

following the optimistic and teleological moral philosophy of Dugald Stewart. Mill and the reviewers were agreed that the French Revolution was ultimately a positive and progressive, though flawed, development; its degeneration in its early years into terror came about through the failures of practical politicians. Stewart and his followers stressed the need for a strong and educated public opinion to preserve the achievements of progress in a modern commercial society. This had been lacking in France, and in Europe it could be preserved only through the maintenance of a balance of power that would strengthen smaller states. Such themes continued to inform the commentary of the reviewers on the Napoleonic wars. Mackintosh and others, including Mill, urged the maintenance of a balance of power according to the law of nature and a developing law of nations. Mackintosh, whose reputation is here favorably reassessed, led the whig opposition to the outcome of the Congress of Vienna and its failure to respect the sovereignty of smaller states. Plassart's rethinking of the aftermath of the Scottish Enlightenment is indebted to the work of Donald Winch and Biancamaria Fontana, but it goes beyond it, and it is a most stimulating part of this study.

Plassart's quite narrow focus on the intellectual history of the Scottish response to the French Revolution and the wars associated with it is in many ways a strength, but it does leave some issues unresolved. The question of the growth of the British Empire, though considered in Ferguson's reflections on the dangers of British imperialism, is not taken up again and might provide material for further associated discussion. Finally, a negative note: the book is particularly expensive. It is hoped that there may in the future be a paperback edition.

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HUNTER POWELL. *The Crisis of British Protestantism: Church Power in the Puritan Revolution, 1638–44*. Politics, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015. Pp. viii + 264. \$105 (cloth).  
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As the editor of the superb recent Oxford University Press five-volume edition of its minutes and papers, Chad Van Dixhoorn, notes, “The Westminster assembly [of divines] has been the elephant in every history” of the 1640s (*Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly*, 2012, 1:xiii). Much of this neglect was due to inherent problems of source material. Because the handwriting of Adoniram Byfield, the assembly's scribe, was so appalling, and because the debates were so vast—nearly 1,400 plenary sessions and more than 200 ad hoc committees—almost all historians relied on partial and unreliable transcripts or on more accessible pamphlet materials discussing the assembly's activities. But unwillingness to engage with the assembly's proceedings was also the result of a widespread assumption that it was, in the greater scheme of the Civil War era, a sideshow. A fractious meeting of windbag clerics endlessly discussing theological and ecclesiological minutiae compared poorly to major parliamentary debates, constitutional upheavals, and military operations. The greater willingness to integrate theology and politics shown by recent generations of scholars of seventeenth-century England has begun to tip the balance back towards taking clerical activity seriously. Nevertheless, Van Dixhoorn's edition has fundamentally opened up the field, and Hunter Powell's book is one of the fruits associated with the Cambridge-based project that created it.

*The Crisis of British Protestantism* represents an exceptionally detailed, fine filigree reading of the Westminster assembly's proceedings to two main ends. The first is to attack any lingering sense in the historiography of “a coarse polarity” (2) between Presbyterians and Independents.

Powell repeatedly emphasizes that “Each polity had a variety of permutations,” and that we should understand contemporary debates in terms of a “spectrum” of positions. Thus “Presbyterianism in England was clearly variegated” (83). Van Dixhoorn stresses “the fluid dynamics of theological groupings” in his splendidly pithy introduction to the *Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly* (1:21), and Powell develops this in a more extensive and detailed fashion, albeit on a very particular front: a close analysis of different understandings of church power, based ultimately on contested readings of the key scriptural proof texts, Matthew 16:19, and Matthew 18: 17, 18.

The second end of Powell’s work is to draw out what he sees as the neglected, or misunderstood, importance of the “Apologists,” the five authors of the *Apologeticall Narration* (1644), more usually known as the Dissenting Brethren. The intellectual trajectories of the members of this group are painstakingly excavated, and their role in debates minutely analyzed. Powell’s contention is that by utilizing the materials of the *Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly* systematically, and by taking great care to consider the “framework of intellectual discourse” (13) within which the debates were conducted, he can correct earlier misinterpretations of the substance and style of the assembly. He regularly attacks previous scholars for approaching the debates through published pamphlets, often written by men who were not members of the assembly, and who were therefore not constrained by its members’ commitment to secrecy. He is also hostile to what he regards as excessive deference to the views of the Scottish commissioner, Robert Baillie, whose readily accessible edited letters have long been a mainstay of scholarship. Overall, Powell wishes to argue that the Apologists were powerful, reasonable figures, propounding a vision for church settlement that was largely scuppered by clerical English Presbyterians—the real villains of his tale—and the shifting tactical concerns of the Scots commissioners.

