

M. J. Braddick and David L. Smith, eds. *The Experience of Revolution in Stuart Britain and Ireland: Essays for John Morrill*.

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Festschriften tend to represent mixed bags in terms of both topic and quality, and this tribute to John Morrill by some of his many doctoral students was always likely to be a loose collection. It is held together by respect for the man and by fascination with the British Civil Wars, and Morrill's own trajectory as a leading revisionist involved, successively, work on localism and neutralism, interest in the

religious context of England's troubles, and a preoccupation with the British problem. What we have here, therefore, is a collection by loyal and grateful students, as well as a personal tribute by Mark Kishlansky, and the topics range widely. Chronologically they span a period from the late 1630s to the closing years of the seventeenth century, while thematically they range from church to court and from Parliament to political theory, by way of polemics, life-writings, and political and religious radicals. Geographically, they extend to continental Europe and the New World, not least in Mary Geiter's intriguing essay on William Penn.

Nevertheless, while its contents are diverse, the volume is less fragmented than one might expect, and it contains not just some real gems but also at least some evidence of interesting historiographical developments. Standout pieces include Anthony Milton's analysis of the advice offered to Charles I during the Civil Wars by court divines and chaplains, which reveals fascinating tensions within the royalist cause, over concessions, conscience, and the implications of the coronation oath. They also include James Hart's discussion of the rhetoric of Parliament as a Great Council, which reveals the speed with which the notion of an advisory body was replaced by ideas about something that was accountable to the people, and which could lay claim to the executive powers of the state. Like other contributors, Hart develops a fairly novel approach to political thought in the civil wars, which means not just a deepened form of contextualism — as in Jonathan Scott's repositioning of James Harrington as a thinker in tune with Cromwell's mission for healing and settling — but also a sense that intellectual developments frequently took place in concrete political settings, rather than in the minds of political theorists. Hart looks to the rhetoric of MPs in the context of policy issues (such as the creation of a new Great Seal), just as Braddick examines ideological escalation in the context of military mobilization. Both authors present striking evidence about how the revolutionary potential of the parliamentary cause became evident very quickly, and both suggest that creativity was born out of the experience of political situations. Both reveal the links between political thought and political practice, and both insist that the latter influenced the former much more obviously than intellectual historians tend to admit. Something similar also emerges from Alan Orr's fine essay on John Lilburne. This acknowledges the messy and complex nature of the Leveller leader's thought, but at the same time provides persuasive evidence about his debt to common law thinking, and offers a challenge to arguments made by Quentin Skinner by insisting that Lilburne became a theorist of negative liberty, not least as a response to the personal experience of imprisonment. Finally, it is worth mentioning Dagmar Freist's fresh and conceptually rich essay on anti-popery and anti-Catholicism in relation to Henrietta Maria. This involves the exciting idea of studying the period by recognizing that people's experiences were "pre-structured," and then "shaped, reshaped, challenged and confirmed in communication with social interaction" and in relation to "everyday practice" (36).

What should be clear from this brief description is that the historiography of the Civil Wars continues to evolve and develop, and it is striking how little

attention is paid to either localism or the British problem, both of which now seem to be out of favor. There is a great deal more on another of Morrill's preoccupations, religion, but the ultimate message of the volume is that even his most devoted students are responding to the challenge of revisionism rather than following its arguments slavishly. They are thus in creative dialogue with their former teacher, which is exactly as it should be.

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