of Taunton which was in imminent danger of surrendering, and that he had been in active service ever since.

Before the end of 1645 Lilburne published a pamphlet recommending the strictest enforcement of the Self-Denying Ordinance. This would force Cromwell to leave the army and return to the House of Commons where he should 'lay the earl of Manchester flat on his back'.²⁵ Six months later Lilburne asserted that Manchester's head had been too long upon his shoulders. He also claimed that the earl had been complicit in the royalist capture of the small town of Crowland in south Lincolnshire in October 1644.²⁶

On the second occasion the House of Lords sent a summons to Lilburne signed by Manchester ordering him to appear before them in person to answer a charge of publishing a scandalous pamphlet. He obeyed but refused to kneel as a mark of respect to the speaker and told the peers to their faces that they had no right to take legal action against a commoner. For this insult he was imprisoned.²⁷ Finally, in early July 1646 when only a handful of scattered royalist garrisons were still holding out, he lost his patience. A broadsheet duly appeared in London reminding Cromwell and the House of Commons about unfinished business.²⁸ The case against Manchester had lain dormant for too long, but:

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... it is a charge of as high a nature as ever was given into that House, and it is therefore hoped that the lieutenant general or some other honest member will discharge his good conscience by pressing the reviving of it that so treachery may receive its due dessert and the kingdom have justice upon its enemies.²⁹

Summoned before the Lords again on 10 July he was more forthright than ever, whereupon the peers fined him £2000, extended his prison sentence to seven years, and declared him unfit to hold any civilian or military office. Lilburne's effrontery was probably because he thought that his conviction would shortly be quashed. Cromwell had returned to Westminster and the Commons had approved a motion promoted by the Independent party referring Lilburne's claim that the Lords had no jurisdiction over commoners to its Privileges Committee. But that was as far as the Independent party was prepared to go. The matter was quietly shelved, Cromwell said not a word, and 'Freeborn John' remained in the Tower of London for another year.³⁰

Cromwell's silence bitterly disappointed Lilburne, but in the summer of 1646 there were good reasons for him to keep quiet on the matter. First, the Independent Party was less able to command support in the Lower House than it had been during the deliberations over reform of the army in the winter and spring of 1644/5. At that time members of parliament uncommitted to either party supported the programme because they hoped it would shorten the war, and such men were now understandably looking forward to the return of peacetime conditions – low taxes, cheap government and a small standing army sufficient to deter the royalists from 'chancing their arm'.³¹ This was a sentiment that the Presbyterian party could exploit, but not the Independents, for whom the dismembering of the New Model, with a strong Independent element amongst its officers and men, would prevent it being used as a pressure group to help ensure that their principal war aim of religious liberty for radical Protestants was not ignored in the post-war constitutional settlement. The Independents insisted that keeping the army intact was essential for the country's security, but this claim fell increasingly on deaf ears as the prospect of a royalist victory or even a truce between the two sides became more and more of an impossibility.

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Trying to undermine trust in the Presbyterian party in the Lower House by reviving the charges against the earl of Manchester, and additionally painting him as a crypto-royalist was a possible strategy for reviving the Independent party's fortunes, but it had every chance of backfiring. First, Cromwell could well be seen as pursuing a personal vendetta given that Parliament had won the war. Second, setting off in pursuit of Arthur Trevor's owl would attract little interest unless there was an important new disclosure, which Lilburne's claim about Crowland clearly was not.

The evidence of Manchester's support for the aspirations of the Presbyterian party between his becoming speaker in January 1646 and the mutinies in the New Model Army on 31 May 1647 is thin and problematic, as he did not write his memoirs and very little of his personal correspondence survives.³² It is, however, possible to assemble enough material from official sources and the writings of contemporaries to shed some light on his attitude towards three of the four most important political issues of the day – religious reform, negotiations with the king, and the fate of the New Model Army – though sadly not on how best to bring an end to the Catholic insurgency in Ireland. The section that follows looks a little like making bricks without straw, but it provides some context for Manchester's behaviour at the climax of what I like to call the First Army Coup in late July 1647 when he and his father-in-law, the earl of Warwick, sided with peers and MPs in the Independent party rather than with their Presbyterian colleagues.

Historians describe Manchester without reservation as an important Presbyterian party politician, but contemporary observations are ambivalent. Jean de Montereul, the French envoy, who in mid-1646 compiled a list of the peers and the parties they supported, included him amongst the Presbyterians, whilst Lord Clarendon, writing a generation later, described Manchester and Warwick as the pillars of the Presbyterian party.³³ However, he acknowledged that a peer's allegiance was not necessarily set in stone. The Scottish commissioner in London, Robert Baillie, focused on Manchester himself rather than the peers as a group, writing in March 1646 that Manchester was capable of safeguarding Presbyterian interests in the Upper House, but that he needed to be briefed in advance by his chaplain and one or two additional Presbyterian ministers, suggesting that he was not completely sure of the earl.

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In the case of Denzil Holles, the leader of the Presbyterian party following Essex's death in September 1646, it was what he did not say rather than what he did say. In his account of the events of 1646 and 1647, written shortly afterwards whilst in exile, he claimed that Manchester 'had been present at and privy to all our consultations', but this can be read as his having been a listener and a confidant. Moreover, by failing to add the word approved 'to be present at and privy to' he leaves in the reader's mind the suspicion that Manchester had disagreed with decisions made about how to handle dissension in the army. This might explain the fact that nowhere in his lengthy account of the First Army Coup did Holles accuse the earl of betrayal or underhand dealing as he did in the case of Cromwell.³⁴ This suggests that leaving his colleagues in the lurch was not a total surprise if he had warned them of the dangers of being too confrontational with the army, but it leaves open the possibility that Holles understood that Manchester was in thrall to the Independent party.

Turning from words to deeds, Manchester followed a strictly Presbyterian line when it came to matters concerning the reform of the Anglican church as established in Queen Elizabeth's reign. Central to church government in Scotland was the principle that it managed its own affairs, free from state interference. However, there was a strong body of Erastian opinion in the English Parliament. The Henrician Reformation had established the opposite principle that the church was subordinate to the state, and a hundred years later there was a fear that putting in place the Scottish model of church government would give too much power to the Presbyterian clergy. Not surprisingly this was music to the ears of the Independent party, and its members and the Erastians voted together in the Commons to ensure that the legislation establishing the reformed church included a measure of state control.

The clearest example of Manchester's support for the reformed Church of England being in complete conformity with the Scottish church occurred on 6 March 1646 when the Commons passed an ordinance authorising parishes to exclude from communion people who the clergy and the lay elders thought guilty of sin; but the devil lay in the detail in that it included a clause permitting men and women thus stigmatised to lodge an appeal with a body of commissioners appointed not by the church but by parliament. This horrified

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the Scottish government, and it was on this specific occasion that Robert Baillie looked to the earl for help in ensuring that the article was rejected in the Upper House. The Independent and Erastian peers, however, succeeded in passing the ordinance with only minor amendments that were acceptable to the Commons, and the ordinance duly became law. Nevertheless, Manchester made his views plain by entering his objection in the Lords' Journal. Interestingly, he and three other peers went to the trouble of asserting that to have voted in favour would have been not only dishonourable but also a sin as they had promised on oath to uphold and defend Presbyterianism 'zealously and constantly all the days of our lives'.³⁵

Manchester was not actively involved in the discussions surrounding changes in the constitution presented by parliament to the king in July 1646 known as the 'Newcastle Propositions'. As speaker of the House of Lords he merely served as the recipient of Charles's responses.³⁶ However, in February 1647 he was named in a letter written by the French ambassador as one of the four peers who saw the Propositions as too harsh to be accepted by the king and were seemingly willing to be flexible about control of the militia.³⁷ Scott, following Gardiner, regards them as Presbyterian moderates, but they were clearly a cross-party grouping. At one extreme was the earl of Holland, who had briefly joined the royalists in 1643 and was drifting back towards them in early 1647 when he failed to persuade parliament to grant him financial compensation for losses incurred during the war. At the other extreme was the earl of Northumberland who, though sometimes his own man, is normally regarded as a thoroughgoing Independent. In the middle were Manchester and Warwick.³⁸ Scott states that the four peers were prepared to be flexible with regard to control of the militia, but this is a step too far. The French ambassador merely stated that a concrete proposal had yet to be agreed.³⁹ There is also evidence that points in the opposite direction insofar as Manchester is concerned. On 4 June 1646 he joined a solid phalanx of Independent peers in declaring his opposition to an attempt by Presbyterians to modify a Commons' resolution so as to weaken Parliament's authority over the militia.⁴⁰ A year-and-a-half later he was of the same mind when he was a promoter of the so-called 'Four Bills' peace initiative. One of these required Charles to accept Parliament having sole control over the armed forces for the next twenty years with monarchs thereafter being unable to exercise such power without the consent of the Lords and the Commons.⁴¹

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Manchester also took a firm line over more immediate matters relating to the armed forces. In autumn 1646 he was one of five peers (including such Independent stalwarts as Lords Kent, Nottingham and Wharton) who signalled their dissent from the majority vote in the Lords commanding General Fairfax not to disband General Massey's corps, the Presbyterian party's feeble military counterweight to the New Model Army. The grounds were that his order to do so only had the approval of the Lower House. Manchester could not refuse to sign the brief letter informing him of the vote but he took no notice. Fairfax's excuse was that he considered he had sufficient authority from both Houses or their representatives to carry out the disbandment, and at any rate it was under way when the order arrived and thus impossible to stop. Nevertheless, despite the disrespectful tone of the letter the speaker did not join the six Presbyterian party peers who decided that the most fitting response was to ignore Fairfax. When he visited London in November to receive Parliament's congratulations for winning the war, they were conspicuous by their absence from the official ceremony welcoming him.⁴²

As relations between Parliament and the army deteriorated in the spring of 1647, it was the leaders of the Presbyterian party in the Commons who took the lead in the confrontation, with those in the Lords following tamely in their wake. Only on a single occasion did some of the Independent party peers go so far as to record their dislike in the Journal.⁴³ At the time Manchester's name appeared occasionally in the London weeklies, but these were so positioned then and for the next year-and-a-half that they cannot be relied upon as purveyors of anything more substantial than rumour or speculation.

The slow-burning First Army Coup began with a mutiny by infantry soldiers faced with Parliament's orders that they should either join new regiments under new commanders for service in Ireland, or be discharged. It ended to all intents and purposes in early August 1647 with the New Model Army occupying the capital without a fight. In between, the inconsistencies in Manchester's behaviour as a leading member of the Presbyterian party gained momentum as the army pressure on Parliament mounted as it slowly circled the capital. Unable to meet force with force, the House of Commons responded by giving way to its demands one by one in what has recently been

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described as a clear case of appeasement.⁴⁴ The Presbyterian party peers tried to resist the drift by opposing concessions suggested in the Commons, but only once did they muster enough votes to overturn a measure approved by the Lower House, and even then the Independent peers may have withdrawn their dislikes once the wording had been altered.⁴⁵ As for the speaker, on no less than fifteen occasions between 5 June and 23 July he had the opportunity to sign the Lords' Journal to register his dislike along with the Presbyterians, but not once did he do so, and in one vote taken on 26 June and two votes on 9 July measures were only passed because he and probably the earl of Warwick voted in favour.⁴⁶

In late July Presbyterian party supporters in London and other citizens who cherished the capital's rights and privileges decided that appeasement had gone too far. On the 19th the army had demanded the restoration of Independent party control over the London trained bands, which had been lost in June as one of Parliament's provisions for the defence of the capital against the army. On the 23rd the Two Houses passed an ordinance appointing a new militia committee with a membership acceptable to the army.⁴⁷ The reaction from the city was almost instantaneous.⁴⁸ On 26 July petitions, signed by members of the city corporation, diverse well-affected citizens, and the young men and apprentices, asking *inter alia* for the London militia ordinance to be immediately repealed, were escorted to Westminster by some aldermen and common councillors supported by a mob of apprentices and former officers and soldiers. The Lords came under pressure first. The three petitions were read to the House, and according to custom the speaker wrote the response. After thanking the city profusely for its role in winning the war and funding the peace through loans and taxes, Manchester promised on the House's behalf to consider the three petitions as quickly as possible but insisted that, for the present, the ordinance of 23 July must remain in force. Nevertheless, having listened to a fourth petition the Lords gave way and repealed the ordinance. The mob then left the chamber and the lords continued with the day's business.

