



ARTICLE

# Reading his Way to Royalism? Sir Thomas Myddelton, Side-Changing and Loyalty in England and Wales, 1639–66

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## Abstract

Civil War allegiance has long been a preoccupation of early modern British historians. They have weighed geographical, religious, political, and pragmatic reasons for British people to choose sides in 1642. A study of the changes of allegiance in the years that followed is just as important. Side-changing reveals the fractures and difficulties that war, regime change, and an uneasy peace created. Most scholarship has examined figures whose ideas and beliefs remained consistent as the world around them changed. This article argues that others changed their minds (and their side) because their ideas fundamentally shifted, through an engagement with oppositional literature, a royalist social environment, and relationships built with royalist agents. Through a case study of the parliamentarian Major-General Sir Thomas Myddelton it examines this process of change. The article takes the study of allegiance into the Interregnum and beyond to the Restoration, tracing the impact of Myddelton's reading, experiences, and actions upon his declared loyalty. To do this, the article proposes a methodology that cuts across historical approaches, using evidence from financial accounts, libraries, and legal cases alongside surviving correspondence and printed pamphlets to build a composite image of a changing mind.

**Keywords:** side-changing; allegiance; loyalty; early modern; Civil War

Consistent and devoted loyalty was an asset following the British Civil Wars. Until 1660 a poor maimed soldier who could narrate a lengthy period in Parliament's service would be much more likely to receive a valuable pension. After the Restoration the flood of petitions and correspondence addressed to Charles II and his advisers demonstrated the hope that royalists of all stations

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would be rewarded in a similar way.<sup>1</sup> Loyalty was cited in requests for positions, restoration of lands or money, and promotion to higher office. The rhetoric of loyalty and allegiance was crucial and, for many families, became part of their identity in the decades to come. There are many examples of such consistent loyalty to either the King or to Parliament. Many more, however, employed loyalist rhetoric to conceal a significantly more complex history of allegiance. ‘Trimming’ or side-changing was not celebrated and was often the subject of individual or collective amnesia.<sup>2</sup> Yet side-changing was extremely widespread from the outbreak of the Civil War until the Restoration as, for example, individuals sought to accommodate the reality of changing political or personal circumstances or reacted to events such as the Regicide of 1649. Andrew Hopper has estimated that as many as 10 per cent of MPs changed allegiance at some point in the period 1642–6, and up to a third of those eligible to sit in the House of Lords.<sup>3</sup> Considering side-changing helps us to understand how many individuals viewed, understood and experienced concepts such as identity, allegiance and loyalty in the seventeenth century, but it also interacts with the influence of geography and ideas.

Sir Thomas Myddelton was one such side-changer. His career as a parliamentary major-general from June 1643 to June 1645 was followed by a slow process of reassessment and a gradual entanglement with oppositional politics and religion. This culminated in a bold public declaration for the king in Booth’s Rebellion in 1659. It is hard to see Myddelton in the same way as Lloyd Bowen depicts John Poyer, another Welsh parliamentary commander whose public allegiance shifted, or as John Sutton describes William, 5th Baron Paget, as men whose principles remained the same while the world around them changed.<sup>4</sup> It would be tempting to understand Myddelton as such, a political Presbyterian whose Puritan upbringing and natural moderation led him to move away from the Commonwealth following the Regicide.<sup>5</sup> This is an argument commonly made by historians of early modern Europe’s other conflicts

<sup>1</sup> For the most recent research on this subject see Brodie Waddell and Jason Peacey (eds.), *The Power of Petitioning in Early Modern Britain* (2024).

<sup>2</sup> G. E. Aylmer, ‘Collective Mentalities in Mid Seventeenth-Century England: IV. Cross Currents: Neutrals, Trimmers, and Others’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 39 (1989), 1–22, at 6–7; Andrew Hopper, ‘The Self-Fashioning of Gentry Turncoats During the English Civil Wars’, *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 236–57, at 241; Mark Stoyle, *Loyalty and Locality: Popular Allegiance in Devon during the English Civil War* (Exeter, 1994), 112.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Hopper, *Turncoats and Renegades: Changing Sides During the English Civil Wars* (Oxford, 2012), 41, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Lloyd Bowen, *John Poyer, the Civil Wars in Pembrokeshire and the British Revolutions* (Cardiff, 2020); John Sutton, ‘Loyalty and a “Good Conscience”: The Defection of William, Fifth Baron Paget, June 1642’, in *Staffordshire Histories: Essays in Honour of Michael Greenslade*, ed. Philip J. Morgan and A. D. M. Phillips (Keele, 1999), 127–56.

<sup>5</sup> G. R. Thomas, ‘Sir Thomas Myddelton II, 1586–1666’ (M.A. thesis, University of Wales, 1968), p. 44; Andrew Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 68; Elliot Vernon, ‘The Quarrel of the Covenant: The London Presbyterians and the Regicide’, in *The Regicides and the Execution of Charles I*, ed. Jason Peacey (Abingdon, 2001), 202–24; Elliot Vernon, *London Presbyterians and the British Revolutions, 1638–64* (Manchester, 2021).

as well, but it does not fit Myddelton's behaviour.<sup>6</sup> He was equally no calculating turncoat whose altered stance brought him safety, position or fortune: in the short term it was rather the opposite. Myddelton's allegiance was changed by a combination of ideas, actions and social environment.