How convincing and significant is all this? Powell’s mastery of the content of the debates is impressive. He is especially good at exposing the times when members of the assembly silently quoted or recycled their own works, or those of others, not least to bypass difficult questions in a debating context. Better yet, as this suggests, he works hard to take seriously the methods and approaches of scholastic humanism that were second nature to the clerics involved in the debates. On this basis, what might appear to us to be savage disagreement can be reframed as a vigorous pursuit of better understanding through ever-tighter focus on particular terms and concepts. No subsequent writers will be able to avoid engagement with Powell’s tenacious account of how this maps onto understandings of the crucial issue of church power, and to how those developed in the context of intense discussion between what John Morrill has described as “men under intolerable strain ... striving to keep unity in the face of innumerable pressures” (*Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly*, 1:ix).

There are, however, significant problems to set in the balance against these very real merits. Exceptional explanatory power is required to render both intelligible and interesting the demanding subject matter and immense detail of the discussion. Unfortunately Powell’s prose is unhelpfully opaque. He is also simply too close to his sources: all but die-hard specialists in the period will often struggle to distinguish the wood from the trees—“signposting” and clarification are not Powell’s strong suits. Like many authors of first books, Powell’s relationship to much of the existing historiography is unnecessarily antagonistic, with a number of authors taken to task in unhelpfully aggressive style in order to magnify the novelty of his own work. Less tangibly but more generally, Powell’s intense sympathy for the Apologists tends to lead to partial and critical assessments of other groups within the assembly and in the wider milieu, although partiality is often at the root of his critiques of other scholars. Nevertheless, Powell has written a book that those concerned with understanding the internal dynamics of the Puritan revolution will need to read, not least for his laudable concern to place the theological debates at Westminster into transatlantic and continental European contexts. Unfortunately, Manchester University Press has ended the practice of including a bibliography

in the series. A return of that practice would both benefit this book and support best scholarly practices.

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DANIEL SZECHI. *Britain's Lost Revolution? Jacobite Scotland and French Grand Strategy, 1701–8*. Politics, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015. Pp. xi + 220 \$105.00 (cloth).  
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In the spring of 1708, a small squadron of French vessels attempted to land a force with the Stuart Pretender, James III and VIII, on the Fife coast, but in spite of a less than sterling performance by the British Royal Navy, Admiral George Byng forced them to abort what might have become a (if not the) major Jacobite rising. The British ruling elite—and perhaps half of Scotland and nearly all of England and Wales—could breathe again. Yet, as Daniel Szechi contends, it was a close-run thing. In the immediate aftermath of the union of the two kingdoms circumstances were fairly propitious for launching an invasion of Scotland and raising Jacobite forces north of the border.

Szechi's stimulating *Britain's Lost Revolution?* is, in essence, an explanation of how various factors present in the winter of 1707–1708 made a descent on Scotland with the aim of launching a major rebellion viable and likely to cause significant disruption to the British state, if not worse. He goes beyond this, however, by exploring the relationship between internal Scottish politics and international Jacobite conspiracy, in an attempt to suggest what sort of post-restoration settlement might have emerged in Scotland. Szechi's purpose in doing so is to demonstrate that Scottish Jacobitism was not just an Episcopalian reaction to the Revolutionary settlement: its appeal could transcend narrow religious and dynastic allegiances. Certainly at least a sizable portion of the Scots Jacobite leadership had embraced a radically “commonwealth” outlook on the Revolutionary settlement and were determined to force the exiled Stuarts into accepting a string of measures that (in this reviewer's view) would have reduced James's power to something like that of a stadtholder in the Dutch Republic. Szechi's treatment—bringing together his own research with that of Scottish historians—is illuminating and makes abundantly clear that Jacobitism was not inherently backward looking.

It was also not inherently boneheaded, like James II had been. Queen Mary Beatrice, James III's mother, showed real political skill in bringing Louis XIV's council to the point where it was willing to back an invasion with money, men, and matériel. But, as ever, the Jacobite government in exile was a supplicant at Versailles, which, by 1707, was seeing its war machine starting to seize up to an extent that the Jacobites simply do not seem to have appreciated. By contrast, Szechi makes a very serious effort to appreciate the changing geopolitical and geostrategic circumstances of the War of the Spanish Succession, over which the Jacobites had little control. It would, of course, be foolish to write off the chances of a successful landing that could have brought civil war back to at least part of the three kingdoms (and Szechi could, I think, have made more of the chances of a rising getting off the ground in 1707). A landing would have set back the cause of the Grand Alliance and destabilized England for a while. But it would have been wise of Szechi to halt speculation at this point, or at least to give more space to various alternative scenarios. Szechi's work—like so many studies of Jacobitism—is suffused with a sense of what might have been, and it makes an implicit suggestion that a Scotland under James would have given the northern kingdom a body politic morally superior to that of its larger southern neighbor. This mild version of virtual history might