Clearly there is a gap in the narrative in the Journal as there is no explanation of the circumstances that caused the Lords to change their minds. The most likely reason is the reaction outside the chamber to the speaker's response to the petitions presented by the representatives of the city corporation. Having

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listened to him they left the building and mingled with the mob outside, eager to hear that the ordinance was to be repealed, whilst Manchester left the chamber possibly thinking that the matter was settled and unaware that there was a fourth petition from the trained band officers and the seamen of the city whose presenters were waiting to be heard. The mob, learning that he had promised nothing, was incensed and surged into the chamber behind the presenters, with one man who reached the bar of the House demanding 'Where is Manchester? We must call him to an account'. The reply was that he had gone down, which did not necessarily mean, as Firth suggested, that he had left by the back door. If that had been so, the Journal entry for the 26th would have named the peer who replaced him. With serious violence in prospect and the nine peers present heavily outnumbered, he hurriedly returned to the chamber and presided over the House's capitulation with not a single dislike against the repeal being recorded in the Journal.⁴⁹

The next day the Lords reassembled but without their speaker. Manchester, together with the earl of Warwick, had left Westminster on the grounds that Parliament could no longer legislate freely, and for that reason they looked to Sir Thomas Fairfax and the New Model Army for protection. By 4 August Manchester was at the army encampment on Hounslow Heath where he joined the Independent peers and MPs in declaring total approval of and gratitude for the New Model Council of War's recent declarations in defence of the honour and freedom of Parliament. Two days later Manchester returned to Westminster under army escort and immediately afterwards delivered a speech thanking Sir Thomas Fairfax on the peers' behalf for guaranteeing the kingdom's peace and safety. John Lilburne, still a prisoner in the Tower and still nurturing his grudges, wrote sarcastically of Manchester and Cromwell (who, fearing arrest, had left Parliament for the army in early June) being 'joined hand-in-hand'.⁵⁰

What persuaded Manchester to act as he did? The simplest explanation is that he was driven by fear that Cromwell would press the charges against him in the Commons if he did not side with the army. The second is that it was a knee-jerk reaction to the collapse of law and order in London that might end in the triumph of the royalists or a nationwide social upheaval threatening the hegemony of the ruling class. There is, however, an argument to be made that for Manchester an important consideration was the contents of a letter he, as

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speaker, received on 19 July from the two peers serving as commissioners charged with carrying messages to and fro between army headquarters and the House. This informed him that senior New Model officers and representatives of the various regiments were close to presenting terms to the king which were not only more likely to be accepted than anything he had previously been offered, but which would, through Parliament's absolute control over the armed forces of the realm, provide protection for the liberty of the subject against the actual or potential autocratic tendencies of Charles and his successors.⁵¹

This looks like a leap in the dark on my part, but it can be argued that there was a consistency in Manchester's political aspirations throughout the 1640s which has been obscured by one of the charges Cromwell made against him in 1644: namely that he was willing to compromise on the most fundamental principle over which king and Parliament had gone to war. As Lord Mandeville, Manchester had been one of the leaders of the attacks on the royal prerogative in the House of Commons, culminating in the Militia Ordinance of March 1642 which would have placed England's armed forces firmly under the control of men appointed by Parliament. He then raised a regiment to fight the king in 1642, took over a failing command, the Eastern Association, in August 1643 when Parliament's fortunes were at their lowest ebb, and then with the support of Cromwell and other like-minded officers, turned its army into the most effective force at Parliament's disposal in less than a year.

Anti-climax followed the victory at Marston Moor, but it has been argued that his army's slow advance from Lincoln to Reading in September and early October 1644, for which Manchester came under intense and repeated criticism from the Commons and from the Committee of Both Kingdoms before Cromwell turned publicly against him, was not because he wanted to prevent an outright victory over the king in the interests of achieving peace by negotiation, but that he feared if he hurried that Parliament, in its enthusiasm for achieving a victory as decisive as Marston Moor at the earliest opportunity, would instead be confronting a resurgent enemy with an army group that was too small, too ill-equipped and too disorganised to deliver the goods.⁵² That is not to say that Cromwell was necessarily wrong in accusing him of wanting a negotiated peace, and that this affected his military

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judgement, but if so the scales would have fallen from his eyes after the negotiations at Uxbridge in March 1645, which showed in no uncertain terms that Charles would not relinquish control over the armed forces to parliament whilst he still had armies in the field. After that, only victory could safeguard England's liberties and it therefore made sense to work strenuously for it through the Committee of Both Kingdoms.⁵³

Manchester's behaviour after the First Army Coup shows a measure of consistency with what had gone before, though the evidence in official sources is less extensive. The House of Lords, however, was easier to preside over. Seven Presbyterian party peers who had attended its sittings during his absence were in the process of being impeached and were excluded until cleared of wrongdoing, which did not happen until well into the following year. In consequence, numbers attending in the closing months of 1647 and early in 1648 rarely exceeded ten and the regulars were long-standing members of the Independent party. Unsurprisingly there were no dislikes recorded. Moreover, there was every incentive to put on a united front to the world. Demands for the Upper House to be abolished were coming from radicals in London, the Commons and the New Model Army, and in such circumstances any differences would be exploited to the House's disadvantage and result in its demise.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the few peers that remained were active in the long-lasting but ultimately fruitless negotiations with the king broached by the army in July. Cromwell, however, lost faith in Charles's genuine desire to come to an agreement when he learned that he was secretly seeking military support from the faction in Scotland headed up by the Duke of Hamilton. His sentiment was shared by many others in the army and Parliament who, though not being privy to Cromwell's intelligence, saw the king's blowing hot and cold as suspicious. The peers, however, pushed ahead regardless, pinning their hopes on bringing the king to his senses by requiring concrete evidence that he was committed to a negotiated settlement. To that end they persuaded an unenthusiastic House of Commons to agree to pass four bills which, with royal consent, would form the bare bones of a constitutional settlement. Manchester as speaker duly led discussions with the Commons, and there is not the slightest hint in the Lords' Journal that he was anything other than

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very enthusiastic.⁵⁵ This is not surprising as two of the bills would safeguard the rights of subjects against the monarchy. One placed control of the militia in parliament's hands for all time, whilst another deprived Charles and his successors of the ability to drive a wedge between the Two Houses by nominating sufficient new peers to create a majority of king's men in the Lords.

When Charles described all four bills as unacceptable, the Commons, without much pressure from the army, passed the so-called 'Vote of No Addresses' on 3 January 1648, which declared it the intention of the Lords and the Commons to devise a new constitution without him, and that it would be treasonous for anybody to negotiate with the king thereafter whatever the circumstances. The Upper House postponed discussion for almost a fortnight claiming that the matter was so fundamental that every opportunity should be given for the maximum number of eligible peers to have their say. On the 14th, twenty attended but the discussion was time-consuming and the decision was postponed till the following day. Manchester and Warwick had their intention to dislike recorded in the Journal as voting began, but before it finished a preamble to the vote was read – which could be read as implying that England would remain a monarchy. The House of Commons was happy to agree to the preamble being attached to the document prior to printing, and the following day the Lords passed the vote of no addresses. There were no dislikes. Immediately afterwards a communication from the Army Council promising to support the just rights of the Upper House was read and entered in the Journal. Gardiner saw the whole business as a humiliating defeat for the Lords, who were brought to heel by the quartering of soldiers adjacent to where the peers met, but they did not arrive until the following day, and all-in-all I see it as more like a procedural triumph for Manchester and his father-in-law. Admittedly, negotiations with the king were at an end, but the House of Lords and the monarchy were safe.⁵⁶

Two episodes later in the year are too poorly recorded in official sources for signs of Manchester's involvement to be anything more than circumstantial, but they are worth more than a mention. On 2 August Major Huntington presented the Lords with an account of Cromwell's involvement in the planning of the First Army Coup. Interestingly, it was a day when one of the seven Presbyterian peers was deputising for the speaker, but on the 5th, when

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Manchester was once more in charge of proceedings, the preparation of a report justifying or rejecting further action was delegated to a subcommittee of which he was a member, but it disappeared from the radar about a fortnight later having failed to complete its task. None of this need to have been anything to do with the speaker. Evidence supporting Huntington's claim may have been meagre as the only witness to be named was Captain Middleton who had been drummed out of the army a few months before. Moreover, the euphoria following Cromwell's overwhelming victory over the Hamiltonians in Lancashire between 17 and 20 August would have made it politically unwise to pursue the matter any further.⁵⁷

Even more obscure is Manchester's involvement in the repeal of the Vote of No Addresses in August and in the final round of peace talks between king and Parliament that followed, the so-called 'Treaty of Newport'; but on his past record he is likely to have been in favour of both as there was to be no retreat from Parliament controlling the militia in perpetuity, and letters from Newport to him in his capacity as speaker suggest that his interest was somewhat greater than would have been the case had he merely been the conduit through which information on the progress of the negotiations was passed to the House.⁵⁸

The record of Manchester's participation in government in 1648 when fighting resumed between Parliament and the king's supporters is more firmly based. On 1 January the Derby House Committee replaced the Committee of Both Kingdoms as Parliament's war cabinet and Manchester moved smoothly from one to the other. Until the beginning of April it only met occasionally, and he was quite frequently an absentee, but when he did attend its letters were often sent out under his signature. From 1 April when the Second Civil War hotted up, the committee met several times a week and he rarely missed a session. This was not because he was the only member who was a peer and therefore duty-bound to attend to keep the Lords fully informed of its instructions and deliberations. He had military experience at the highest level, which was otherwise lacking between Cromwell's departure on active service in mid-April and the secondment of Major General Philip Skippon in June. His record as an army commander would have cut no ice with those who believed Cromwell's accounts of the events of the autumn of 1644, but he had a reputation as military administrator that was incontestable, resting as it

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did on his success in revitalising the Eastern Association army between August 1643 and June 1644, and military administration was one of the committee's principal tasks.⁵⁹

Manchester's commitment to the war effort at the highest level in 1648 as in 1645 makes perfect sense, as victory by the king's supporters would be disastrous for his constitutional and confessional ambitions. From late July onwards, however, his attendance became intermittent. Perhaps he considered that the danger of such an outcome had passed as the royalists were on the back foot everywhere but in the far north; but his long absence in late July and August suggests that it was no coincidence that it began not long after the Duke of Hamilton crossed the border into England at the head of an army of Presbyterians.⁶⁰

The earl's political career came to an end in December 1648. On the 6th, Colonel Pride and his musketeers physically prevented MPs who favoured some form of accommodation with the king from taking their seats. The Lords were not affected, and Manchester duly presided over its deliberations on the following day, but when it met again on the 12th he was nowhere to be seen. This was in strict conformity with his behaviour on 27 July 1647 when Parliament's liberties had first been breached; but when what was left of the Commons, having passed the ordinance for putting the king on trial, sent it up to the Lords for approval, he sat in the House for the last time but as an ordinary member. In accordance with his principles he condemned outright the legality of the whole proceedings, whereupon the peers reject the ordinance *nemine contradicente*.⁶¹ The Commons went ahead nevertheless, and immediately after the king's execution abolished the Upper House as useless and a threat to the people of England. Manchester clung onto his inquisitorial role at Cambridge University for a further year-and-a-half but was dismissed when he refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth. He then withdrew into the shadows only to emerge as an important power broker at the Restoration after which he received various high offices and rewards from the grateful king and the command of a regiment in the Second Dutch War.