Few scholars have considered Sir Thomas Myddelton at any length. Where they have, it has generally been in relation to his military role in the First Civil War. In that regard, historians traditionally portrayed Sir Thomas as a Presbyterian whose parliamentary allegiance was the result of Puritan beliefs.<sup>7</sup> More recently research has shied away from such a depiction of his religion, though Lloyd Bowen has argued that Myddelton was a political Presbyterian in the later 1640s.<sup>8</sup> Though by their nature individual, Myddelton's choices can be used to examine characterisations of allegiance more widely, and to explore the influence of issues such as identity, belonging and environment upon the behaviour of the men and women who sought to navigate through the unstable years of the Interregnum. We may conclude, as Ann Hughes did of the parliamentary Rowland Wilson, that the 'profound effects of war, revolution, and regicide' had a transformative effect on Sir Thomas Myddelton, his experiences during and after the First Civil War turning his mind away from the priorities embedded in him within the expansionist mercantile London society of his youth and his family towards the more conservative and rooted environment of North-East Wales.<sup>9</sup>

As historians' arguments about side-switching have changed, their characterisation of the sides has changed too. In 2007 Jason McElligott argued that historians should move away from 'convenient polarities' of royalist and parliamentary.<sup>10</sup> McElligott and David Smith commented on the patterns of allegiance, the frequency of side-changing, and the fact that allegiance may no longer be seen as fixed or unchanging.<sup>11</sup> The first monograph on the topic,

<sup>6</sup> Stuart Carroll, "'Nager entre deux eaux": The Princes and the Ambiguities of French Protestantism', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 44 (2013), 985–1020; Judith Pollmann, *Religious Choice in the Dutch Republic: The Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565–1641)* (Manchester, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> A. H. Dodd, *Studies in Stuart Wales* (Cardiff, 1952), 126; A. H. Dodd, 'Wales in the Parliaments of Charles I', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1946–7), 70; J. R. Phillips, *Memoirs of the Civil War in Wales and the Marches*, 1 (1874), 163; David Klausner, 'Family Entertainments among the Salusburys of Llewenni', *Welsh Music History*, 6 (2004), 129–142, at 130; Thomas, 'Sir Thomas Myddelton II', 44.

<sup>8</sup> 'Myddelton, Sir Thomas (1586–1666), of Chirk Castle, Denb.', in *The House of Commons 1640–1660*, ed. Stephen K. Roberts (Woodbridge, 2023), 265; J. Gwynn Williams, 'Myddelton, Sir Thomas (1586–1666), parliamentary army officer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Sept. 2004, Oxford University Press, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19686> (accessed 4 June 2024); Lloyd Bowen, 'The Politics of Reconquest: Parliament, the Army and North Wales, 1643–49', in Alex Beeton (ed.), *Parliament and Revolution, 1640–1660* (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> Ann Hughes, 'A "Lunatick Revolter from Loyalty": The Death of Rowland Wilson and the English Revolution', *History Workshop Journal*, 61 (2006), 192–204, at 201.

<sup>10</sup> Jason McElligott, *Royalism, Print and Censorship in Revolutionary England* (Woodbridge, 2007), 5, 98.

<sup>11</sup> Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, 'Introduction: Rethinking Royalists and Royalism', in *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars*, ed. Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (Cambridge, 2007), 11, 15.

Andrew Hopper's *Turncoats and Renegades*, argued that more work needs to be done to 'properly contextualise individuals' defections'.<sup>12</sup> The response to Hopper's call has been muted but his work has shifted the historical consensus, complicating arguments beyond loyalty versus defection and factional disputes. Scholars such as Bowen have contended that, as the political and religious environment shifted, it placed individual men and women in changing positions regarding the binary positions of royalist and parliamentarian. In 1645 a Presbyterian MP such as Sir Robert Harley, for example, would be favourably disposed to Parliament in a way that, following the Regicide, he would not necessarily be in 1649.

This article examines the political and religious journey of Sir Thomas Myddelton as a micro-historical case study through which to assess these arguments and to explore the complexities of allegiance in the years 1642 to 1660. It will argue that alongside the binaries of consistent loyalty or an altered adherence caused by an interaction between long-held positions and new circumstances, changing sides could also be a gradual process. Switching sides need not be a Damascene conversion. Sir Thomas emerged with a changed political attitude and religiosity after the fire and ashes of the Civil Wars. His position on these issues changed after the First Civil War, contrary to his own interests and (in the short term) those of his family. His gradually changing stance brought with it the risk of censure, loss of status and sequestration, all of which were realised when he joined with Sir George Booth in 1659.

Sir Thomas Myddelton made two significant decisions in his life. The first was to declare for Parliament in 1642. There are many potential reasons for this, but the influence of Puritan and pro-parliamentarian family and friends in London, a fear of Catholicism, the seizure of his estate and his own hesitation may all have contributed. The second was to support the Restoration of Charles II, a decision which fitted better with his more recent self-fashioned identity as a Welsh patriot and gentleman. This decision was achieved through immersion in local culture and society, tentative engagement with royalist agents, and, critically, through intensive reading of royalist and episcopalian works. This article explores these decisions and their consequences for Myddelton.

At first glance it seems the paucity of sources complicates such a study. Despite being at the forefront of Civil War military action in Wales, Myddelton remains an enigmatic figure.<sup>13</sup> As his only biographer has observed, his personality hardly shines out from his surviving papers.<sup>14</sup> A number of surviving elegies perhaps give the best indication of his character: according to them he was a contemplative, serious man, who loved his family, books and garden, and who was interested in medicine, sport and providing charity for anyone from poor kindred to local women.<sup>15</sup> He valued his books so much that he was to hunt for those

<sup>12</sup> Myddelton does not feature as turncoat or renegado. A. Hopper, *Turncoats and Renegades: Changing Sides During the English Civil Wars* (Oxford, 2012), 10.

<sup>13</sup> In Welsh 'y milwr gymerodd ran mor flaenllaw yn y Rhyfel Mawr'. J. W. Jones, 'Syr Thomas Myddelton', *Cymru*, 46 (1914), 191–9.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, 'Sir Thomas Myddelton II', 2.

