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aims of significantly advancing our understanding of the relationship between the people of the Scottish Highlands and the British Empire. Here, unfortunately, is where the work becomes unstuck.

The biggest problem Dziennik faces with *The Fatal Land* is that military recruiting in the eighteenth-century Highlands and Islands has already formed the basis of one excellent monograph: Andrew MacKillop's *More Fruitful than the Soil* (2000). Exploring the century between 1715 and 1815, MacKillop laid out in great detail how army recruiting affected the people of the Highland region in the crucial years before and after 1745. This included not just the introduction of additional financial opportunities to a population experiencing rapid economic and social change but also the effects of wide scale recruitment on public perceptions of the region, and their intendant—largely negative—consequences for the manner of northern Scotland's historical development.

How, then, does *The Fatal Land* move beyond the position already laid out by MacKillop? Dziennik argues that MacKillop failed to examine the actual experiences of Highland soldiers fighting abroad and thus ignored the enormous cultural impact of military service in both Scotland and America (14). There is certainly merit in this criticism, yet *The Fatal Land* fails to demonstrate that paying greater attention to such cultural factors significantly alters any of MacKillop's original findings. Indeed, while Dziennik's chapter on the soldier and Highland culture is a solid one, Wilson MacLeod has already argued similar things in a general survey of Gaelic poetry's relationship with the British military. The chapter on indigenous encounters similarly covers ground already broken elsewhere, while Dziennik's biggest-hitting ideas on the economic and social history of the Highland region are simply underscoring ideas originally raised by MacKillop. Lacking a long durée approach to the issue of recruiting, Dziennik is also unable to ask—as MacKillop did—whether and how the circumstances he identifies changed over time.

Key works on Highland history also go uncited, and this hampers *The Fatal Land*'s ability to offer fresh insight into its proposed area of impact. Reference to *The Making of the Crofting Community* is an unfortunate absence given Dziennik's thematic argument, while Malcolm Gray's *Highland Economy* is also notable by its omission. Dziennik also relies heavily on evidence drawn from the southern and eastern Highlands for many of his arguments about the region as a whole. In this respect reference to Iain Mowat's work on Easter Ross as a "double frontier" between Highland and Lowland Scotland would have allowed *The Fatal Land* to reflect more critically on how the existence and form of distinct subregions within the larger Highland unit affected an individual's experience of empire.

In all, therefore, *The Fatal Land* is a perfectly competent work on the Highland soldier's experience in North America, but one that largely fails to fulfil its own claim to significantly challenge the wider field.

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MICHAEL EVERETT. *The Rise of Thomas Cromwell: Power and Politics in the Reign of Henry VIII, 1485–1534*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. 362. $40.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.8

Michael Everett's detailed and enjoyable book, *The Rise of Thomas Cromwell*, traces Cromwell's journey from a relatively ordinary London lawyer and merchant in the 1510s and 1520s to royal secretary in 1534. Everett presents Cromwell as a highly organized and efficient administrator whose competence and capacity for hard work ensured that his responsibilities (and

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with them, his power and influence) quickly expanded after his entry into royal service. This initially came about as Henry VIII sought to confirm his legal title to the confiscated lands of Thomas Wolsey's educational foundations in Oxford and Ipswich, Cromwell being the obvious candidate to assist given that he had previously helped the cardinal acquire these same lands.

Subsequent management of these new crown lands continued to occupy much of Cromwell's time. His surety in handling this legal, administrative, and financial work also brought similar business related to the church, such as collecting revenues owed for vacant bishoprics and managing monastic elections, and government offices, like master of the king's jewels. It was this ever-growing workload, acquired through an aptitude for effectively carrying out routine tasks and frequently accomplished through cooperation with other ministers, which eventually enabled Cromwell to emerge as the king's dominant advisor. For Everett, this was the operative word, as Henry, while listening to his councillors' views, ultimately made the decisions and Cromwell, as his loyal, hardworking servant, faithfully carried them out in combination with his colleagues.

In identifying the causes of Cromwell's ascent, Everett's analysis reveals not only what he did but also, and just as importantly, what he did not do, undermining numerous historiographical arguments about the minister's significance in the process. Cromwell did not become leader of any court faction in the early 1530s which could precipitate his rise, his position in the council being more important; he did not exhibit a unique commitment to Parliament that accounted for its extensive use in the 1530s, but was merely part of the broader legal profession which already saw statute as the highest form of law, and part of a government that valued the legitimacy that a representative assembly could confer on its controversial policies; and he did not seek to gain control of royal finances through his offices in order to fund independent initiatives, instead simply utilizing flexible government machinery to receive money connected to his wide responsibilities directly and thereby implement policy quickly. Most importantly, he did not single-handedly accomplish the break with Rome (and he certainly did not come up with the ideas that underpinned it). Rather, he only became involved with Henry's Great Matter in 1532, helping to draft legislation, coordinate an accompanying propaganda campaign, and enforce the law. Far from being the key to his rise to power, Cromwell's role here is just another example of him acquiring further responsibilities because of his administrative skills and work ethic, and executing them in a joint effort with his peers, notably Thomas Audeley.