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Thus, Manchester did not retire into obscurity in April 1645. He continued to serve on the Committee of Both Kingdoms and after a short interval returned to the Woolsack. Although a firm Presbyterian, he was clearly not a consistent member of the Presbyterian party in parliament. This may be because the threat of Cromwell's charges resurfacing hung over his head like the sword of Damocles, but there is enough evidence to suggest another consideration: throughout the 1640s he consistently sought to put in place a constitution which would secure England's liberties for future generations under the guardianship of an army firmly under parliamentary control, and this caused him at times to side with the Independents. However, the extent to which one or the other or neither was the main motive underpinning Manchester's actions in the late 1640s is probably forever out of reach, and for this the responsibility lies with whoever ordered the culling of his personal papers, which clearly occurred before the visit of the Historical Manuscript Commission to Kimbolton Castle in the late nineteenth century.⁶²

- ¹ I am most grateful to Professor Peter Gaunt for his helpful comments on a very early draft of this article.
- ² For a comparison of the two narratives see Wanklyn 'A general much maligned: the Earl of Manchester as army commander July to November 1644', *War in History* 14.2 (2007), 133–56; Wanklyn, 'Oliver Cromwell and the performance of Parliament's armies in the Newbury campaign, *History* 96 (2011), 15–23.
- ³ For this emphatic statement about Cromwell's escape from the charges against him, see S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War* (4 vols., 1888–93) ii, 88–9; M. Wanklyn, *Parliament's Generals* (Barnsley, 2019), 57.
- ⁴ Coronavirus pandemic restrictions mean that I have been unable to revisit the Montagu family papers at Huntingdon Library and the House of Lords Record Office or to look for the first time at British Library Additional Manuscript 34253. My recollection is that the first two contain nothing of significance for the period 1646–9, but the British library would probably have given me more information about Manchester's powers as speaker.
- ⁵ John Rushworth, *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State* (7 vols., 1721) vi, 4; Calendar of State Papers Domestic [C.S.P. Dom.] 1644–5, 151.
- ⁶ Gardiner, *Great Civil War* ii, 90–2; C.H. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell* (1904), 117; J.C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell* (2005), 93; Bennett, *Cromwell at War* (2017), 110–11. In his

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account Bennett goes so far as to blame Manchester for prolonging the quarrel but does not supply the evidence.

⁷ Wanklyn, *Parliament's Generals*, 57–9.

⁸ C. Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1974), 212; *Journal of the House of Commons* [C.J.] iv, 148.

⁹ *A Collection of Original Letters and Papers, concerning the Affairs of England, from the year 1641 to 1660*, ed. Thomas Carte (2 vols., 1739), i. 78 [Trevor to the Marquis of Ormond, 9 April 1645].

¹⁰ I. Gentles, *The English Revolution and the Wars in Three Kingdoms 1638–1652*, (Harlow, 2007), 270.

¹¹ C.S.P. Dom. 1644–5, 386–624. In the same period Essex attended on forty-one occasions and Waller fifty-eight.

¹² Ibid 1645–7, 1–259. Essex and Waller were present on eighteen and forty occasions respectively. Counting is impossible from mid-December as attendances were not recorded.

¹³ *Journal of the House of Lords* [L.J.] vii, 303–562, 617–719; ibid viii, 3–75. In September Manchester only attended the House on twelve out of twenty-one possible occasions, but his absences included a block of six days when he was presumably ill or out of town.

¹⁴ J. Adamson, *The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I* (2007), passim; L.J., v and vi.

¹⁵ Wanklyn, *Parliament's Generals*, 40, 49; Huntingdon Library, Duke of Manchester Mss, DM32/5/1.,

¹⁶ L.J. vii, 405–6, 416; J. MacCormack, *Revolutionary Politics in the Long Parliament* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), 79–80.

¹⁷ C.J. iv, 100, 162; L.J. vii, 306. A conference of the Two Houses to discuss the matter proposed by the Lords did not apparently take place.

¹⁸ The last occasion he was attacked in the Commons was in mid-June when he and Essex were still being blamed for the slow progress of the war: Hopper, *Black Tom* (Manchester, 2007), 66.

¹⁹ For a full explanation of this hypothesis see Wanklyn, *Parliament's Generals*, 87–9.

²⁰ Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affairs* (1732 ed.), 182.

²¹ Manchester's contract was initially for a month. In late February it was extended to two months without debate: L.J. viii, 125, 129, 188. Thereafter it was renewed for several months at a time until he left office of his own volition in December 1648.

²² See below XXX.

²³ See, for example, C.S.P. Dom. 1645–7, 514, 516.

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- ²⁴ At some stage Cromwell almost certainly apologised to Lilburne for the delay in bringing Manchester to trial. Probably this was during the Langport campaign when Lilburne visited the army in a civilian capacity. Otherwise it is difficult to explain his assertion that Manchester would have been brought to trial in the spring of 1645 had Cromwell not been sent into the west on a military mission by the contrivance of 'a northern knight': British Library [B.L.], Thomason Tracts [T.T.], E.293(3); *ibid.*, 669/f10(32); *ibid.*, E.304(17), 35.
- ²⁵ C.S.P.Dom. 1644, 380; B.L., T.T., E.304(17).
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, E.340(12); *ibid.*, E.341(12).
- ²⁷ *L.J.*, viii. 368–70.
- ²⁸ He had returned to Westminster soon after the surrender of Oxford on 26 June: Gardiner, *Great Civil War* iii, 109, 146.
- ²⁹ B.L., T.T., 669/f10(32).
- ³⁰ C.S.P. Dom. 1644–5, 19–21; *L.J.*, viii. 368, 388, 429–33; *C.J.* iv, 601; Whitelock, *Memorials*, 222.
- ³¹ D. Scott, *Politics and War in the Three Stuart Kingdoms 1637–1649* (2004), 132–3; I. Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland 1645–1653* (Oxford, 1992), 145–8.
- ³² See below note lxii.
- ³³ Gardiner, *Great Civil War* iii, 105–6.
- ³⁴ *Select Tracts relating to the Civil Wars in England*, Francis, Lord Maseres ed. (2 vols., 1815) i, 308; Robert Baillie, *Letters and Journals 1637–1661*, D. Laing ed. (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1841) ii, 359.
- ³⁵ *C.J.* iv, 466–7, 475; *L.J.* viii, 202, 208–9; S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625–1660* (3rd edn., Oxford, 1906), 268, 270. Manchester also voted on 11 March in favour of a petition from London demanding *inter alia* the suppression of radical Protestant sects: 'The Journal of Thomas Juxon, 1644–1647', K. Lindley and D. Scott eds., *Camden Soc.*, 5th ser. 13 (1999), 108.
- ³⁶ See, for example, *L.J.* ix, 25.
- ³⁷ *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Jean de Montereul and the Brothers de Bellievre*, J. Fortheringham ed. (2 vols. Edinburgh, 1888–9) i, 430.
- ³⁸ A. Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution* (Oxford 2002), 348, 374, 412.
- ³⁹ Gardiner, *Great Civil War* iii, 213; Scott, *Politics and War*, 133. The French ambassador was impressed, but it is not beyond the grounds of possibility that the names were dreamt up by the Countess of Carlisle who headed the list of peers in his letter. I am much taken with C.V. Wedgwood's comments on the countess as intriguing, mischievous, and never famed for her discretion: *The King's War* (1958), 33, 410, 527, 534.

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- ⁴⁰ *L.J.* vii, 355. A gap in the second list of signatures in the Journal penned after the measure had been passed strongly suggests that his and lord North's names were erased when it suited the circumstances to suggest that they changed their minds during the debate.
- ⁴¹ Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, 336–8, 346–7.
- ⁴² *L.J.* viii, 531, 563.
- ⁴³ On 27 May three determinedly Independent peers objected to the order in which the infantry regiments were to be disbanded: *L.J.* ix, 207.
- ⁴⁴ *The English Revolution*, 314.
- ⁴⁵ *L.J.* ix, 255, 288–9; *C.J.* v, 209.
- ⁴⁶ *L.J.* ix, 234–349; *ibid* ix, 296, 322. The only occasion on which his dislike was recorded in the Journal was with respect to an ordinance fixing the length of a ban on stage plays being staged in London: *ibid* ix, 334..
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid* ix, 340–1, 349–50.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid* ix, 338, 341.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid* ix, 355–8; C.H. Firth, *The House of Lords in the Civil War* (1910), 170. Juxon mentions that some of the lords left by the back door but seemingly after the vote to repeal the ordinance had taken place: Journal, 162.
- ⁵⁰ Rushworth, *Historical Collections* vii, 754–5.
- ⁵¹ *L.J.* ix, 339.
- ⁵² Wanklyn, 'A General Much Maligned', 156.
- ⁵³ S.R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, 281.
- ⁵⁴ Firth, *House of Lords*, 171–2, 195; *L.J.* ix, 374–620.
- ⁵⁵ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, 398–9; *L.J.* ix, 541, 548; *C.J.* v, 370; Whitelock, *Memorials*, 281.
- ⁵⁶ Gardiner, *Great Civil War* iv, 53–4.
- ⁵⁷ *L.J.* x, 408–43; Wanklyn, *Reconstructing the New Model Army* (2 vols. 2015–16) i, 94.
- ⁵⁸ *L.J.* x, 347, 353, 357, 361; C.S.P.Dom.1648–9, 307, 319–20.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid* 1648–9, 40, 47, 110, 201.
- ⁶⁰ He only attended on two occasions between 27 July and 18 August: *ibid* 1648–9, 217, 245.
- ⁶¹ *L.J.* x, 625, 641–2.
- ⁶² HMC, appendix to the 8th report ii (1881), 59–63. There was deliberate intent as items concerning war and politics that survived the cull such as Essex's letter and Manchester's defence against Cromwell fitted the image of the earl as a moderate. Evidence of his devotion to Presbyterianism is also hard to find.

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by Dr Clive Holmes

Members of this Association should require no introduction to the Fenland Museum at Wisbech. The title ‘Lord of the Fens’ which was awarded Cromwell by the Royalist journal *Mercurius Aulicus* may have been intended as a put-down, but it is obvious that much of Oliver’s early career – his military experience, his religious identity, his ambiguous involvement with drainage schemes – was bound up with the fenland.¹ So the museum, purpose built and opened in 1847, with its rich collection of photos, maps and tracts, particularly concerning the drainage operations, should be a place of pilgrimage for us. The picture below (Plate 8), of an early 20th century fowler firing a punt gun, is designed to remind you of the riches to be found in the museum, but also to make a point in relation to this article in which I revert to my old interest in the role of Crowland in the civil war.²



Plate 8: Punt Gun (Courtesy of Wisbech & Fenland Museum)

The town had been held by the Royalists early in 1643 who built the first earthwork fortifications, and after its capture was then garrisoned for Parliament; it fell again after Rupert's brilliant action against the forces besieging Newark allowed the Royalists to raid deep into Lincolnshire in late March 1644, but was recovered in early May as the earl of Manchester's army moved against Lincoln on its march to the siege of York and victory at Marston Moor. In early September 1644 Manchester reluctantly led the bulk of his forces away from the Eastern Association into the Thames Valley, and within a month, on 3 October, Crowland was surprised by the Cavaliers.³ The Governor of the Parliamentary garrison, Major Dodson, was travelling south as part of Manchester's staff, and we know nothing of how the town was taken, although the continuing Royalist sympathies of the townspeople must have encouraged the Newarkers to make yet another attempt.⁴

The capture was followed immediately by a period of bitter cold and torrential rain, which halted the attempts to recapture the town by a sudden assault, and the Parliamentarians, with 'the approaches inaccessible', did little more than establish guard-posts on the major access points 'to prevent the adjacent parts from being plundered'. But the beleaguered garrison were not inactive during this period, and a surprise attack on 24 October on one of the blockhouses manned by some of the local trained bands resulted in the loss of many men, and the capture of 80 prisoners, munitions and an eight-pounder field gun. A week later an attempt by the Newark and Belvoir Royalists to mobilise a force to relieve the town ended disastrously for them in a running cavalry battle from Denton into the Vale of Belvoir. But still Crowland held out; although the weather had improved, its defences were now reinforced by the flooding of the fens that surrounded the town.⁵

The task of re-taking the town was finally accomplished by Colonel William Rainborowe, whose regiment had been left in Lincoln when Manchester marched south. In November, Rainborowe's regiment formed part of the force defending the western border of Kesteven, and on 17 November he commanded a brilliant action that has been missed by his hagiographers. A night march of 15 miles over sodden roads and fast-flowing streams brought him to the outskirts of Newark just before dawn, where his force totally surprised the Cavaliers quartered south of the Trent at Farndon and East Stoke who thought 'the ways were impassable'. Many prisoners, more horses

and much equipment was taken. Rainborowe's men had been ready to abandon the difficult approach, but he trusted in God and encouraged them on.⁶

Shortly after this success, Rainborowe received a direct order from Manchester to take in Crowland, and, having abandoned the useless blockhouses and tightened the investment of the town, he eventually forced its surrender on 8 December. A myth has grown around this little incident which has been repeated and developed by some historians, and its origin in the contemporary sources is worth examining.