<sup>15</sup> For example, NLW, Chirk F 7381.

looted in 1659 for the remaining seven years of his life. These impressions are borne out in his financial accounts, book purchases and will. Sir Thomas Myddelton was the second son of the North-East Welsh merchant Sir Thomas Myddelton, born in London in 1586 before his father's rise to prominence as a Puritan merchant, a member of the London elite, Lord Mayor and landowner. Myddelton's father, who had only bought the estate in 1595, made over Chirk Castle to him upon his first marriage in 1612, and he settled down to the life of a Welsh country gentleman – feasting, feuding, holding local office, making excellent marriages for his children and extending his landholdings. Until 1642, Myddelton's life and career was consistent with the expectations of his class. After the outbreak of the Civil War that pattern was broken: not in terms of his military experience but in the contradictions and complexities of his behaviour. Between 1642 and 1660 Myddelton had taken up arms against the king in a strongly royalist area; had become a major-general with a minimum of military experience; had then aided in royalist plots during the mid-1650s and outright rebellion in 1659. He took part in the ejection of Church of England clergymen in 1645–6 and then protested against ejections, financially supporting several ejected clergymen and their families. He employed and associated with radical Protestants such as Colonel John Jones and his steward Watkin Kyffin but petitioned against the implications of radical religious initiatives in 1652.<sup>16</sup>

Sir Thomas Myddelton's religious identity was equally complex. John Gwynfor Jones was typically prescient as to Myddelton's reading habits, noticing that Myddelton 'read the works of staunch Anglicans'. His analysis of Myddelton's religion was less successful. Jones argued that he 'to a degree, had adopted his father's Puritanical leanings' and that save 'for a period in the 1640s Middelton [sic] was an Anglican and had, in the 1630s, come under Laud's Arminian influence'.<sup>17</sup> This is rather muddled, and sets up an artificial dichotomy between Elizabethan Puritanism and pre-Civil War 'Anglicanism'. A. H. Dodd explained the problems with identifying Myddelton as a 'Presbyterian', describing him instead as standing for 'militant Protestantism' within a European context, while much earlier John Phillips proposed that Myddelton was probably 'inclined to Puritanism and opposed to the pretensions which were put forward by the high Episcopalians about this time'.<sup>18</sup>

Myddelton's *History of Parliament* biography comes closest to identifying his contradictions. It notes Myddelton's Puritan religious upbringing and his interest in religious reform during the Long Parliament, alongside his conformity to Laud's policies and the allegedly decorative environment of his private chapel at Chirk.<sup>19</sup> It describes Myddelton's interest in advancing reformation and

<sup>16</sup> NLW, MS 9064E no. 1987; NLW, MS 9064E, no. 1988.

<sup>17</sup> J. Gwynfor Jones, 'Some Puritan Influences on the Anglican Church in Wales in the Early Seventeenth Century', *Journal of Welsh Religious History*, 2 (2002), 19–50, at 41.

<sup>18</sup> A. H. Dodd, 'Civil War in East Denbighshire', *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society*, 3 (1954), 41–89, at 44.

<sup>19</sup> 'Myddelton, Sir Thomas (1586–1666), of Chirk Castle, Denb.', in *The House of Commons 1640–1660*, ed. Stephen K. Roberts (Woodbridge, 2023), 265.

fostering pious clergy, and his dismay at the ‘general defection of the ministry’ to the royalist cause.<sup>20</sup> Myddelton’s political adversary Edward Vaughan described how in the 1630s, in compliance with Laud’s reforms, Sir Thomas ‘did repaier an ould ruinous chappell in his owne Castle, erected an Altar: and rayled itt: sett upp an crucifix, and Organs’.<sup>21</sup> Although this evidence comes from a source hostile to Myddelton, it is borne out to some degree by the installation of the organ in 1632 and the liturgical content of the part-books containing choral music that survive and which were commissioned for Myddelton’s chapel.<sup>22</sup> A letter of December 1655 hints that his grandchild was baptised with godparents (an illegal act at that time), while his establishment of a choral foundation and commissioning of masques also argues against Puritan tendencies.<sup>23</sup>

The *History of Parliament* biography argues that Myddelton’s religiosity constituted ‘essentially Elizabethan Protestantism’ as evidenced in the extensive preamble to his will of 1666, and it argues that this indicates that his political allegiance stemmed from his hope of advancing the Protestant reformation as he saw it.<sup>24</sup> These explanations may hold true for Myddelton at the beginning of his Civil War career but certainly start to falter after the parliamentary victory in 1647. This article will argue that Myddelton’s religious allegiance itself altered over time, maintaining a strong sense of anti-popery but increasingly aligning with the more assertive form of Anglicanism that would become prevalent in North-East Wales after 1660. The preamble, rather than providing evidence of godly belief, will be combined with Myddelton’s reading matter and other evidence from his financial accounts to argue for a rather more conservative faith.

Myddelton gradually forged a new identity after 1647, that of a royalist and an active supporter of the Church of England. This began in the late 1640s, and evidence of his royalist sympathies gradually increased. Alongside acts of increasing political subversion, Myddelton’s reading became focused on episcopalian apologetic and pro-episcopal tracts. This proceeded alongside an acculturation with Welsh social and political culture, and a growing sense of self-conscious Welshness. These two aspects of identity could be strongly interlinked – to seventeenth-century Englishmen a Welshman’s royalism was indivisible from his passion for genealogy, his language, and his strange and

<sup>20</sup> Accusations against Myddelton in 1647 describe his chapel as containing a railed altar, crucifix, and an organ, and his family worship as encompassing kneeling and bowing. Although some of this can be supported in other sources, the bulk of the material is confined to statements provided by Edward Vaughan, with whom Sir Thomas was involved in a lengthy political, familial and legal feud. ‘Myddelton, Sir Thomas (1586–1666)’, *Bodleian*, Tanner 60, fo. 41; NLW, Wynnstay 90/16/35.

<sup>21</sup> NLW, Wynnstay 90/16/35.

<sup>22</sup> John Harper, ‘Music in Worship before 1650’, in *A History of Welsh Music*, ed. Trevor Herbert, Martin V. Clarke, and Helen Barlow (Cambridge, 2022), 53–77, at 69–70; William Reynolds, ‘Middleton’s Household Chapel: Church Music on the Welsh Border in the Seventeenth Century’, *Welsh Music History* 4 (2000), 114–15.

<sup>23</sup> NLW, Add MS 468E no 2089.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Myddelton, Sir Thomas’, 273.

different customs.<sup>25</sup> Myddelton's actions, therefore, are in this article placed alongside his book purchases to build a picture of Sir Thomas and his changing convictions during the crucial period from 1647 to 1666.

