

Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, Peter Lake, eds.. *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. x + 304 \$60.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-521-80700-5.



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It is fitting testimony to the brilliance of Conrad Russell's work and to the enduring significance of his revisionist rewriting of early Stuart political history that his festschrift should be edited by three of his most penetrating and persuasive critics. Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake carry unimpeachably post-revisionist credentials: all three contributed major essays to the seminal 1989 post-revisionist collection, *Conflict in Early Stuart England*, which Cust co-edited with Ann Hughes; Cust and Cogswell have published brilliant essays and major monographs that have significantly revised key elements of Russell's reading of the politics and political culture of Parliament, court, and country in the 1620s; and Lake has challenged Russell's work in a series of essays, ranging from case studies of individuals like Thomas Scott, who did not fit the Russell model of early Stuart political man, to more recent historiographical reflections that include an indispensable critical review of Russell's *The Causes of the English Civil War* and *The Fall of the British Monarchies*.^[1]

As the editors make clear in their helpful introduction, Russell's post-revisionist critics begin from a position of profound appreciation for the power and enduring value of his complex and subtle account of early Stuart politics. As they sympathetically reconstruct the basic elements of Russell's interpretation of the period, the editors demonstrate how far off the mark many of the initial ripostes to Russell's work were. Far from being a narrow antiquarian empiricist, uninterested in ideology or long-term causation, Russell has consistently drawn attention to the power of ideas and offered long-term structural and, in the case of religion, ideological explanations for political conflict. And Russell's analytical concerns, particularly his interest in the processes and difficulties of state formation in the composite British monarchy, continue to provide a fruitful map for future research in many different areas of early modern English and British history. As they reconstruct the historiographical genealogies of Russell's work, the editors also convincingly suggest how ossified and uncritical historical understanding of early Stuart high political history had become by the early 1970s, sheltered in a pretty-much ne-

glected corner as the storm over the gentry raged across the stage. Russell not only revised early-seventeenth-century political historiography, he rescued it--by inspiring, provoking, and maddening his colleagues, he, above all others, triggered the return to the archives and the bitter debates that continue to transform our understanding of the decades that preceded the first modern revolution.

The dozen essays in this collection, by Russell's students, London colleagues, and American friends, are nearly all written in a post-revisionist mode. Many explicitly take issue with Russell's specific theses (on the localism of MPs, on the impossibility of opposition, on the mind of Charles I), while others implicitly challenge both his theses and his working premises, assumptions, methodology, and choice of sources. But each contribution quite obviously benefits from the intellectual charge generated by any engagement with Russell's writings. There are odd absences from the collection: there is not as much here on the British problem as one might expect, Ireland is hardly mentioned, and there are virtually no examples of the kind of reconstruction of Parliamentary debates and maneuvers that Russell has specialized in. And the collection also replicates some of Russell's blindspots, in particular his marginalizing of popular politics. But, taken together, these essays suggest that, nearly a quarter of a century after the publication of *Parliaments and English Politics*, the study of early Stuart religion and politics remains a vital area of intellectual endeavor.

The first six contributions appear under the heading "Politics." Nicholas Tyacke opens the collection amid the smoking ruins of Sir John Neale's and Wallace Notestein's work on parliamentary opposition, and proceeds very cautiously to rebuild some of what Geoffrey Elton and Conrad Russell demolished. Tyacke identifies and tracks the activities of a group of Puritans who were committed during the 1590s to the Stuart succession and who worked both to defend the Stuart

claim in writing and to forge ties with James VI and his court in advance of Elizabeth's death. Tyacke also persuasively suggests that this network was partially responsible for what he dubs a "puritan blueprint" (p. 38) for reform in church and state that circulated at court after James's accession. The goal of that document, Tyacke argues, "was to seize the initiative from the Elizabethan old guard ... following the queen's death" (p. 42). This effort failed miserably. But, Tyacke argues in a tantalizing last paragraph, "in the very process of rejection a new kind of adversary politics was born" (p. 44). Thus, by using the close-grained analysis of networks, factions, and complex high-political maneuvering championed by Russell and the revisionists, Tyacke challenges some of Russell's most powerful claims about the possibility of opposition and adversary politics in the early Stuart period.