The most enthusiastic of Rainborowe's modern biographers, Adrian Tinniswood, provides the fullest and most imaginative account of the fall of Crowland. He records the 'formidable system of earthworks' which protected the garrison, and the dreadful weather that had turned the fens surrounding the town into 'a vast shallow lake'. But Rainborowe was equal to the challenge. He mounted his gun batteries on boats, and then 'launched a sudden and successful waterborne assault on Crowland's outer defences. He manoeuvred his boats to take control of the enemy's outworks and his gunners proceeded to bombard the defenders with their field pieces'.⁷ Ian Gentles, writing in the more sober pages of the *ODNB*, echoes aspects of this account: 'his next notable exploit was an amphibious assault on Crowland Castle ... which resulted in the recapture of the fortress.'

Now, the little we know about the fortifications of Crowland – a bastioned earthwork, using part of the cloister of the abbey on its south face, designed to command the three roadways on banks leading into the town – hardly support Tinniswood's remark about 'outworks', or Gentles's 'Castle'.

Nor would it have been easy to mount field guns on floating platforms – the recoil would have quickly shattered them (see our fowler with his long punt gun).⁸ But, most critically, the story is not supported by the immediately contemporary sources, none of which mention an 'assault'. And most newsbook accounts omit any mention of floating batteries, and simply record an increasingly close blockade of the town, maintained in part by boats guarding access to the flooded Porsand Fen, and supported by a continuing close bombardment, which led the defenders, starving and short of

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munitions, to surrender on terms.⁹ Only the editor of *The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer* wrote of Rainborowe's siege 'with his boates and Batteries made thereon put such a terrour into the Enemy'.¹⁰ The words are ambiguous, but do not I think refer to waterborne ordnance, but to the craft patrolling the flooded fenland and the bombardment of the town. John Vicars, in his triumphalist chronicle of the victories of the Parliamentarians, downloaded the language and detail of his account of the fall of Crowland from *The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer*, but he read the reference to boats to mean that Rainborowe brought up his guns by water and deployed them on the banks.¹¹

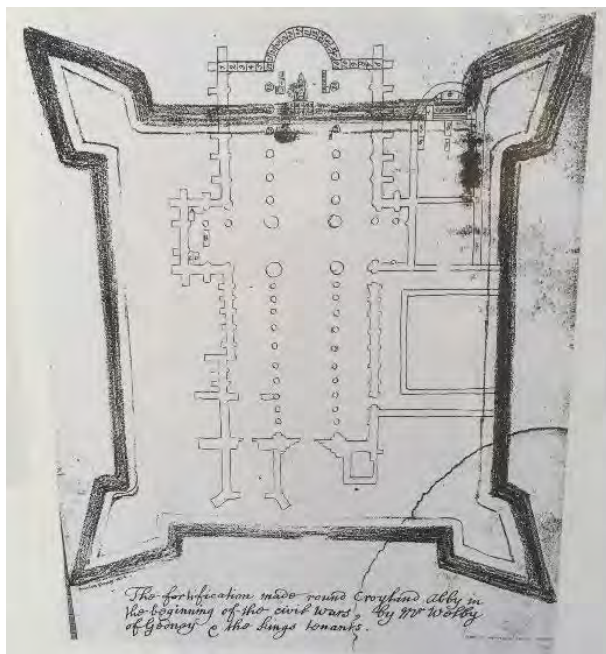


Plate 9: The 1643 fortifications around the ruins of Crowlands Abbey as depicted in a 17th century sketch by Mr Welby of Gedney (Courtesy of Crowland Abbey)¹²

Rainborowe's personal courage is apparent in all his military actions, from his command of the sally from Hull in October 1643 to his seizure and death at the hands of Royalist raiders from the besieged castle of Pontefract at Doncaster a little over five years later. As a commander he was energetic and innovative, with a gift for inspiring his men in adverse conditions. These

characteristics were exemplified in his night-march against the Newarkers in October 1644 and his vigorous prosecution of the siege of Crowland the following month. His achievements were remarkable. They do not need the additional gilding applied by some biographers.

Note: I would like to thank Robert Bell, the Curator of the Fenland Museum at Wisbech, for his generous help with this article, particularly for providing the photo of the punt gun in action. I would also like to thank Stuart Orme, curator of the Cromwell Museum, for providing the illustration of the fortifications at Crowland and for reading a draft of the paper.

- ¹ John Morrill, 'The Making of Oliver Cromwell' in Morrill (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (London, 1990), passim: for the Royalist jibe, p. 38; Andrew Barclay, in his *Electing Cromwell* (London, 2011) has developed a number of these points, particularly concerning Cromwell's involvement with religious non-conformists in the Isle.
- ² See my article 'Oliver Cromwell in the News: April – May 1643' in the 2019 edition of this Journal, pp. 72–77
- ³ The Huntingdonshire Committee reported its capture to Sir Samuel Luke, governor of Newport Pagnell and head of the earl of Essex's intelligence network, on Saturday 5th: H.G. Tibbutt (ed.), *The Letter Book of Sir Samuel Luke, 1644–1646* (Bedfordshire Record Society, 1963), letter 832.
- ⁴ For Dodson's actions in this period, see my 'The Identity of the "Statement by an unknown opponent of Cromwell"', *English Historical Review*, CXXIX (2014), 1375, 1377.
- ⁵ The best study of this period is provided by Alfred Kingston, *East Anglia in the Great Civil War* (London, 1897), pp. 177–81. For the Royalist success on 24 October, see Luke Letter Book, letter 60, Luke to the earl of Essex; for the cavalry battle, see *ibid.*, letter 887, Thomas Bristow to Luke.
- ⁶ British Library, Stowe MS 190 fol. 67, 18 Nov. 1644 John Archer to ? (Tibbutt's suggestion of Thomas Bristow, Luke's local agent, is probably correct: Luke Letter Book, Letter 1531)
- ⁷ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Rainborowes: Pirates, Puritans and a Family's quest for the Promised Land* (London, 2013)

- ⁸ Stuart Orme tells me that the Peterborough Museum collection includes a punt gun, and old Movietone footage of it being fired: ‘the recoil on the boat was quite astonishing’, he writes.
- ⁹ See Thomason Tracts in the British Library (hereafter TT) E.21[14]: *A diary or an exact journal* no. 31, p.221; E.21[11]: *The London Post*, no. 15, p.2; *Perfect Occurrences of Parliament and chief collections of letters*, no. 18, sub 10 and 12 Dec.
- ¹⁰ TT E.21[25]: *The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer* no. 85, 679–80
- ¹¹ TT E.348[1]: John Vicars, *The Burning Bush Not Consumed* (London, 1646), p.76
- ¹² My thanks to the authorities of Crowland Abbey, and to Stuart Orme, for making this illustration available.

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‘A PERSON TO BE TRULY ADMIRER FOR NOTHING BUT APOSTASY AND AMBITION AND EXCEEDING TIBERIUS IN DISSIMULATION’ (SLINGSBY BETHEL 1668). GIVEN THAT IN 2002, CROMWELL WAS VOTED THE THIRD GREATEST BRITON OF ALL TIME, HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE CONTEMPT SHOWN HIM BY SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES?

by Ethan Aho

This was the Cromwell Association schools' prize-winning essay 2020, funded by Frederic L. Borch III.

Undoubtedly Cromwell is a challenging figure, having pursued religious toleration and persecution, championed the parliamentary cause and reverted to military rule. Given this complexity, one-sided portrayals deserve scrutiny. The adulation Cromwell seems to have received in the 2002 popular poll is likely attributable to a degree of public ignorance. The popular exaggeration of Cromwell's seismic rise to power from 'humble' origins has made him appear heroic – Cromwell was actually a gentleman by birth, his brief time as a tenant farmer the consequence of his own intemperance in Huntingdon in 1630.¹ Moreover, an emphasis on Cromwell's self-represented integrity, propelled by Carlyle, has perhaps masked the cruelty and ruthlessness of some of his actions.² Pejorative characterisations of Cromwell can be similarly explained. Cromwell was accused of being personally ambitious, radical, hypocritical, cruel and lawless, by contemporaries before and after the Restoration in 1660. Cromwell's creation of the Protectorate in 1653 was his most controversial moment, to many an indication of his ambition, hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Despite insisting he only intended to 'keep the peace of the parish', Cromwell was accused, as early as 1648, of being driven by 'ambitious ends'.³ Many, including Edmund Ludlow, who denounced Cromwell's 'ambitious designs', were republicans angered by Cromwell's apparent hijacking of the revolution in 1653.⁴ To these republicans, by expelling the Rump – a legitimate instrument of republican development – and becoming Lord Protector, Cromwell was abandoning the 'old cause'.⁵ It was the creation of the 'pretended Protectorship' which to Bethel betrayed Cromwell's

'unpardonable' drive for his 'own single advancement', with Ludlow perceiving both moves as part of Cromwell's 'design of destroying the civil authority, and setting up of himself'.⁶ As Lord Protector, Cromwell's expensive policies were further cited as evidence of his design. '[I]gnorant' and doing 'irreparable ... damage' to England, Bethel found Cromwell's costly foreign policy reflective of personal greed.⁷ Ludlow also viewed the domestic 'Act of General Pardon and Amnesty' suspiciously. It seemed Cromwell was 'fortify[ing] himself by the addition of new friends for the carrying on his designs' because it cost 'great sums of money'.⁸ Ultimately, Cromwell was characterised as autocratic by republicans because of his dissolution of the Rump and creation of the Protectorate, events seen as part of a 'design' to enhance his own power. They were acts which seemed to contradict what republicans had fought for, instances of an individual abusing their power. Subsequent policy decisions strengthened this idea that Cromwell was personally ambitious, not acting in the cause of establishing republican rule, but trying to advance himself.

Parliamentarian Presbyterians voiced their contempt for the Independent Cromwell during the first civil war. Whilst Cromwell's dispute with the Earl of Manchester, the Lord General of the Parliamentary army, in 1644, arose from the Earl's lacklustre efforts following the Battle of Marston Moor, the charges levelled against Cromwell rested on a sense of his radicalism. In the Lords Manchester admonished Cromwell for attacking the principle of hereditary peerage, vilifying the Assembly of Divines, and displaying a violent animosity towards the Scots.⁹ To Manchester, Cromwell was a radical troublemaker, who had said 'that he hoped to live to see never a Nobleman in England', and 'could as soone draw his sword against [the Scots] as against any in the king's army'.¹⁰ Manchester even suggested during a private meeting in December 1644 that Cromwell should be proceeded against as an incendiary between the two Kingdoms. This charge persisted, with Cromwell in 1648 painted as 'the very abstract of sedition'.¹¹ Therefore, Cromwell was resented by Manchester because of a perception that he was socially subversive.

These accusations of radicalism were strongly religious in nature. Presbyterians, such as Major-General Crawford and Lieutenant-Colonel Dodson, viewed Cromwell as supporting Independent officers over more

orthodox godly men in his strategy for recruitment and promotion. Morrill has noted Cromwell's 'insistence that no religious test be applied to those volunteering for service', and it was this toleration which led to heated exchanges.¹² Indeed, Cromwell bitterly disagreed with Crawford over his dismissal of William Packer, a Baptist junior officer.¹³ Not only was Cromwell tolerating religious radicals, he also appeared to be dismissing godly men. Dodson accused Cromwell of dismissing 'honest gentlemen' for 'common men' who 'onely he would give ... the title of godly'.¹⁴ They believed this because Cromwell had been clamouring for the dismissal of many of Crawford's Presbyterian officers, as well as Crawford himself for 'a number of pretended faults'.¹⁵ These charges were expounded in a *Statement by an opponent of Cromwell*, which accused Cromwell of seeking to make the army an enclave for religious radicals.¹⁶ Therefore, Cromwell was disliked by Presbyterians during his time in the Eastern Association for his subversive toleration of religious radicals. However, it is noticeable that these early accusations of a political and religious radicalism were essentially replaced by later accusations of personal ambition, indicating that 1653 was more significant in arousing contempt against Cromwell, the quarrel with Manchester and the Presbyterians being quickly forgotten.