### Broadening the source base

This article also seeks to broaden the source base by which changes of allegiance are identified and analysed. One of the difficulties of discussing early modern decision-making in general, or an altered political allegiance specifically, is that actions are often the only way by which such a change can be detected, whether by joining a rebellion, travelling to Oxford or London or publishing printed materials declaring a new allegiance. Those who have left behind traces of their decision-making process have done so in commonplace books, letters and diaries, or in their own declarations after the fact.<sup>26</sup> This article will draw from a broader base of source material. Sir Thomas Myddelton may not have produced clear narrative declarations of his changing ideas, but the Chirk archive is a rich and varied one. It is possible out of that archive to construct a picture that, in its complexity and variety, reveals Myddelton's journey away from parliamentarianism. This archive includes the significant collection of detailed financial accounts alongside Myddelton's surviving letters in the collections of his extended family. Financial accounts do not, in general, reveal private thought, but they do show the journeys Myddelton made, the people with whom he socialised, his actions to protect and rebuild his family and home, as well as the material purchases he made. The books, objects and services he paid for reveal much about his political and religious identity, providing a subsumed biography of his later life.<sup>27</sup> The archive also comprises book purchases and library catalogues, wills, legal papers, manuscript narratives, material objects and printed papers.<sup>28</sup> Individually, each facet of this evidence would be of limited use but set carefully together with Myddelton's actions, documented in printed pamphlets, state papers and parliamentary sources, it combines to trace his changing allegiance.

Sir Thomas Myddelton's book purchases are an important part of that picture. He did not significantly annotate his books and there is no pattern of marginalia within his library. Yet the library evidence is still extremely

<sup>25</sup> Sarah Ward Clavier, *Royalism, Religion, and Revolution: Wales, 1642–1688* (Martlesham, 2021), chs. 2 and 3.

<sup>26</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, 2000), esp. chs. 3 and 4.

<sup>27</sup> Just as Suzanna Ivanic has shown how probate inventories and a material approach can be used to reveal the complexities of European religious identities. Sarah Ward Clavier, 'Accounting for Lives: Autobiography and Biography in the Accounts of Sir Thomas Myddelton, 1642–1666', *The Seventeenth Century*, 35 (2020), 453–72; Suzanna Ivanic, *Cosmos and Materiality in Early Modern Prague* (Oxford, 2021).

<sup>28</sup> In this the article responds to a recent call for historians to make more use of books and libraries as source material for assessing wider political, cultural and social trends in the history of Wales. Mary Chadwick, Sarah Ward Clavier and Shaun Evans, 'Introduction: Books and Manuscripts in Wales', *Welsh History Review*, 31 (2022), 1–16, at 14–16.

informative. Benedict and Léchet were correct to say that a private library reveals not a sharply defined picture of its owner's personal intellectual orientation but 'his larger intellectual inheritance and the range of texts he might have used to think with, or against'.<sup>29</sup> Even more pertinent is Mandelbrote's argument that the 'presence of intellectually important or unusual texts, or the latest books, or the relatively expensive or most difficult to obtain, may well shed light on an owner's priorities and choices' is especially pertinent in Myddelton's case. These priorities changed over time, reflecting the quandaries that Myddelton faced, and the decisions that he ultimately made.<sup>30</sup> Lisa Jardine, Anthony Grafton and William Sherman's work on the Elizabethan scholar Gabriel Harvey famously reveals a tendency to read and cogitate before taking action: that he 'studied for action'.<sup>31</sup> Barbara Donagan has shown how the godly Colonel Hutchinson applied himself to an extensive course of reading before concluding that it was right to go to war in 1642, while Kevin Sharpe has used William Drake's reading notebooks to show how 'a seemingly unpromising collection of extracts and commonplaces may document the shifting values and politics of a learned and moderate gentleman for whom the world had turned upside down'. Myddelton legitimated his actions in a similar way to Hutchinson. The timing of, and themes within, Myddelton's recorded purchases give a picture of the material he was using to 'think with', and in that sense provide an insight into his decision-making at a crucial point in his life. Combined with evidence of Myddelton's actions during the 1640s and 1650s, they will be used to reveal his gradual process of political realignment.<sup>32</sup> While one may quibble with the interpretation of individual data points, therefore, it is possible to build up a picture of Myddelton's likely reading when placed alongside his actions. It is the use of the body of evidence as a whole that constructs a persuasive analysis.

Our knowledge of Myddelton's library and reading habits is drawn from several sources. Myddelton required his steward and senior servants to keep detailed financial accounts. Many of these have survived.<sup>33</sup> Myddelton ordered

<sup>29</sup> Philip Benedict and Pierre-Olivier Léchet, 'The Library of Élie Bouhéreau', in *Marsh's Library: A Mirror on the World*, ed. Muriel McCarthy and Ann Simmons (Dublin, 2009), 165–84, at 183.

<sup>30</sup> Giles Mandelbrote, 'Personal Owners of Books', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, 11: 1640–1850*, ed. Giles Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley (Cambridge, 2006), 173–89, at 178.

<sup>31</sup> Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy", *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), 30–78; Anthony Grafton, Nicholas Popper, and William Sherman (eds.), *Gabriel Harvey and the History of Reading* (2024); Barbara Donagan, 'Casuistry and Allegiance in the English Civil War', in *Writing and Political Engagement in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Derek Hirst and Richard Strier (Cambridge, 1999), 89–111, at 90; Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, 170–1.

<sup>32</sup> Kevin Sharpe and Kirstie M. McClure, 'Introduction: Discovering the Renaissance Reader', in *Reading, Society, and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge, 2003), 1–37, at 18–23.