Lori Anne Ferrell discusses another of Russell's favorite topics--Anglo-Scottish Union and the "British Problem"--using an innovative interdisciplinary approach to sources mostly neglected in Russell's own work. Her analysis of the early Jacobean "polemics of Union" (p. 45) centers on a close reading of two court performances--a sermon by Robert Wilkinson and a masque by Thomas Campion--produced to celebrate the 1607 marriage of the Scots courtier James, Lord Hay, with the English heiress Honora Denny. Ferrell contextualizes both performances in a number of ways, and adds compellingly to our sense of the ways in which the "socio-religious ideologies of marriage" functioned in early Jacobean discourse as "polemical delivery systems for the concept Great Britain" (p. 49). She also adds much to our understanding of court masque and sermon as modes of addressing (and redressing) diversity of opinion within the court, arguing that both Wilkinson and Campion, in different languages and genres, were tackling the problem of internal court opposition to Union.

Pauline Croft offers a provisional analysis of a curiously understudied phenomenon, the experiences of MPs during their sojourns in London: what they did, where they went, and with whom. Russell's work needs to make much more of London, and Croft raises a number of important points about the metropolitan experience--sociability integrating men from different localities, and facilitating national news and culture--that directly challenge some of Russell's claims about the innately localist mentality of the typical MP. More daringly, in a kind of cultural-historical rewriting of Notestein's discredited "winning of the initiative" thesis, Croft also suggests that MPs' shared experience of London helped to create a sense of corporate and national identity that supported Parliamentary assertiveness in the 1620s. Croft's essay offers two extended case studies based on diary evidence as provisional support for these claims. Using Lady Margaret Hoby's diary, Croft tracks the patterns of the Yorkshire Hobys' London socializing, demonstrating both their connections with members of the court elite and their immersion in London Puritan circles. Croft supplements the Hoby evidence with a close reading of the 1610 diary of the Hampshire MP Sir Richard Paulet, a diary that reveals him as an avid urban consumer who patronized the London booksellers, took in cultural performances in and out of court, attended trials in several different venues, and gadded to a wide array of sermons delivered in different locations and from a variety of ecclesiastical and theological vantage points. Though her sample is small, Croft's essay makes clear the need for more work not only on the metropolitan experience of the early Stuart MP, but on the place of the unique social, spatial, and cultural resources of the rapidly growing capital city as catalysts in the creation and transformation of English political and religious mentalities.

Andrew Thrush directs attention to another understudied area--the politics of the 1610s, a decade that he argues should be reconceived as "the Jacobean Personal Rule" (p. 85). His essay lays

out a narrative overview of the decade with several interconnected threads: the crown's chronic shortage of money, so central to Russell's explanation of early Stuart political conflict; royal foreign policy, in particular the search for a foreign bride for the heir to the throne, a bride who moreover might bring with her a dowry substantial enough to replenish the royal coffers; the consideration and application of various extra-parliamentary fiscal alternatives--projects, loans, benevolences, and retrenchment--designed to alleviate royal want; and the ongoing debate in court about the feasibility of recalling Parliament. Thrush argues that the disastrous failure of the 1614 Addled Parliament made James all the more reluctant to rely on the institution for money and raised real anxieties, in court and beyond, that Parliament's future was in grave peril. Although much remains to be said about the 1610s, Thrush deals only glancingly with ideological and constitutional anxieties, underexplores the significance of court scandal, and never intervenes in the contentious historiography on court faction--his central claims about the period offer a stimulating manifesto for a large-scale reassessment of the middle period of Jacobean rule.