The frequent denunciations of Cromwell as a hypocrite can be primarily explained by his apostasy of adopting the Instrument of Government. To republicans, such as Sir Henry Vane, it was the moment God's purpose in the revolution was betrayed. Vane opined that Cromwell, since the Civil War, like Achan after the fall of Jericho, had 'brought not in the fruit and gain of the Lord's treasure, but covetously went about to convert it to his own use'.¹⁷ These accusations were clearly strong because Cromwell saw the need to reassure MPs: 'I would not build Jericho again'.¹⁸ Moreover, they persisted through the 1650s. Following an audience with Cromwell in 1655, Giovanni Sagredo, a Venetian diplomat, was sceptical of the Protector: 'he makes a great show of his zeal ... this way he stimulates the troops to second his designs'.¹⁹ This accusation of a false profession of religious drive for personal ends was reflected frequently by detractors such as Colonel Edward Lane and Fifth Monarchist Christopher Feake.²⁰ Therefore, Cromwell was accused of hypocrisy, mainly because of his seeming abandonment of godly will to pursue earthly greed, an apostasy particularly apparent with the creation of the Protectorate.

What often explains resentment of Cromwell then, is a sense of betrayal. Bethel admonished Cromwell's 'turning out' those who had supported him.²¹ Having hoped their *Agreement of the People* would predicate a new constitution, the Levellers were appalled when it was discarded in 1649.²² Such bitterness was, of course, what disaffected many republicans, who believed that Cromwell had betrayed republican principles by traitorously creating the Protectorate. Moreover, large sections of the army felt betrayed by Cromwell's negotiations with Charles, 'that man of blood', in the summer of 1647, and petitioned against the Heads of Proposals, while the Scots felt scorned by Cromwell when he took full credit for the victory at Marston Moor in 1644, belittling their role by claiming there were only 'a few Scots in the rear'.²³ Therefore contempt often arose from a feeling of betrayal, with the ultimate hypocritical betrayal to republican detractors being Cromwell's apostasy of 1653.

By contrast, the Irish Catholics were actively estranged rather than passively left to become disaffected. As such, Cromwell was hated in Ireland because of his cruelty. Clearly, a major reason for this was the brutality of his dealings with Drogheda and Wexford. As Ó Siochrú relates, the massacres 'shocked contemporary opinion, not only in Ireland, but also on the continent'.²⁴ However, accusations of cruelty did not all stem from violence. The callous plundering of Ireland was highly significant. Nearly forty per cent of the land was confiscated, with the 1652 Act of Settlement clearing six Irish counties of their Catholic landholders. These colossal changes had a stark physical impact on contemporaries, leading 'to the deaths of thousands of innocent Irish citizens', spreading discontent that persists to the present day.²⁵

Whilst Cromwell's Irish campaign was actually celebrated in England, with only the Levellers providing any murmurs of opposition, many Englishmen raised similar complaints of ruthlessness. In the 1640s Cromwell was accused of ruling the Isle of Ely oppressively.²⁶ Unsurprisingly, the Royalists saw Cromwell's role in the execution of Charles I as a barbaric depredation, the Penruddock uprising in March 1655 a clear instance of their disaffection. Indeed, satanic depictions of Cromwell by post-Restoration writers such as James Heath and William Winstanley, were largely inspired by his role in the regicide.²⁷ Bethel evidenced his characterisation of Cromwell's rule as being 'full of oppression and injustice' by Cromwell's cruel mistreatment of

Lilburne and Sir Henry Vane.²⁸ The Levellers, unsurprisingly, had also lectured Cromwell on his oppressive treatment of Lilburne, one of their own, in April 1649.²⁹ To the republican Algernon Sidney, Cromwell was a Caesar-like figure, 'a tyrant' as signified by his 'usurpation' of 1653.³⁰ Therefore, Cromwell was depicted as 'England Monster' in England and Ireland for his violence and ruthless political acts.³¹

Cromwell was also condemned for riding roughshod over the law. MP Bulstrode Whitelocke refused to enforce Cromwell's ordinance for reforming the Court of Chancery in June 1655 as it lacked parliamentary approval. Whitelocke's subsequent dismissal further confirmed to detractors that Cromwell was a law unto himself.³² Similarly, Prynne denounced Cromwell's impeaching of eleven MPs without any 'proof of guilt (contrary to all law ... only to strengthen his own faction in the House though he ... acknowledged them to be innocent ... in private'.³³ Dissimulation went hand in hand with an evasion of the law. Again, 1653 was key. A tyrannical usurpation of established forms, the Instrument of Government was regarded as nothing more than 'monarchy bottomed by the sword'.³⁴ Arguing that parliament could constitute a government, about 80 MPs refused to take an oath recognizing the Instrument's authority.³⁵ Overall, there was clear dissatisfaction with Cromwell's lawless forgoing of parliamentary consent.

In conclusion, Cromwell's success and personality celebrated in 2002 were actually aspects despised by his contemporary detractors, who saw Cromwell as a personally ambitious hypocrite. Ultimately, it was Cromwell's actions (too religiously and politically radical for many, too conservative for some, too brutal for others), which gave inveterate opponents as well as disgruntled former allies ample cause to criticise him. Davis's judgement that Cromwell's act of implementing the Instrument of Government 'was the moment [his] reputation for scheming ambition and personal aggrandizement took hold' bears scrutiny.³⁶ Whilst Cromwell was accused during the 1640s of being rash and radical by Presbyterians, the creation of the Protectorate, a huge national development, was far more significant in impacting contemporary opinion, with accusations of apostasy and personal ambition accelerating after 1653.

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Martyn Bennett, Ray Gillespie and R. Scott Spurlock, ***Cromwell and Ireland: new perspectives***. Liverpool University Press, 2021 (312 pp.) ISBN 978-1789622379, £90 hardback.

reviewed by Professor John Morrill

This is an engrossing set of essays that warns us that Cromwell did not conquer Ireland and (de)spoil it single-handed. There is a persistent theme throughout the book that the military history, the subsequent settlement, and even the popular memory of the Commonwealth period involves others. It brings Michael Jones, Charles Coote, Henry Ireton and Roger Boyle into sharper focus, and it locates Cromwell's own contribution in wide chronological context. The essays are almost all written with verve and the production values are good. It even has footnotes (glory be!) and a most useful bibliography. It is a great shame that at £90 it is not going to be on most people's must-buy bucket list. Perhaps a paperback will come later; I do hope so.

Half the chapters in the book have Drogheda as their starting point and I did wonder what is there left to say. It turns out there is, not least in the powerful opening chapter which not only further extends what we know about codes of honour and how they were applied at Drogheda, but which also examine what happened in Drogheda on 10–12 September 1649. Pádraig Lenihan examines the often quite clear evidence relating to 54 massacres in Ireland in the preceding eight years, in 14 of which more than 100 non-combatants or those who had surrendered on terms were slain. The number of incidents in which the English (or was it the royalists?) were slaughtered by the Irish (or was it the Catholics?) or vice versa was more or less even, but the worst and most egregious of the massacres were committed by 'English' troops. Lenihan offers a whole series of careful and precise distinctions which certainly allow us to see in perspective Cromwell's actions following his order of 'no quarter' to all those in arms in the town. But until the killing of as many as 3,500 persons in Drogheda, the biggest single slaughter had been 700. That said, neither this nor any other of the essays take us much further than previous work in the matter of the number of civilians slain in hot (but probably not cold) blood.

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Lenihan's essay provides the kind of rich context and 'trajectory' in which this volume excels. Thus, Martyn Bennett offers an excellent account of the role that was played during Cromwell's time in Ireland by his fellow generals. He was constantly dividing his army and sending them on separate operations, and these are properly evaluated here. Two related and fascinating points are that Cromwell seems to have had some doubts about Henry Ireton as a soldier and hesitated to make him second-in-command and only did so after his first choice, Robert Blake, turned him down. And he also points out how Ireton is consistently written out of all Cromwell's accounts of his own military actions. He was present at Drogheda and Wexford, for example, but is invisible from the record. Ireton gets a chapter to himself, by David Farr, who adds to his fine biography of Ireton specifically by examining the differences, rather than the similarities, between him and his father-in-law.

Most of the remaining essays are elaborations of the authors' previous work. Tom Reilly's attempts to exonerate Cromwell as a war criminal, more nuanced than in his two books on the subject, is still not accepted by four authors in the volume. James Scott-Wheeler descants on his book on Cromwell in Ireland by looking at the campaigns through the eyes of Ormond as well as Cromwell. Alan Marshall, who has written a general history of Cromwell the soldier, offers a close reading of the (no coincidence) lack of evidence of what went wrong in Cromwell's botched attempt to take Clonmel by storm. John Cunningham persuasively develops the case for seeing the 'Cromwellian land settlement' as far from being what Cromwell himself wanted. Eamon Darcy offers a close reading of two Irish texts which show that there was a recognition of other villains beside Cromwell within the memory of his Irish contemporaries. If he took their lands away, what did the Stuarts do to give them back? And Sarah Covington adds to her existing work on Irish folklore, finding no fixation with either Cromwell or the 'Cromwellian settlement', especially prior to the transformation of Irish Nationalism in the nineteenth century.

That leaves two very distinctive and illuminating essays. Nick Poyntz has written an essay for print-history nerds. As one such, I loved it. He examines in great detail how all the weekly newspapers reported what happened at Drogheda, and specifically the notorious postscript to one of Cromwell's reports which includes the admission that 'many inhabitants' were amongst

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the slain. He both refines why it is a ‘true report’ and why a nervous Council of State managed to get it removed from the later reports. Finally, Heidi Coburn, in an adaptation of her very fine Cambridge MPhil dissertation, examines the consistent over-reporting of the transporting of Irish to the American and Caribbean colonies. She offers a clearer guide as to who, how and how many were sent, what their conditions were (a long way from slavery) and how some actually thrived.

So this is a book about the physical and mental worlds within which Cromwell operated in his nine months in Ireland, and about what he was and was not responsible for. It is a rich and well-written compendium. Pity about the price – don’t blame Cromwell, blame the times.

Richard Cust and Peter Lake, *Gentry Culture and the Politics of Religion: Cheshire on the Eve of Civil War*. Manchester University Press, 2020. (379 pp., 17 figures.) ISBN 9781526114402, £85 hardback.

Lloyd Bowen, *John Poyer, the Civil Wars in Pembrokeshire and the British Revolutions*. University of Wales Press, 2020. (272 pp., 1 map.) ISBN 9781786836540, £14.99 paperback.

reviewed by Professor Peter Gaunt

During the closing decades of the twentieth century it became fashionable, at least in terms of England and (although generally the poor relation) Wales, to explore the causes, course and consequences of the civil war at the county level; county studies of Scotland or Ireland through the 1640s of this ilk never really took off. The depth and quality of those county assessments varied, from the deeply analytical and academic to little more than a straightforward narrative of the military actions occurring within the county boundaries, but many added to our knowledge of the nuts and bolts of waging the war at a local level and of the operation and impact of parliamentarian and royalist war efforts – reassessing how, how far and why the county divided before, during and after the war, and exploring the nature, strength and consequences of activism, neutralism and localism within county society. This county level

approach has continued – recent years have seen the publication of excellent full-length analyses of the war efforts and wartime administrations which operated in Lancashire and Shropshire, springing from detailed new research, together with a briefer but suggestive assessment of the conflict in Herefordshire, for example. However, the flow of county studies has noticeably slackened since the millennium. Accordingly, it is a pleasure to welcome these two volumes, which take very different approaches to assessing key aspects of and developments within Cheshire and Pembrokeshire during our period.

The starting point for the joint authors of the Cheshire volume is the concept of the county community. Developed by Alan Everitt and other historians in the 1960s and 1970s, it posited that during the early seventeenth century and beyond English counties were governed by a small and closely interconnected network of county-based gentry, who were inward- rather than outward-looking, so that their social, cultural, economic, administrative and political outlooks centred on their own county and were largely circumscribed by its boundary. They formed, therefore, a county community, these historians suggested, largely bound up by the localist interests of their own individual county, distanced and (semi-) detached from and caring little about metropolitan affairs or national developments and policies, and viewing attempts by the centre to impose its will at county level as unwelcome, hostile and to be resisted. Several county studies were written in that idiom, seeking and apparently finding a gentry-led and self-contained county community flourishing in a range of counties, even in some, such as Sussex and Kent, which lay quite close to London and the twin seats of national government at Whitehall and Westminster. However, more recently historians have been critical of the county community thesis, in part because it tends to privilege almost exclusively the small gentry elite and thus ignores the mass of the county's population and the role of popular opinion – but more importantly because, they feel, contemporary evidence simply does not support it and shows instead that gentry lives and outlooks were very much broader, crossing county and regional boundaries, and embracing a keen and often active interest in national affairs and administration. Thus the existence of the county community has been disputed and dismissed and the influence of localism downplayed, replaced by a portrait of gentry outlook as shaped by a

blend of local, regional and national concerns, in which the latter was strong and sometimes predominated, and by the interactions between them.