<sup>33</sup> They were published privately in the early twentieth century in two volumes by his descendant, W. M. Myddelton. It should be noted that the published accounts are actually composites of many different manuscripts in the Chirk collection, currently held at the National Library of Wales (NLW). There are many more subsequent volumes. W. M. Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, A.D. 1605–1666* (St Albans, 1908); W. M. Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, 1666–1753* (Manchester, 1931).



books from trusted booksellers, bought them himself when in London, bought whole book collections locally, and used employees, friends and kindred to acquire them or borrow them. In most instances the accounts give prices of these books and, in some entries, provenance information about the books and manuscripts that Myddelton acquired. Secondly, there is the library catalogue of 1704, compiled within the lifetime of Sir Thomas's grandson, Sir Richard Myddelton. It reveals that in 1704 Chirk Castle library comprised at least 1257 volumes, ranging from British and European history to religious controversy, and from gardening to witchcraft.<sup>34</sup> This makes the Myddelton library relatively small for a family of that status in the early eighteenth century, when average collections numbered around 3,400.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly there are problems with using library catalogues as evidence of allegiance or opinion. For one, the presence of a book published in the 1640s is not necessarily an indicator that it was purchased in the year of publication or by a particular individual. Furthermore, the contents of the catalogue may not reflect the whole collection – it might exclude more ephemeral works, books may have been lent out, or be situated outside the library itself.<sup>36</sup> By 1704 the library at Chirk Castle was not the same as when Sir Thomas Myddelton II died in 1666. His son (Sir Thomas the first baronet) pre-deceased him in 1663, but had contributed some books to the library.<sup>37</sup> His grandson Thomas ordered some books from London via his brother Richard, while Richard himself was an avid reader and purchaser of books and pamphlets, particularly on the politico-religious controversies of the day.<sup>38</sup> A comparison of the accounts, the 1704 catalogue and the modern catalogue of Chirk Castle library makes it clear that many of Sir Thomas II's books were not in the library by 1704, or had been replaced by new editions of the same works.

Despite this, through later accounts and bills it is possible to demonstrate that, although later Myddeltons bought some older books when reading about a particular topic, most of their purchasing was of contemporary material. Of the 289 books in the 1704 catalogue that had a publication date between 1631 and 1666, only seven can be *proven* to be bought by individuals other than Myddelton. Almost all of Myddelton's purchases were contemporary, showing an interest in the latest news and religious polemic. Only two of the identifiable books purchased by him had a date of publication more than ten years before their purchase. This indicates a strong probability that most of the books or pamphlets published in the period of his life, particularly those on contemporary topics, were bought by or for Sir Thomas. Book-plate evidence from the modern catalogue can confirm this further, meaning that the 1704

<sup>34</sup> NLW, Chirk A 29.

<sup>35</sup> David Pearson, 'The English Private Library in the Seventeenth Century', *The Library*, 7th ser., 13 (2012), 379–99, at 381.

<sup>36</sup> David Pearson, 'Patterns of Book Ownership in Late Seventeenth-Century England', *The Library*, 11 (2010), 139–67, at 143; Mandelbrote, 'Personal Owners of Books', 178.

<sup>37</sup> These included sermons by Donne and Taylor, works by Hammond and Bramhall, playbooks and political pamphlets. NLW, Chirk F 10597; Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, A.D. 1605–1666*, 151–60.

<sup>38</sup> NLW, Chirk A 29.

catalogue can be used to draw conclusions concerning Sir Thomas's purchases beyond the Chirk Castle accounts.<sup>39</sup>

Another difficulty is that purchase of a book does not necessarily mean that the reader agreed with the standpoint of the author. In the religious and political crises of the seventeenth century people attempted to gain different vantage points on events, and purchased widely, including material by those with whom they did not agree.<sup>40</sup> They also armed themselves with the arguments of those with whom they disagreed so that they could persuade their interlocutors. This fitted within a tradition of using 'pro' and 'contra' arguments. Again, although it is impossible to avoid this problem completely, we can draw some useful conclusions when combining this evidence with that from other, more direct sources. Thirdly, there is Myddelton's correspondence and that of his steward and family. Although this is not plentiful, it does cast a light on the books that Myddelton particularly valued.

### Myddelton's allegiance, religion and reading, 1640–6

Perhaps the greater mystery than Myddelton declaring for the king in 1659 was that he ever fought for Parliament at all. Myddelton, like many other gentlemen, peers and MPs, struggled with the way that events progressed in the Long Parliament. Andrew Hopper argued that it was difficult even to define a side-changing MP because 'so many sought to postpone or avoid taking sides'.<sup>41</sup> In January 1641 Myddelton wrote to his nephew of 'a greate faction against the Bishops for to roote them out', warning that he 'shall heere shortly of some straunge affects'. In the same letter he wrote of the trial of Strafford, saying that 'I feare he will fayle to free himselfe'.<sup>42</sup> The trial of Strafford particularly interested him – he collected St John's arguments concerning Strafford's attainder, Strafford's answers to the questions put to him at trial, Pym's declaration of the high treason and Strafford's speech on the scaffold. Myddelton eagerly awaited news of the trial's commencement and relayed its progress to his nephew.<sup>43</sup> These words and actions seem anomalous for a future parliamentary commander. He left London in July 1641 after being active on several parliamentary committees, an action which has been ascribed by J. Gwynn Williams and Gwyn Thomas to unease at the radical direction in which the Parliament was headed.<sup>44</sup> While it is more plausible that his decision was at least partly caused by his wife's severe illness and his daughter

<sup>39</sup> National Trust, National Trust Collections Database, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk> (accessed 4 June 2024).

<sup>40</sup> Elisabeth Leedham-Green and David McKitterick, 'Ownership: Private and Public Libraries', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume IV: 1557–1695*, ed. John Barnard, D.F. McKenzie and Maureen Bell (Cambridge, 2002), 323–38, at 324; David Pearson, 'The English Private Library in the Seventeenth Century', *The Library*, 13 (2002), 379–99, at 384.

<sup>41</sup> Hopper, *Turncoats*, 42.

<sup>42</sup> NLW, Llewenni 175.

<sup>43</sup> NLW, Chirk A 29; Llewenni 179.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas, 'Sir Thomas Myddelton II', 31; Gwynn Williams, 'Myddelton, Sir Thomas'.