Like Thrush, David Hebb dwells at length on the fiscal malfunctions of the early Stuart state. He focuses on a series of projects for the "exploitation of the sea" (p. 103), schemes that aimed to raise money both for the royal treasury and for the personal profit of influential courtiers, in particular for the royal favorite, George Villiers, Marquis and later Duke of Buckingham. Hebb directly challenges Roger Lockyer's overly sympathetic portrait of Villiers as a reformist Lord Admiral, stressing instead the effort by the favorite to maximise his personal profit from the office, raking in an astonishing 30,000-40,000 pounds per annum as Lord Admiral at the time of his death.[2] One source of the Duke's income, Hebb shows, came from his aggressive and legally dubious assertion of the Admiral's sole right to collect the salvage profits from wrecks. Other projects related to Eng-

lish maritime activity—for instance, the plan to ransom English captives from the Turks by exchanging them for prostitutes—never got off the ground. Some were only partially implemented. But the schemes all fit the pattern of courtiers trying to capitalize on England's expanding maritime economy. In essence, Hebb's essay wants to reposition these projects as part of the problem of corruption in the early Stuart state, insisting that, "the sleaziness of official life ... was an essential, cancerous feature of crown finance and politics under the early Stuarts" (p. 123). Hebb's case studies need to be placed in several larger contexts that he only briefly alludes to—the culture of projecting more broadly defined, the discourse of common good and private gain, the contemporary understanding of corruption—but they offer a telling illustration of the early Stuart state's parasitic engagement with the rise of English maritime commerce.

Cynthia Herrup's essay is characteristically subtle and challenging. Using many of Russell's most powerful ideas about the value of unity and consensus in contemporary political culture, and adopting his approach for tracking the divergent applications of shared languages and ideas, Herrup explores the place of the parliamentary general pardon in early Stuart England. Tracking late medieval and Tudor precedents, Herrup argues that by 1603 the issuing of a general pardon at the end of a Parliamentary session had become a routine, yet still potent expression of the harmonious collaboration of monarch and Parliament. Under the early Stuarts, however, general pardons eventually became a focus of contention and their routinized production was disrupted. One factor, again, was money. General pardons waived a wide array of penal statutes that yielded significant fines for the crown. For MPs and their constituents, pardons were a financial relief from burdensome laws; for the crown they were a money-losing proposition. The pardon was also a locus of constitutional ambiguity: was a general pardon like a statute, passed by Parliament and

assented to by the king? Or was it an unusual form of proclamation, essentially undebatable in the Commons? These inherent ambiguities, Herrup suggests, remained buried when events and personal inclinations permitted. Under pressure, these latent tensions could become manifest, as they did in 1628 when the Commons balked at a general pardon which they feared could protect the hated Buckingham. Herrup's analysis of the general pardon evokes a political culture riddled with usually latent constitutional ambiguities, whose presence was cloaked by symbols and invocations of unity, consensus, and organic harmony. The dynamic of political events and personalities, however, could force those ambiguities to the surface, giving disputes with no constitutional root cause a polarizing constitutional significance.

The next three essays are grouped in a section on religion. Julia Merritt offers a careful intervention into the ongoing debate about the supposedly unpopular nature of predestinarian Calvinist modes of religiosity and divinity, locating a bridge across the Calvinist-popular gulf in the career and writings of a well-documented godly individual. Robert Hill was a disciple of William Perkins and a committed Calvinist-puritan protagonist in the late Elizabethan Cambridge theology wars—the kind of divine who personified the most unpopular and forbidding aspects of post-Reformation religious culture. But, Merritt shows, Hill was also a "religious populariser" (p. 147), the successful author of a catechism and other pastoral works, and a moderate puritan reaching out to ordinary, urban parishioners. Hill, she concludes, "seems to demonstrate that a moderate puritan *could* compromise, and *could* be flexible to the pastoral needs of his community, without doing it in a manner which required any *doctrinal* modification" (p. 159). This finely wrought case study of a hitherto neglected urban churchman probably will not resolve the debate, but it adds yet another nuance to the early modern English religious spectrum.