Using early Stuart Cheshire, down to the beginning of the county's civil war in autumn and winter 1642–43, as a case study, in this book Richard Cust and Peter Lake return to and reassess the issue of the county community, as well as more widely exploring afresh the political culture, outlook and (self-) image of the county's gentry. In a lengthy opening section they present a rich and richly-evidenced thematic review of factors shaping and reflecting gentry outlooks. Exploring a range of issues which take them well beyond the original case made by Everitt, the authors examine the gentry's architectural, funerary and heraldic tastes, their keen interest in not only their own dynastic history but also a semi-mythologised history of their county as somehow distinct and separate, generating a sense of unusually strong unity, neighbourliness and paternal sociability – as well as the more familiar images of reliance upon local markets, the predominance of inter-marriage and the remarkable durability and stability of the county's gentry, creating a tight county-based kinship network. While noting that many Cheshire gentlemen spent time in London on business, as well as receiving an education at Oxbridge and in one of the capital's Inns of Court, and that they often retained a strong thirst for metropolitan news, the emphasis is on the ways in which the county's gentry conformed to the county community thesis. Thus 'it was a county which looked inwards rather than outwards' (p. 45), with 'a remarkably tight-knit kinship network' (p. 50) and so on, culminating in the conclusion that 'Cheshire has emerged from the above analysis as a county almost ideally suited to the production of county consciousness' (p. 151).

Parts two and three of the book have a different feel, couched in the form of an analytical narrative, first of the 1620s and 1630s, largely focused on the Personal Rule, and then of the opening two years of the 1640s, down to the onset of civil war. The authors argue that, although under growing strain, the cohesion and unity of Cheshire's gentry community was maintained during much of the Personal Rule. The secular demands on the county made by Charles I, principally financial, were mitigated by the unity, tact and diplomacy of the gentry, their ability to lobby and negotiate with the distant organs of royal central government and their willingness locally to consult the county's freeholders. Meanwhile, potential religious divisions within Cheshire,

between the godly or puritans on the one hand and the Laudian policies pursued by the king and his supporters on the other, were long held in check by the ability of the Calvinistic bishop of Chester to be flexible, to drag his feet, to seek compromise and fudge in the local application of some aspects of national religious policy. However, the authors suggest that this consensual approach broke down in the closing stage of the Personal Rule and was increasingly replaced by a more adversarial atmosphere, which ranged a clutch of county gentry whom Cust and Lake label 'Patriots' (led by members of the Booth, Wilbraham and Grosvenor families), evangelical Calvinists who sought to defend the rights of the county and who were suspicious of the court, against another group of Cheshire gentry (with members of the Aston and Savage families to the fore), pro-Laudian and with strong court connections and sympathies.

These divisions became very evident during the elections to the Short and Long Parliaments, which also saw the emergence of gentry opponents of royal policy, notably Sir William Brereton, more radical than the 'Patriots'. As charted in detail in the third and final part of the book, these growing divisions formed the background to and were played out in Cheshire via intense petitioning campaigns of 1641–2. The most important petitions were framed in religious terms, against and for episcopacy early in 1641 and, toward the end of the year and in part as a failed attempt to restore an element of harmony, in defence of the Book of Common Prayer, and they were backed by county-wide drives to win support for and to garner signatures to (sometimes differently-worded versions of) those key petitions. The picture which emerges is of complex manoeuvring to gain status and power within Cheshire on the back of reshaping relations between the locality and the increasingly fractured and opposing elements of central government. For a while, the petitioning campaign enabled the courtier Sir Thomas Aston to take the initiative, though from late 1641 the 'Patriots' and a wider group of county gentry with whom they made common cause, here dubbed the 'middle group', regained the initiative. They sought to reach an accommodation or settlement on the basis of their broad and national outlook, the authors argue, rather than mere narrow neutralism springing from localism. The volume closes with the royalist military aggression of the opening months of the civil war, especially the king's visit to Chester and his securing of the city and the

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actions of a royalist force given entry into Nantwich, which, the authors claim, forced many of the gentry to take sides.

This is an intelligent and, on the whole, persuasive interpretation of developments in Cheshire, certainly very detailed in its arguments and supported by an impressive array of contemporary printed and archival sources. It runs against recent historical fashions in its endorsement of a (reworked) concept of the county community and in its focus on the landed gentry, almost to the exclusion of the wider county society; there is little here about broader public opinion or popular sentiment, beyond exploring the outcome of the campaigns to win wider endorsement of the key petitions of 1641 and some further musings about gentry influence and control in the conclusion to part three of the book. There are also distinct changes of tone and pace within the lengthy text, most notably between the thematic exploration of the first part and the analytical narratives of parts two and three, but also between some of the chapter sections found within those latter two parts. Thus at various points the semi-narrative breaks off and gives way to long and close textual analyses of some contemporary writings, especially the printed pamphlets of the moderate Cheshire puritan and presbyterian John Ley, who emerges as one of the key figures in this account, as well as of Aston, who is treated here as a much more substantial and effective protagonist in the run-up to and the early weeks of the civil war within the county than in some other recent accounts. This is a hugely impressive and thoughtful assessment of the culture and role of the gentry in early Stuart Cheshire and of their part in the descent into civil war, which, it is to be hoped, will serve to stimulate similar fresh work on other counties and will, more broadly reignite county studies. A less expensive paperback edition would be a boon to potential readers.

While Oliver Cromwell had no role in early Stuart Cheshire and so plays no part in Cust and Lake's story, he certainly does feature as one of the opponents with whom John Poyer crossed swords in Pembrokeshire. It was a long list for, as Lloyd Bowen makes clear in this fascinating new account, Poyer had a knack for rubbing people up the wrong way, finding himself on the wrong end of accusations of corruption and shady deeds and making enemies even of potential friends and allies. As mayor or governor of Pembroke for much of the main civil war, he became one of the first active

and armed supporters of the parliamentary cause in south Pembrokeshire during the opening months of the war and he remained loyal and steadfast, commanding a small garrison and retaining control of Pembroke and its immediate hinterland, even when the royalists surged forwards and overran much of the county, as they did several times in the course of the main war. Historians have long been puzzled about exactly why this erstwhile loyal and dogged parliamentarian then took a stand against parliament early in 1648 and, alongside two other former parliamentarian officers, Rice Powell and Rowland Laugharne, became the leaders of what evolved into an overtly pro-royalist rising which spread across parts of South Wales and so became a major plank of the so-called second civil war of 1648. Although by no means the first to explore this conundrum – Robert Matthews’s *‘A Storme out of Wales’: The Second Civil War in South Wales, 1648* (2012) addressed the issue – Bowen provides a fuller and deeper explanation, grounded in strong use of surviving sources, as well as a more rounded account of Poyer’s whole life and career.

Careful throughout to set Poyer within the context of national and regional developments – thus ensuring that readers new to the civil war in (south-west) Wales or in England and Wales can get their bearings – Bowen assembles the often fragmentary surviving evidence to reconstruct Poyer’s background and early life. He was a fairly modest merchant and trader, though with links to some rather more powerful local families, and emerged as a parliamentarian in 1640–42, perhaps shaped by those existing links as well as by his reaction to the Irish Rebellion and his anti-Catholicism, though certainly not springing from any godly puritanism, as Poyer was a firm and consistent supporter of the Church of England, Bowen demonstrates. His loyal and tenacious support for parliament and defence of Pembroke from 1642 to 1646 brought him enhanced status but also left him heavily out of pocket, he claimed, and also sowed the seeds of his bitter falling-out with a group of prominent Pembrokeshire landed families, principally John Eliot and the Lorts, who had initially supported the king’s cause in the county and had only turned to parliament during the course of the war. Yet in the murky and complex post-war world, it was these people who were viewed as dependable allies of, and who cultivated useful connections with, the Independents and the New Model Army, thus ensuring that they held power in Pembrokeshire. In contrast, Poyer found himself increasingly isolated and powerless, not only

with little chance of recovering his wartime debts and arrears but also accused of huge financial corruption, charges which would be investigated by his enemies who controlled the main county committee and its auditing subcommittee. An order to relinquish his command of Pembroke castle was the catalyst of his armed resistance, leading to his swift condemnation by parliament as a traitor and, sometime in late March 1648, his decision explicitly to link his stand to support for the royalist cause. He was now set on a path which led to a failed royalist rebellion in South Wales, the siege of Pembroke by part of the New Model Army under Cromwell, his surrender and imprisonment and eventually, in April 1649, his trial and condemnation at a court martial and his execution by firing squad in Covent Garden – all explored here. His strong parliamentary background had made him both suspect in the eyes of his new royalist allies – reflected in how his role in the events of 1648 was often skated over in post-1660 pro-royalist accounts – as well as all-the-more damned as a turncoat in the eyes of Cromwell and the leading parliamentarians.

One of the many strengths of the book is its careful and thorough use of sources. Archival material has clearly been sought out and is adduced, though it remains rather thin. But very full use has been made of the pamphlets, broadsides and newspapers of the day, uncovering all sorts of reports and snippets which pop up in contemporary publications whose titles give no hint that they would include news from that far-flung corner of Wales and which have hitherto been largely or wholly missed. This book is an object lesson in how meticulous and doubtless time-consuming searching through the mass of published material churned out by the presses during the 1640s can bring to light valuable new information. Of course, many of these publications are shot-through with bias, exaggeration and downright lies, all the more so in the case of such a divisive figure as Poyer, and Bowen is excellent at charting a route through the often wild allegations and counter-allegations put out in print by or about Poyer and his enemies, at analysing and dissecting the texts, and at seeking to discern the truth. What emerges is a far more convincing picture of this controversial character: a man of tenacity and principles who could rally people behind him, even when the odds were stacked against him, and a figure whose new-found royalism of 1648 was not just an expedient adopted when he found himself out-manoeuvred in a local and national parliamentary power-struggle but also, in part at least, a genuine refection

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of his longer-standing principles about church and state. In Bowen's hands, Poyer emerges as a better understood and somewhat more likable character, while it is his turncoat enemies, especially the skilful but 'frankly villainous' John Eliot, who come across as scoundrels. This is an accessible, enjoyable and informative study: a credit to both the author and his publisher.

Laurence Spring, *The Armies of Sir Ralph Hopton: the Armies of the West 1642–46*. Helion & Company, Century of the Soldier, 2020. (212 pp.) ISBN 978 1 913336 51 6, £25 softback.

Richard Israel, *'Cannon Played from the Great Fort': Sieges in the Severn Valley during the English Civil War, 1642–1646*. Helion & Company, Century of the Soldier, 2021. (165 pp.) ISBN 978 1 913336 50 9, £25 softback.

reviewed by Dr Stephen K. Roberts

Sir Ralph Hopton (1596–1652), from 1643 Baron Hopton of Stratton, was Charles I's general in the west during the first civil war. Although he inherited wealth in land, which helped him become an MP in three parliaments of the 1620s, each time for a different constituency in the west of England, he became a professional soldier in his twenties. He served in the Low Countries and Bohemia. On his return from these campaigns he settled into Somerset gentry society, and was a critic of government policy during the 1630s. He was as sceptical towards puritanism as he was towards the innovations of Archbishop Laud, and was a reluctant supporter of the first bishops' war against the Scots in 1639, and stayed aloof from involvement in the second. His social standing in Somerset, and no doubt his avoidance of the political factionalism of that county, secured him a seat for Somerset in the first parliament of 1640, and for Wells in the second.

In the Long Parliament, Hopton was initially among the reformers, but when the attacks on Laudianism developed into an assault on episcopacy itself, Hopton began to move away from the ruling junta at Westminster. The celebrated episode of the king's attempt to arrest the 'Five Members' in January 1642 was a milestone on Hopton's political journey. Far from

demonstrating solidarity with the intended victims of Charles's invasion of parliamentary privilege, Hopton doubled down on his criticism of the junto, to the extent that he soon found himself in the Tower of London. The parliamentary leadership, at this stage in its dealings with the king very sensitive to allegations that it was impugning the monarch's integrity, had taken exception to Hopton's remarks on a publication by the Commons. Released in March 1642, Hopton returned to the West Country as an active agent in the king's efforts to mobilise support for his cause, building an army which amply demonstrated its effectiveness by defeating the earl of Stamford at Stratton in May 1643, curtain-raiser to further royalist victories at Lansdown and Roundway Down and the king's domination of the west.