Elizabeth's wedding in December 1641, it is significant that he did not return for a whole six months.<sup>45</sup>

Myddelton's return at the time of the Irish Rebellion might be explained by anti-popery or fear of the Irish Rebellion having an impact on Wales.<sup>46</sup> He sat on the parliamentary committee set up to investigate Catholicism in Wales, which even before the Irish Rebellion was concerned with the question of whether there was a 'welsh armie of papists' ready to take over the principality.<sup>47</sup> He owned several pamphlets on the events of the Irish rebellion, including some published a few years after its outbreak, indicating an ongoing interest in Irish events and the interpretation of them.<sup>48</sup> The North-East Welsh gentry had, in general, a remarkably relaxed attitude to the Catholic threat discussed in Parliament, but Myddelton had not spent his formative years in that environment, growing up in London in a Puritan mercantile household.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore many of his English friends and relatives were pre-occupied with the potential consequences of the rebellion in Ireland. If there were initial qualms, the Irish Rebellion may well have settled them. At the same time, a kinsman of Myddelton's wrote to him asking that he raise the matter of Church government in Parliament: specifically the way that the Church under Laud was 'intermedlinge with lay commissiones & Matters', a course which he saw as a 'vice unreformed'.<sup>50</sup> That Myddelton agreed with this assessment may be inferred from his later attempts to keep control of his own presentation rights and tithes.

It is possible that Myddelton's hesitation ultimately meant that others decided his allegiance. Given that Myddelton kept his parliamentary seat until Pride's Purge of 1648, it seems unlikely that he signed the pro-episcopal and proto-royalist North Welsh petitions to the Parliament in 1641 or the king at York in 1642.<sup>51</sup> He made no other positive signs of royalist leanings. By June 1642 Richard Lloyd of Esclusham was able to write that Myddelton was 'the single exception' to an otherwise uniform royalist allegiance among the gentry of North-East Wales.<sup>52</sup> That said, Myddelton may not even have been decided by June 1642. If his regional adversary Edward Vaughan's accusations of the later

<sup>45</sup> Myddelton did receive permission to go home to Chirk on 24 July 1641, but was back in London eight months later – he was one of a small number of MPs to work with the Lords on matters such as the petition of the Merchant Strangers in March 1642. *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 2, 1640–1643* (1802), 222, 499; Thomas, 'Sir Thomas Myddelton II', 31; NLW, MS 5390D, 49–55.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas, 'Sir Thomas Myddelton II', 32; Dodd, 'Civil War in East Denbighshire', 47.

<sup>47</sup> Wallace Notestein (ed.), *The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (New Haven, 1923), 325.

<sup>48</sup> For example, Sir John Temple's *History of the Irish Rebellion* (1646) and *A History of the Late Insurrection in Ireland* (Bristol, 1644). NLW, Chirk A 29.

<sup>49</sup> Ward Clavier, *Royalism, Religion, and Revolution*, 115–26.

<sup>50</sup> NLW, Chirk E 5604.

<sup>51</sup> Sir Simonds D'Ewes provides a number of examples of those who were punished by the Commons for being involved in pro-episcopacy or 'scandalous' petitions, for example Sir Edward Dering and the Kentish petition. Anne Steele Young and Vernon F. Snow (eds.), *Private Journals of the Long Parliament, vol. 2: 7 March to 1 June 1642* (1987), 249; British Library (BL), Harley 1980, fo. 76v; Anon., *The Humble Petition of Many Hundred Thousands, inhabiting within the Thirteene Shires of Wales* (1642).

<sup>52</sup> Dodd, 'Civil War in East Denbighshire', 48.

1640s and early 1650s are given credit, Myddelton either rejected calls by pro-parliamentarian individuals in September 1642 to establish Chirk Castle as a safe base for parliamentarians in a hostile area, or actively gave up the castle to the king and promised to serve him after Edgehill.<sup>53</sup> By December 1642, however, Myddelton's parliamentary allegiance was well known enough to prompt action by his royalist neighbours. An oath was proffered to Myddelton's tenants, in English and Welsh, that bound them to oppose him and the parliamentary armies as 'Rebells now in Armes against his Majestie and his Loyall subiects and the peace and Lawes of this kingdome'. Those swearing to this oath promised not to communicate any information to Myddelton or to aid him in any way, as well as fighting for the king. The oath was specifically designed, it seems, to prevent the traditional loyalty of a tenant to his landlord.<sup>54</sup>

Myddelton's official response to the oath, printed in London in 1644, was predictably one of outrage. His arguments against the oath are, perhaps, instructive. The priority given throughout the tract to anti-papist arguments confirms that this was a primary preoccupation in Sir Thomas Myddelton's thinking. Sir Thomas decried the encouragement given to English and Irish papists because of the oath. A second element points towards the personal hurt and offence felt by its protagonist, as the printed tract denied treachery, arguing that Sir Thomas's forces were 'neither Traitorously nor Rebelliously Raised, but have His Majesties Royall Authority for their warrant'. He described the oath itself as 'unjust, deceitfull and impossible to be performed'.<sup>55</sup> On 15 January 1643, shortly after the oath was tendered and Myddelton had responded, Chirk Castle was seized by royalist forces and all plate and wealth sold to fund a new royalist regiment.<sup>56</sup>

By early 1643 Myddelton was committed to raising a parliamentary army. He was appointed Major-General of the five North Welsh counties on 26 May 1643 and on 7 June 1643 he took the new Protestation and the Oath of Covenant.<sup>57</sup> In February 1643 he and his fellow parliamentary commanders Sir George Booth and Sir William Brereton were indicted of high treason by a Cheshire Grand Jury 'after the Battell at Edg-Hill'. The indictment described those accused as being 'seduced and moved by the instigation of the Divell, utterly withdrawing the love, true, and due obedience' to the king, and 'with all their power striving the common peace and tranquillity of this Kingdom of England to disturbe' by raising a force at Nantwich on

<sup>53</sup> No evidence survives for either of these accusations, though the former fits better with Myddelton's movements and with the easy seizure of the castle than the latter. NLW, Wynnstay 90/16/35.