Everett's arguments are authoritative and generally convincing, resting as they do on thorough and meticulous archival research, with the frequent re-dating of calendared letters indicative of his extremely impressive grasp of the sources. Nevertheless, perhaps one area that may not fully convince everyone is the discussion of Cromwell's religion. Contrary to the frequent presentations of him as an evangelical reformer, Everett argues that evidence for this in the period before 1534 is lacking, while admittedly maintaining that it is possible, but by no means certain, that he subsequently acquired evangelical beliefs. Although Everett makes some fair points to support this conclusion, drawing attention to Cromwell's traditional-looking will, amended soon after September 1532 (133), and Stephen Vaughan's eagerness in December 1531 to assure his master that he was not a Lutheran (implying that Cromwell was not either) (136), other parts of the discussion are less satisfactory.

Accepting the argument that shared religious belief was not a prerequisite for friendship or acquaintance does not sufficiently explain the remarks made by Miles Coverdale and another anonymous writer, which apparently influenced Sir Geoffrey Elton's thinking, concerning Cromwell's "godly communication" (137). Similarly, countering arguments for Cromwell's reforming credentials based on his provision of patronage and protection to evangelicals by suggesting that this reflected the government's need to defend the Royal Supremacy rather than the minister's own religious preferences arguably ignores the fact that these were not mutually exclusive motivations. At a more fundamental level though, it does not address how far

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Cromwell's ecclesiastical patronage was actually focused on reformers, with Everett's discussion of this (127–130) saying little about the religious views of those who benefited. Just as Everett points to the need for a nuanced analysis of Cromwell's relationships with men like Hugh Latimer and Robert Barnes in the later 1530s to determine how far he shared their views, these objections suggest that something similar may still be beneficial for the early 1530s regarding the minister's interactions with the likes of Coverdale, William Marshall, and other recipients of his patronage.

Of course, these criticisms should not be seen as detracting from Everett's considerable achievement. After all, in doubting many historians' previous views of Cromwell's religious outlook in the early 1530s Everett demonstrates his willingness to question assumptions as well as the high burden of proof that this requires. Together these qualities make for an original and scholarly work that succeeds in providing a more multi-dimensional view of Cromwell, his rise to power, and the politics of the early 1530s more generally, and by extension also in raising serious questions about how the rest of the decade played out.

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Susan E. James. *Women's Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485–1603: Authority, Influence, and Material Culture*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 332. $129.95 (cloth).
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In *Women's Voices in Tudor Wills*, Susan E. James draws from 1,200 wills from repositories across England to breathe life into women's experiences throughout the late medieval and early modern period. In an effort to extend the scholarship of Amy Erickson and Barbara Harris, James advocates for the will as an untapped record. James reveals women, across status, class, and geographical boundaries, as active in expressing their concerns over their property and community, exercising their authority over their heirs, and contributing their wealth to the economy. To support her central argument, James relies on two pillars: one, that these concerns reached down the social hierarchy; and two, that women often used different rhetoric and relied on different resources than did men in their wills. While James succeeds in painting these women's lives vividly with details from their wills, she is less effective at supporting her argument with the same evidence.

In six chapters, James approaches late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century women's lives from a variety of angles: remembrance, identity, work, land, money, and material possessions. Remaining true to providing a collective voice to a subset of the population usually silenced by coverture laws and "male-dominated processes" (96), her chapter subtitles such as "In My Mother's Shop" (112) and "My Bed Fellow as My Sole and Onlye Executor" (171) are taken from the wills themselves. James's approach is to present examples drawn from wills across region, class, and time to show how women provided for those in their communities (chapter 1), to explain the ways that women ensured their memory would endure (chapter 2), to outline the range of occupations pursued by women and their vocational training (chapter 3), and to highlight the ways in which women's experience of bequeathing property was circumscribed by the cultural practice of marriage (chapter 4).

This methodology allows us to envision women like the two maidens who attended a wedding dressed in white with red petticoats (274) noted in a 1555 will; to hear Agnes Smythe's frustration in 1562 over her daughters' squabbles when she threatened to withhold her bequests to one daughter if she persisted in troubling the other (192); to feel Agnes Grosewell's charitable spirit behind her gift to "her" leper in 1488 (48); and to sense Isabel

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