However, military victory brought no great satisfaction for Hopton. As Rupert's governor-lieutenant at Bristol, he was soon embroiled among the factions competing for the ear of the king, and Rupert's demands on his soldiers and resources exposed him to increasingly well-organised parliamentary forces. Defeat at Cheriton in March 1644 led to a prolonged period of inactivity and by the winter of 1644–5, especially after Hopton's taking a commission under the young prince of Wales, difficult relations with Rupert and his 'war party' had become an open quarrel. The approach of the New Model army proved unstoppable and Hopton, like others of the royalist high command, was obliged to leave England after the fall of the west in 1646. His life thereafter, until his death in 1652, was shaped by the faction-fighting among the exiled advisers of the king and the prince.

Little of the dramatic trajectory of Hopton's life story can be gleaned from Laurence Spring's new book. In 14 chapters, the volume covers subjects such as organisation, recruitment, mustering, clothing, arms and armour, discipline, casualties and pay. There is plenty of context to supply educated conjecture where direct evidence is lacking. The author is adept at mining sources both manuscript and in print to very good effect. Good use has been made of manuscripts in the local archives of the western counties, as well as in the national collections. The course of the military campaigns is given in great detail, though the politics that lay behind, and shaped the campaigns, is barely discussed.

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Readers hoping for the kind of listings of officers that characterised Laurence Spring's earlier works on Waller's army and the Eastern Association may be disappointed by this volume. This is no doubt owing to deficiencies in source material, not to the author's lack of focus. In the absence of a royalist parallel to The National Archives (TNA) sources in state papers and exchequer records, it seems it is simply not possible to recreate the comings and goings of the royalist officer cadre in the same detail. Nevertheless, this book will doubtless be of great interest to those keen to acquire a feel for what military service in the west was like on the king's side in the civil war, under the general Clarendon described as: 'as faultless a person as ever knew man.'

A similar attention to detail 'on the ground', or rather in this case, under the ground, marks Richard Israel's book on sieges in the Severn valley. It is clear that certain army officers had specialist skills in sieges, whether in conducting them or lifting them. Thomas Rainsborough was one of these, with experience at Hull, Crowland (Lincolnshire), Standlake (Oxfordshire), Berkeley, Warminster and Corfe Castle before he replaced Edward Whalley to lead the siege of Worcester in May 1646. The place of military specialization in the career progress of the officer cadre on either side in the war is not the focus of this book. Nor are the politics of sieges. Instead, though documentary, topographic and cartographic are carefully weighed, it is the legacy of archaeological evidence that informs this volume most markedly. This is an exhaustive account of the sieges of Bristol, Gloucester, Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and Worcester. Aspects of the earthworks and fortifications of the sieges are set in local topographical context, with a wealth of photographic evidence, so that a visitor to any of these places can use this volume as an accompanying handbook – a Pevsner for Severn Valley sieges, if you will.

As with Laurence Spring's volume, there is a lightness of touch in Richard Israel's book when it comes to the larger narrative. As examples: the office of king was abolished in March 1649 not in 1651 as Richard Israel would have it (p. xi); 'a theatrical medieval theme' (p. 27) is a curious choice of words to describe the king's raising his standard at Nottingham; we know of Dorothy Hazzard's part at the head of Bristol women's efforts to defend the city in 1643 through her own deposition in a court, not 'according to legend' (p. 45). This book will probably be more useful to those already familiar with the

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personalities and themes of the civil war in the Severn region than to those completely new to the subject.

These are two substantial additions to Helion's 'Century of the Soldier' series. The text of each is complemented by plentiful, well-chosen and clearly-reproduced illustrations; each is marred by the absence of an index.

Ismini Pells, *Philip Skippon and the British Civil Wars: the 'Christian Centurion'*. Routledge, 2020. (xiii+291 pp.) ISBN 97803 7460105, £120 hardback.

reviewed by Professor John Morrill

Heaven knows how many libraries can afford to pay £120 for this book, very fine as it is. Some readers of *Cromwelliana* might well be willing to pay the £33 Amazon is asking for the e-book on Kindle, but hopefully there will eventually be a paperback. It cannot come soon enough.

We are fortunate in having very well researched and presented lives of most of the parliamentary generals who worked alongside Cromwell: in the past twenty years major studies of Fairfax, Ireton, Lambert and Harrison, and reliable modern but older studies of Essex and Waller. Even some regional commanders have now been given up-to-date biographers, like the military study of Sir William Brereton by Andrew Abram, reviewed in last year's *Cromwelliana*. Three of the senior generals await a good modern re-evaluation: Charles Fleetwood, George Monck and Philip Skippon. The largest and most grievous of those gaps is Skippon, and to the list of major studies comes what is very possibly the best of them all – Ismini Pell's study of Philip Skippon (1598–1660), commander of the London Trained Bands before and after his service commanding the New Model's infantry.

This is as complete a biography as is possible from the scattered sources and the lack of a personal archive. Ismini Pells has done a spectacular job tracing and stabilising his family background, early life (*ODNB* does not have any idea when he was born), and twenty years at the sharp end of the Thirty Years War (twice seriously wounded in the Dutch service). He was even more

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grievously wounded at Naseby, fighting on with a bullet in his side. Few men survived seventeenth-century battles three times. It will have taken courage as well as luck with the omnipresent infections. One third of the book covers the period up to 1642 and another quarter examines his political career in the last decade of his life, during the Interregnum; the central forty per cent covering his role as commander of the London Trained Bands and then as Sergeant-Major-General in the New Model, and his career in the army, down to the Regicide.

All three sections are authoritative and persuasive. Coming from a minor gentry family with important links to leading puritan ministers (and through them noble patrons), religion mattered to Skippon and his protestantism had become more ascetic and biblo-centric from his time in the Netherlands. Ismini Pells makes exceptional use of the annotated Bible, that she herself identified as his, in drawing out his God-centred view of the conflicts he engaged in – political as well as military. His mainstream Calvinism made him a good puritan but as suspicious of charismatic sectaries as of priestcraft.

Pells shows how his experience in the 1620s and 1630s was put to good use in training troops and constructing defence works. By the mid-1640s he was the most experienced officer in any of the armies, and great benefit accrued. His hallmarks were self-discipline, focus and courage. Although many of those who had served on the continent (the supreme example is the Earl of Essex) had learnt caution and the art of ‘slowly-slowly-catchee-monkey’, Skippon was bold. An excellent example was his daring plan, when abandoned by Essex down at Lostwithiel in the late summer of 1644, to break out of the royalist encirclement. He was overruled at a council of war, and had to surrender on terms he did well to achieve. His integrity earned him respect. Essex had doubted that he would escape with his life: in the quote that astonished me more than anything else in the book, we are told that Essex wrote to him to say ‘if you live I shall take as great care of you as of my father, if alive, if God otherwise dispose of you, as long as I have a drop of blood, I shall strive to revenge yours on the causers of it’. Despite being abandoned and left to his fate, Skippon never wavered in his loyalty.

Throughout the book, Pells has to work out (without much in the way of first-hand sources) how and why he acted as he did. Whether discussing the

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lead up to the Self-Denying Ordinance, the debates in the General Council of the Army in 1647, the trial of the king, the end of the Rump, or the trial of James Nayler, we consistently find some wonderfully shrewd evaluation of difficult sources, and willingly, unflinchingly, to take on other scholars, always with firmness, fairness and courage. When we add to this, that in illuminating Skippon she has made a significant contribution to the history of the military, political and religious cultures of the era of the British Civil Wars, you can see why I pray for an affordable paperback and urge all those not allergic to reading on a tablet to rush to Amazon to get the kindle version of this very fine book.

Michael Hunter, *The Decline of Magic: Britain in the Enlightenment*. Yale University Press, 2020. (243 pp.) ISBN 9780300243581, £25 hardback.

reviewed by Dr Stephen Brogan

How do people make up their minds concerning important issues of their day, about which it is difficult to remain neutral? And how do beliefs and ideas that start off as marginal, and sometimes even dangerous, gradually become accepted as the norm? Michael Hunter examines the ways in which educated people in Britain jettisoned belief in magic between approximately 1650 and 1750: in doing so, he provides a compelling and erudite account that shines light on the origins of the English Enlightenment, while teasing out the complex process of intellectual change that underpins his study.

In order to appreciate the centrality of magic in pre-modern European societies, it is helpful to remember that life at that time had no scientific rationale: instead, human existence was understood in religious and occult terms. This was accentuated during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the Renaissance and the Reformations, which involved great revivals of magic and religion that in turn helped to set the context for the witch hunts of early modern Europe. This means that when doubt concerning magic really started to take root in the latter half of the seventeenth century, those at the vanguard had to challenge a number of prevailing orthodoxies.

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Michael Hunter has devoted much of his prolific output to the study both of Robert Boyle, England's pre-eminent scientist before Sir Isaac Newton, and of the early Royal Society. Both feature a lot in this book. But for any reader expecting to hear that it was the scientists of the Restoration who abandoned magic in favour of science, and that everyone else then followed suit, a surprise is in store! As Hunter explains, Boyle was a deeply religious man who gave magic a great deal of thought: the problem was that by implication the rejection of phenomena such as spells, witches, astrology, and second sight called into question the supernatural events of the Bible, especially the miracles wrought by Christ. For Boyle and many of his peers, scepticism about magic was perilous because it led to atheism. Yet some of the Fellows of the Royal Society were uncertain about magic, so the organisation solved this thorny problem by adopting a corporate silence on the matter. It conducted no experiments into magic, which only later in the eighteenth century was misinterpreted as disbelief.

But in some quarters the supernatural *was* derided at this time. As Hunter explains, it wasn't the scientists who mocked it, rather it was the wits and freethinkers who patronised the coffee houses. Iconoclastic young men who had grown up during the Civil War and Interregnum and seen authority challenged on an unprecedented scale; the wits had read Hobbes. Key targets for the wits were magic and priestcraft, both of which were mocked for relying on the ignorance and credulity of the people, it was argued. Thus the wits were tarnished as irreligious, provoking an orthodox backlash in the form of earnest books arguing for the reality of the supernatural realm and denouncing the wits as atheists and libertines. Joseph Glanvill's *Saducimus Triumphatus* (1681) is particularly noteworthy in this regard. Initially, this rearguard action made the wits' heterodox opinions too dangerous for much of the reading public, a development that delayed the broader reception and acceptance of anti-magical views. It took the Mechanical Philosophy, deism, and especially Newtonian Science to make such ideas safe enough for educated people to accept them. Hence by the 1730s there was a consensus that the universe operated according to a set of laws, while God had receded from being omnipresent to a more distant, non-interventionist deity. All this rendered magic too capricious, something that just did not fit into the new world view. Consequently, doctors began to pathologise witches as mentally

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ill, ghosts were relegated to children's tales, and the Hanoverian monarchs had no need of a Dr John Dee to provide them with astrological advice.

Hunter's book weaves a gripping account, with chapters forming case studies on important themes including the notorious poltergeist case of the 1660s, The Drummer of Tedworth; the ambivalence of the Royal Society; the changing views of medical men; and second sight in the Highlands of Scotland. The methodology of the book is particularly noteworthy for its investigation of the ideas of the wits and freethinkers, the bulk of which were expressed orally before the 1690s, as committing them to print was too hazardous. This means that a lot of the anti-magical ideas are accessed at one remove, in pamphlets that describe coffeehouses and denounce their irreligious patrons, and in the weightier tomes of men such as Glanvill. Despite the obvious bias of the apologists for magic and the supernatural aspects of Christianity, they coalesce in their attack on freethinking. The wits are castigated for having too much confidence and not enough education, and for being dissolute characters on a high road to atheism. Inadvertently, the apologists allow us access to new heterodox ideas of the Restoration that otherwise would be almost lost to us, and so we should be grateful to the likes of Glanvill.