<sup>54</sup> BL, Add MS 46399A fo. 78; Warwickshire Record Office, CR2017/TP646.

<sup>55</sup> *A declaration published by Sir Thomas Middleton, Knight, Serjeant-Major-Generall, and Vice-Admirall for the sixe counties of North-Wales: setting forth the illegallity and incongruity of a pernicious oath and protestation, imposed upon many peaceable subjects within the said counties.* (1644), 4–5.

<sup>56</sup> Norman Tucker, *Denbighshire Officers in the Civil War* (Wrexham, 1964), 71; Phillips, *Memoirs of the Civil War in Wales*, 164–5; Dodd, 'Civil War in East Denbighshire', 50; Robert Williams (ed.), 'An Account of the Civil War in North Wales', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1 (1846), 33–42, at 34.

<sup>57</sup> Myddelton took the original Protestation on 3 May 1641. *Journal of the House of Commons*, II, 132–3; *Journal of the House of Commons*, III, 105, 119.

20 January 1643.<sup>58</sup> This and the loyalty oath angered and humiliated Myddelton, who was as sensitive as other provincial officers about his reputation in London and further afield. Being described both as a traitor and being indicted in such a way was highly dishonourable.<sup>59</sup> A warrant was issued by the king for his arrest on 16 June, so for all his hesitation Myddelton risked his reputation, liberty, wealth and life in the parliamentary cause.<sup>60</sup> It seems that the royalist gentry's reaction to Myddelton's hesitation, his fears about support for Catholicism within the royalist party and the seizure of his estate had pushed him into a commitment to Parliament, regardless of how limited his enthusiasm might have been for some of the policies and aims of the Long Parliament.

Once appointed as commander of the parliamentary forces in North Wales Myddelton prosecuted the war as fully as he was able, leading to criticisms by local clergymen, gentry and chroniclers of his and Brereton's troops' behaviour in Wrexham and Hawarden in 1643 and 1645.<sup>61</sup> Welsh preachers, including the radical Morgan Llwyd, travelled with his forces, 'able to preach in the welch tongue'.<sup>62</sup> To all appearances, therefore, the Myddelton of 1643–5 was a committed parliamentarian and, at the very least, a promoter of radical Protestant religion. His closest associates at that time were Myddelton's steward Watkin Kyffin, and his brother-in-law Colonel Thomas Mytton. Myddelton's war efforts were closely associated with those of the Cheshire-based parliamentarian officer Sir William Brereton, another fact that has led to a more radical reputation than he deserves.<sup>63</sup> Brereton was zealously godly before the First Civil War, sitting on a number of committees on religion in the Long Parliament and calling for the abolition of episcopacy in a 1641 petition. Their association happened largely because Myddelton was often forced to campaign (not to mention recruit and raise finance) outside Wales due to the strength of Welsh royalism until the latter stages of the war.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> The warrant was signed by Richard Grosvenor and John Werden, one of whom would marry into the Myddelton family and the other who would fight with Sir Thomas in 1659. Anon., *A Horrible and Bloody Plot to Murder Sir Thomas Fairfax, Sir William Brereton, Sir Thomas Middleton, Colonel Moore ...* (1646), 12.

<sup>59</sup> Hopper, *Turncoats*, 159–60.

<sup>60</sup> NLW, MS Llanfair-Brynodol 53.

<sup>61</sup> Even contemporary accounts comment on Myddelton's lack of support within the borders of Wales. Chirk A 12; *Journal of the House of Commons*, III: 1643–1644 (1802), 320; BL, Harley MS 2125 fos. 67, 135v; Thomas Carte (ed.), *A Collection of Original Letters and Papers ...* (2 vols.; 1739), I, 29–34; D. R. Thomas (ed.), *Y Cwta Cyfarwydd* (1883), 216; BL, Add MS 33373; Dore, *Letterbooks of Sir William Brereton*, I (1984), 239.

<sup>62</sup> This has been seen as another sign of Myddelton's Puritanism, though it appears it was at least partly the scheme of interested Welsh Puritan MPs who wanted to 'facilitate the difficult worke you haue in hand of reducing that countrey to due obedience'. *Journal of the House of Commons*, III, 565–6; NLW, MS 11439D, fo. 23.

<sup>63</sup> Brereton and Myddelton are frequently mentioned in the same printed letters to parliament, in correspondence, as well as in the *Journal of the House of Commons*. Their collaboration is further evident from Brereton's letterbooks. R. N. Dore (ed.), *The Letterbooks of Sir William Brereton*, I; R. N. Dore, 'Sir Thomas Myddelton's Attempted Conquest of Powys, 1644–5', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 57 (1963 for 1961–2), 91–118.

<sup>64</sup> The National Archives (TNA), SP 28/346; NLW, Chirk F 12543.

Despite the accusations of royalist neighbours and Myddelton's association with Brereton, however, Geoffrey Smith has described Sir Thomas Myddelton as a 'lukewarm parliamentarian' who sent information to the royalist spy John Barwick even while he was an active military commander.<sup>65</sup> Between the years 1641 and 1645 Barwick identified Myddelton as a spy or informer: one of those who 'set themselves up for reformers, but had not yet wholly imbib'd all their madness'.<sup>66</sup> Barwick's account is not straightforwardly reliable, and there is no other supporting evidence to substantiate the claim that Myddelton was, from 1642, at least hedging his bets. Myddelton's connections with Barwick and the future Charles II were undeniable from the early 1650s onwards, but limited evidence survives of them before that point aside from Myddelton's connections with the royalist Eversfields of Denn. Smith's argument has much to support it in the very early 1640s. Myddelton does not appear to have been a political or religious zealot and was comparatively late to commit to Parliament's side.<sup>67</sup> Barwick's statement concerning Myddelton's moderation is very plausible. Yet Myddelton did fight determinedly in both England and Wales against friends, kin and neighbours. He may have been reluctant, but this did not result in any quarter being given to the royalist 'enemy', nor criticisms of Parliament other than those relating to funding and recruitment.