Anthony Milton's brilliant essay also revolves around a case study, this time of a rather more infamous early Stuart churchman, the Laudian polemicist Peter Heylyn. Milton uses Heylyn to explore the dynamic and essentially unstable processes through which Laudian ideology was assembled. He intends his essay to supplement and modify Peter Lake's landmark reconstruction of an "'ideal type' of Laudianism" (p. 164) in his 1993 essay "The Laudian Style."^[3] Milton presents Laudian ideology not as a static system of thought but as a "process," a bricolage of polemical positions and glosses constructed on the fly and over time by individuals with differing motives and ambitions, responding both to short- and longer-term religio-political and polemical needs. Thus, Heylyn began his literary career as a satirist and political geographer inclined, if anything, to the godly end of the religio-political spectrum. He became a Laudian primarily because of his personal ambition to become the client of an ascendant William Laud. Heylyn attempted to win and to maintain favor by giving Laud what Heylyn thought he wanted: revelations of seditious puritan conspiracies, and vicious and reckless attacks on personal and intellectual enemies. Heylyn was thus an opportunistic polemicist, who helped radicalize the Laudian project through the hyperbolic style of his defense. This same process, Milton argues, can be found in other Laudian writings and in the careers of other Laudian polemicists. In effect, they retrospectively gave an extremist, innovative theological meaning and justification to policies that were originally motivated by Laud's theologically rather inchoate ceremonialist and anti-puritan prejudices. In Milton's hands, Laudianism becomes a far more slippery entity than Lake's static reconstruction implies, and his essay should join the work of Tyacke and Lake as one of the best interpretations we have of the establishment religion of the 1630s.

Jacqueline Eales's essay on provincial preaching during the Civil War takes the collection for the first time into the 1640s. Provincial sermons

have never received the kind of attention from historians that the London Fast Sermons have had, but Eales makes a good case for the benefits of persevering at the difficult work of tracking them down and analyzing their form and content. Using detailed local evidence from Great Yarmouth, York, Herefordshire, and Kent, Eales both sets out the constraints that shaped the giving of sermons in the war-torn localities and explores the sermon as an important vehicle of political ideas. Eales lucidly documents the engagement of parliamentary and royalist sermons with various forms of resistance and anti-resistance theory, and convincingly suggests the role of the pulpit in forming and sustaining popular allegiances and in inspiring military and iconoclastic activity.

The volume concludes with three heavyweight contributions by the editors, under the rubric "Popularity." Thomas Cogswell offers a major reassessment of Buckingham, focusing on questions and sources that Russell has persistently neglected. Building on his own earlier work into public opinion and news culture in the 1620s, Cogswell explores the favorite's quest to shape a heroic "public image" (p. 212). Having won the king and court, Buckingham spent the last four years of his life also playing the dangerous game of courting a popular following. Most of the time, he failed, but his attempts to walk in the shoes of the 2nd Earl of Essex teach us much about the dangerous political dynamics of the later 1620s. The Duke's public self-fashioning took a number of different forms: speeches in Parliament, and, after 1625, both print and scribal publications to bolster his image in the face of mounting criticism. For a while, the publicity worked--Cogswell finds several contemporaries echoing the language and opinion of the official newsbooks in their own accounts of the 1627 Rh= expedition--but it could not cope with the news of the disastrous defeat and ignominious retreat of the expeditionary force. Cogswell's essay usefully extends a number of post-revisionist critiques of Russell's

handling of the 1620s. Buckingham is a major figure in Russell's interpretation of political conflict, but, in Russell's telling, the Duke is mainly a court and parliamentary player. His reputation in the public sphere, whether as an object of libelous assault or as the heroic figure he struggled so hard to present, is passed over. Russell also misses the degree to which contemporary thirst for news was transforming the workings of English political culture more broadly, and Cogswell's case study provokes interesting historiographical questions about the relationship over the long term between the English state and the rise of public opinion. Buckingham's policy of aggressively managing opinion died with him.