We must end on a sobering thought, however. Key issues such as whether magic was real or a con trick, and whether its practitioners were authentic or deluded, and the intellectual ramifications of such views, were hotly debated. Yet as Hunter observes, in reality it was a dialogue of the deaf: 'People just made up their minds and then grasped at arguments to substantiate their preconceived ideas, with a new generation simply rejecting out of hand the commonplaces of the old' (p. 46). Discussing the poltergeist Drummer of Tedworth, Hunter explains that 'it really does seem as if it was a predisposition to believe or to disbelieve, rather than any decisive piece of evidence, that was fundamental to dictating people's response to what occurred' (p.120). Despite this being the beginning of the Age of Reason, there is a noticeable lack of evidence of people weighing up both sides and then making up their minds or changing them. This is revealing, not just as a theory of intellectual change, but for readers who like their history to appear particularly relevant to its time of publication. Current debates in the UK include the furore over Brexit, and the extent to which the government's

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handling of the COVID-19 pandemic has been disastrous. Do we examine both sides and make informed decisions based on the strongest evidence, or are we already committed to one side from the very beginning? And what constitutes reliable evidence? Returning to the Restoration, for those who believed in the supernatural, the ghostly Drummer of Tedworth was proof enough in itself; for doubters, it was a hoax even though no evidence was forthcoming to support this, despite the whole house being searched more than once and floorboards taken up. One is left wondering if Hunter's readable and meticulous book on early modern England has put its finger on a human quality that transcends any given period.

Timothy Venning, *Cromwell's Failed State and the Monarchy*. Pen and Sword Military, 2020. (362 pp.) ISBN 978 1 52676 421 8, £25 hardback.

reviewed by Professor John Morrill

I need to begin with two substantial caveats. The title implies, and the back cover and flyleaf explicitly state that is a book which focuses on the Protectorate. Thus, the flyleaf talks of the failed state being the Protectorate which, it says, lasted from 1649 to 1660 and the back cover speaks of 'Cromwell as Lord Protector 1649 until his death in 1658' and 'how the Protectorate "Failed State" collapsed with Cromwell's death and succession by hopeless Richard Cromwell' and led to the Restoration of the Stuart dynasty. The only problem is that the book begins in 1646 and ends with the collapse of the Nominated Assembly in December 1653. No harm in that, unless you buy it to read about the Protectorate. Presumably Tim Venning never saw the cover of his book but he should now correct the different but equally misleading information on both the publisher's and Amazon's websites.

This is then a book on 1646–53 and not 1649–60 and some readers will be glad of that. But those readers do need to know that the book is very out of date. Going through the endnotes and (admirably full) bibliography, it is clear that while Tim Venning has done yeoman service in the archives and especially in the Thomason Tracts, the vast majority of his secondary source

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references are at least 25 years old. Of course, many books published by the early 1990s are still worth reading. But so are dozens of books and hundreds of articles written since. So again, *caveat emptor*. This is not a book that reflects up-to-date scholarship and ways of thinking about the period.

Although the title page indicates that there will at some point be a paperback as well as a hardback, the hardback itself is only £25 and at the time of this journal publication, it can be bought on Amazon for £18.44 (with the kindle edition available at £9.99).

All that said, what is this book about? It is, broadly, a high political narrative that begins with the king's surrender to the Scots in May 1646 and ends with the collapse of the Nominated Assembly and the meetings that precede the establishment of the Protectorate. There are six chronological chapters, the longest at 80 pages, the shortest at 29 pages. Each is divided into a series of short discreet sections dealing with a particular moment or extended incident and the literal subheadings give a sense of the content – many of the subheadings taking the form of rhetorical questions (and, indeed, rhetorical questions inhabit the whole text). Here are examples of the subheadings, selected by opening the book at random: *The crisis comes to a head. Did the danger of a Presbyterian-Scots move to secure the King for a settlement at the same time as disbanding the army prompt the army 'coup'?* [pp.45–9]; *Ireton's Proposals: bringing the radicals 'on board'* [pp.115–18]; *The Leveller Challenge: were Lilburne and the other civilian agitators less dangerous without their murdered army ally Colonel Rainsborough?* [pp.148–153]; *Slow progress on constitutional business: inevitable or a sign of low priorities likely to annoy the army?* [pp.215–17]; *The coup of 20 April 1653: did Cromwell misread the situation?* [pp.280–4]. Some readers will be engaged with this approach. The upside is that Venning works very closely with his sources and has many refreshing things to say. The downside is that he does not incorporate very many of the discoveries of the past 25 years. But there is always a case for going back to sources and not being too trustful of the secondary sources.

While many of the set-piece discussions therefore feel old-fashioned and some (such as the account of the King's trial and execution, or of Cromwell's culpability for the Drogheda massacre) add nothing to existing accounts, others do have a freshness and the ability to challenge existing views. For

example, his account of Cornet Joyce's seizure of the King from Holdenby in early June 1647 (including Cromwell's complicity), his account of the Putney Debates (properly showing the importance of all 14 days of debate and not just the three for which we have fairly full transcripts of what was said), or later his discussion of how the Nominated Assembly was constituted, are really valuable. Across the whole book, the greatest insights are afforded by Venning's recognition of the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Irish dimension, especially for those parts of the story that normally exclude them (eg the importance of the crisis in Ireland for Army-Parliament relations for all the events of 1647), and also of how domestic politics were complicated by foreign threats and interference, something which is important in 1647–8 through the counter-productive interventions of the French ambassador, but much more important in 1649 and especially in 1651–3. His discussion of the highs and lows of Anglo-Dutch relations (from a yearned-for union to open war) and of the temptation to intervene in the French civil wars (fantasies of exporting revolution) are important reminders that being an island does not make British history an insular matter. This is a book that places the minutiae of English constitutional wrangling in a British and European context. Readers who are aware of what the book does offer, rather than what it claims to offer, can dip in with profit.

Stephen Bann, *Scenes and Traces of the English Civil War*. Reaktion Books, 2020. (288 pp., 113 illustrations, 75 in colour.) ISBN 978 1 789142280, £40.00, hardback.

reviewed by John Goldsmith

As an Association which sets out to commemorate Oliver Cromwell, the publication of a book by a distinguished art historian on the theme of the legacy of the civil wars in visual culture cannot go unnoticed. This is not an overcrowded field.

Professor Stephen Bann's book is therefore to be welcomed in his study of what he describes as 'scenes and traces' of the war. By his own admission he does not attempt to add to our understanding of the period, nor is it a comprehensive chronological catalogue of all the visual references to the

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period that survive, but rather a reflection on some monuments, portraits, paintings and statuary that appeal to the author's aesthetic sensibilities.

Despite on the whole being dismissive of plaques and monuments erected to commemorate specific events, battles or birthplaces – 'they cannot be said to give much of a stimulus to the historical imagination' – we should be gratified that the Association's plaque at Worcester was selected as an illustration. Some surprise is expressed at how recently it was placed there, now nearly thirty years ago – clearly he doesn't know what we have been up to since.

Although few monuments in churches directly reference the civil wars, the author claims to be able to detect in the inscriptions of contemporary tombs 'a certain heightening of the emotional impact of these messages'. Interesting examples are cited: Lady Waller's tomb in Bath Abbey, Sir William Mainwaring's in Chester Cathedral, and members of the Bargrave family in Kent, amongst others.

More prominent is the sculpture of Charles I on horseback, by Hubert Le Sueur, which since 1675 has stood on the site of the old Charing Cross, which the author envisages as a scene, and now a feature of another site of commemoration – Trafalgar Square. It is described as 'not just the oldest but also the finest equestrian statue in the capital', a comment few would take issue with. It has a fascinating story having been created in 1633 and then buried, rather than scrapped as instructed, under the Commonwealth, before its restoration along with that of its subject's successor. Reference is made, but without illustration, of the bizarre statue of Charles II trampling on Cromwell, originally sited in Stock's Market (the site of the Mansion House) and now at Newby Hall in Yorkshire. It was a remodelling of an entirely different work showing the King of Poland trampling on a Turk. What isn't mentioned is that between its life in London, and Newby Hall, it spent more than a century on an island in a lake on an estate in Lincolnshire. The adjacent parish church at Gautby also has crammed into it, and also relocated from the City, the tomb of Sir Thomas Vyner, goldsmith and banker, knighted by Cromwell and made a baronet by Charles II. Traces of the civil war indeed.

Attention is drawn to the absence of any British tradition of 'history paintings' before the 18th century, and the lack of any contemporary imagery of civil war

scenes is a mystery which awaits answer elsewhere. Isaac Fuller's set of five paintings of the flight of Charles Stuart (National Portrait Gallery) is a noted and noteworthy exception. Images of the civil war do not become in any way common until the 18th century when the print trade responded to the need for illustrations to accompany histories of the period. Odd as it may seem now, prints were purchased and inserted separately into texts. Although prints were most commonly copied from paintings, the production of prints for sale was the key motivation, not the production of great paintings that were worthy of reproduction as prints (although the two were frequently in a symbiotic relationship with one another).

The role of Benjamin West in developing the genre of history painting is acknowledged, but the significance of his painting of 1782, *Cromwell dismissing the Long Parliament* (Montclair Art Museum) in developing an image of Cromwell, and helping to cement it in popular imagination, is ignored. Prints of the painting were in circulation very soon after its creation, and it was so well known that by the late 1820s it had appeared as a transfer print on a *British History* dinner service. Paul Delaroche's painting of *Cromwell and Charles I*, 1831 (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nîmes), depicting the apocryphal scene of Cromwell viewing the corpse of Charles I in his coffin is favoured over West's image, and the claim made that 'the visual embodiment of Cromwell remained for half a century at least, the figure created by Delaroche'.

The author's previous work on Delaroche predisposes him to this opinion and there is a lengthy discussion on the link between the work of the English artist James Ward and Delaroche. A sketch by Ward of cavalry boots from Haddon Hall is accorded significance in influencing Delaroche's painting as well as some of the details in Ward's best known battle scene described here as *The Battle near Boston*. Bann notes that there is 'some confusion' about the painting and asserts that 'there can be no doubt' that it has been incorrectly described as *The Battle of Marston Moor* because of the narrative within the painting. The painting, now in the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon, is illustrated but there certainly is doubt about what it is depicting. The topography revealed on the right-hand skyline is dark moorland, Marston Moor. The best explanation is that the painting, as shown, was a study for the larger scene *The Battle of Winceby*, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1826. The larger painting clearly shows a silhouette of the Boston Stump

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[the tower of St Botolph's Church in Boston, Lincolnshire] in place of the brooding moorland.

Although West's painting is ignored in this book in favour of Delaroche, Stephen Bann is not unaware of it. As joint author of the catalogue for an exhibition *The invention of the past: stories of the heart and sword in Europe 1802–1850* at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyons, he does make at least a passing reference, suggesting that it was at the time West painted Cromwell that he 'acquired a large feathered hat' but asserts that Delaroche went much further in his search for an authentic outfit. But both Cromwell's feathered hat and his floppy cavalry boots were features of a Dutch print published soon after the dismissal of the Long Parliament in April 1653, *Dit Hays is Te Hver* or *This House is to Let*. The similarity between its composition and West's painting, and the detail, is striking.

The argument that Delaroche had an influence on subsequent depictions of Cromwell is a good one, but it was by no means the only, or most important one. West's image of a strong, principled man of action, surely had greater weight with the readers of Thomas Carlyle than Delaroche's introspective, self-doubting Cromwell.

The book's concluding chapter reviews English history painting in the nineteenth century, and a range of artists and interpretations of Cromwell are discussed. More needs to be researched and written about how visual representations of the English civil wars shaped popular opinion, from Ford Madox Brown's idiosyncratic *Cromwell on his farm in St Ives* (Lady Lever Art Gallery) to W.F. Yeames' sentimental *And when did you last see your father* (Walker Art Gallery). Other than Roy Strong's 1978 book *Recreating the Past* (which doesn't even make Bann's bibliography) and the exhibition *For King and Parliament: attitudes of 19th century painters to the English civil war* (Wolverhampton and the Mappin, Sheffield) in the same year, and an exhibition of Yeames at the Walker in Liverpool in 1992, there has been very little of substance.

Professor Bann has added significantly to the discussion, albeit through the prism of Paul Delaroche, and for that he should be thanked.

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by Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons

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by Professor Peter Gaunt

JOURNALS

In the listing of journal articles which appeared in last year's *Cromwelliana*, it was noted that because all academic libraries were closed as a consequence of the pandemic it had proved much harder than usual to compile it and that, without being able directly to search physical copies of many regional and county journals on the shelves, the listing was likely to be patchier than normal in its coverage of that material. Alas, one year on and with the pandemic continuing, that remains the position. So while this listing should be fairly full and thorough in noting material which has appeared in national and international journals, it has again proved difficult, or in some cases impossible, to search recent and current editions of county titles.

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