Richard Cust critiques Russell's famous character assessment of "the Man Charles Stuart," a portrait both brilliantly astute and curiously unconcerned with reconstructing Charles's ideological make-up, the mental grids of assumptions, aspirations and anxieties through which he perceived the world.[4] As a partial corrective to Russell's portrait, Cust explores the king's "fears and prejudices" (p. 236). Cust has written tellingly of Charles's fear of "popularity" before, but here he steps back to offer a broader and theoretically more reflective overview.[5] Cust presents "anti-popularity" as a "discourse ... through which the king processed political experience and reached his decisions about policy" (p. 236). Cust notes the classical origins of the king's set of anxieties and tracks some Elizabethan and Jacobean examples of the discourse in political action. He then discusses how the discourse of anti-popularity shaped Charles's dealings with Parliament in the 1620s, his religious policy in the 1630s, his court culture, his policies towards urban corporations and charters, his reaction to the Covenanters, and his maneuvers against Pym in 1641. In Cust's formulation, acts that Russell sees as examples of Charles's political incompetence—such as the disastrous attempt to arrest the Five Members in January, 1642—can now be better understood as logical extensions of Charles's view that political cri-

sis within his monarchy had roots in a "popular" conspiracy fomented by demagogues whose elimination would offer a means to return to political harmony and order.

The collection ends with a characteristically challenging essay by Peter Lake. On one level, his contribution is a detailed critique of Judith Maltby's reading of Sir Thomas Aston's 1641 petitions in defense of the Church of England as an expression of "prayer book Protestantism." [6] But Lake's essay is also an important intervention in the debate on the dynamic intersections of local and national politics in the run-up to civil war, and a major contribution to the analysis of petitioning, a form of political activity that has begun to attract attention again after a period of neglect. [7] Lake is interested in the complex interplay of ideological differences, the rhetorical and linguistic forms in which they are couched, the forms of political communication in which they are conveyed, and the forces of personality and faction that shape their production, all operating within a tightly interconnected set of local and national religio-political contexts. Lake thus not only makes a powerful case that Aston's petitions deployed a rhetoric of moderation for partisan and polarizing ends, but sets out a model for re-reading the place of petitioning in the run-up to civil war. In Lake's view, a petition's political meaning cannot be deciphered solely from its text, but was also generated by the local and national contexts of its production and presentation. In the Aston case, the political implications of the petitions transcended the disputes about the church that lay at the heart of their content; the furor over the petitions of Aston and his Cheshire rival, Lake suggests, was also a battle over concepts of political representation and the nature of the county community.

This collection of essays compellingly illustrates the current sophistication and complexity of early Stuart political and religious historiography, and sets out several paths for future explo-

ration. It also reminds us of the intellectual debt early modernists owe to Conrad Russell's work. We should all be eager to find out what Russell himself will make of these tributes, challenges, and provocations written in his honor.

Notes

[1]. Richard Cust, *The Forced Loan and English Politics, 1626-1628* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth Century England," *Past and Present* 112 (1986); Richard Cust and Peter Lake, "Sir Richard Grosvenor and the Rhetoric of Magistracy," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 54 (1981); Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621-1624*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); "The Politics of Propaganda: Charles I and the People in the 1620s," *Journal of British Studies* 29:3 (1990); Peter Lake, "Constitutional Consensus and Puritan Opposition in the 1620s: Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match," *Historical Journal* 25:4 (1982); "Retrospective: Wentworth's Political World in Revisionist and Post-Revisionist Perspective," in *The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, 1621-1641*, ed. Julia F. Merritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); "Review Article," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 57:2 (1994).

[2]. Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592-1628* (London: Longman, 1981).

[3]. The essay is published in Kenneth Fincham, ed., *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993).

[4]. Chapter 8 of *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[5]. See, e.g., his reconstructions of the "new counsels" in *Forced Loan and English Politics*; see, too, "Charles I and a Draft Declaration for the 1628 Parliament," *Historical Research* 63 (1990).

[6]. Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter 4.

[7]. See, e.g., David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Petitions had been central to another revisionist classic, Anthony Fletcher's *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London: E. Arnold, 1981).

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