Myddelton's reading in the early 1640s supports the picture of him as a moderate. As with any gentleman news enthusiast, he sought out contemporaneous information, and received news by personal letters from a range of sources.<sup>68</sup> At the Restoration Myddelton paid for his collection of the Interregnum acts and proclamations of Parliament to be bound but he also evidently collected the king's declarations from 1640 to 1643.<sup>69</sup> The existence among his papers of two manuscript narratives concerning the conduct of the Civil War itself, one depicting Myddelton's own part in the war in a fairly unflattering way, supports a view of Myddelton processing and considering the conflict in which he had been involved. The second narrative, anonymous but from its content possibly written by Myddelton himself, offers a defence of the author's lack of success in Wales, and begs pardon for his 'weakness'. Arguing that 'all slaves to the gentrie and the gentrie all slaves to the king; and scar[ce] knowe any other God', as well as that 'as for there Religion; they cry God and [the] king; and will nott heere of any other way of salvation', it is a document that decies an emotional choice of allegiance while expressing doubt at the conduct of the war.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Geoffrey Smith, *Royalist Agents, Conspirators and Spies: Their Role in the British Civil Wars, 1640–1660* (Farnham, 2011), p. 43; Jason McElligott, 'Barwick, John (1612–1664), Dean of St Paul's', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Jan. 2004, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1613> (accessed 4 June 2024).

<sup>66</sup> Peter Barwick, *The Life of the Reverend Dr. John Barwick, D.D. ...* (1724), 48–9.

<sup>67</sup> NLW, Wynnstay 90/16/35; Wynnstay 90/16/49; Wynnstay 90/16/54; Wynnstay 90/16/98.

<sup>68</sup> Including Sir Robert Napier and John Edwards. His steward Watkin Kyffin also received printed news and letters of news from friends, which alongside almanacks and 'small books' appear to have circulated at Chirk. NLW, Chirk F 12740; Chirk E 4184.

<sup>69</sup> The Chirk account books are unpaginated. References to particular entries and purchases will be identified by date. NLW, MS 6372E: 21 Apr. 1661; Chirk A 29.

<sup>70</sup> NLW Chirk A 16; NLW, Chirk F 13636.

He bought copies of important speeches or pamphlets relating to events of national importance. He was also concerned with the issue of episcopacy and the prayer book, buying several pamphlets from either side of the religious divide.<sup>71</sup> Myddelton was concerned about the question of the army's role in politics at the end of the First Civil War, and owned tracts by the regicide John Cook and the Presbyterian MP John Corbett.<sup>72</sup> His ownership of two of the Welsh royalist Judge David Jenkins's publications regarding the legality of Parliament trying royalists for treason indicates that he was perhaps wrestling with the legalistic arguments facing the nation towards the end of the Civil War (including the legitimacy of Parliament's very authority). Myddelton owned rebuttals to Jenkins as well, his purchases falling on either side of the argument.<sup>73</sup> In all these issues Myddelton owned material by authors on either side of each debate. These practices are in line with many gentlemen of his period and aided in understanding the positions of both opposing sides (whether to come to a decision or to sharpen one's rhetorical edge in preparation for debate). This was shortly to change as Myddelton's political and religious position shifted.

### Changing allegiance? 1647–59

Sir Thomas Myddelton was eager to resign his command following Parliament's Self-Denying Ordinance of 1645, despite attempts by his officers to gain an exemption for him. Forced to choose between sitting as an MP and retaining his command, he chose the former.<sup>74</sup> To some extent this would be unsurprising even for a more ideologically committed parliamentarian – his campaigns had been marred with financial problems, recruitment difficulties and a failure to persuade his Cheshire-based allies to undertake the scale of campaign Myddelton wished for in Wales. After spending July 1645 to June 1646 in London, he returned home to Chirk Castle a couple of months after it was surrendered to his eldest daughter.<sup>75</sup> From that point forward Myddelton situated himself either in Chirk, engaging in repairs to the Castle and socialising with neighbours, or at Parliament in London. From 1648 he was barely present in Westminster.

The earliest accusations of crypto-royalism date from 1647. Edward Vaughan, newly elected MP for Montgomeryshire, accused Myddelton of long-standing equivocation and split loyalties, corruption and financial greed.<sup>76</sup> Although Vaughan's accusations were part of a wider regional factional and

<sup>71</sup> These included tracts by Lord Falkland, Edward Symmons and Joseph Caryl. Lord Falkland, *Draught of a Speech: Concerning Episcopacy* (1644); E. Symmons, *Scripture Vindicated from the misinterpretations of Stephen Marshal's Sermon* (Oxford, 1644); Joseph Caryl, *Sermon on James 4:8* (1646); NLW, Chirk A 29.

<sup>72</sup> NLW, Chirk A 29.

<sup>73</sup> William Epstein, 'Judge David Jenkins and the Great Civil War', *The Journal of Legal History*, 3 (1982), 187–221, at 193; NLW, Chirk A 29.

<sup>74</sup> 'Myddelton, Sir Thomas', 271; Dore, *Letterbooks of Sir William Brereton*, 1, 335–6.

<sup>75</sup> 'Myddelton, Sir Thomas', 271.

<sup>76</sup> NLW, Wynnstay 90/16/35.

kin-based feud, some of his points are substantiated elsewhere. Myddelton's tendencies to amass lands and money had been commented on by others, and his indecisiveness is well-documented. The evidence compiled by Edward Vaughan against Myddelton also included allegations of poor leadership (at best) and cowardice (at worst), standing at a distance from the fight at Montgomery Castle in 1646, failing to go to the aid of his inferior officers, and ultimately that he 'ranne away and would neuer turne head and faight'.<sup>77</sup> Vaughan's witnesses seem either to be Vaughan kin or associates, and the allegations were not recorded outside these papers, but if credited they could contribute to a picture of a man reluctant to risk his life for a cause to which he was only moderately devoted. Parliamentarian fears about Myddelton's loyalty may not have been roused by Vaughan's accusations – no definite outcome was recorded to the enquiry, and it seems neither man's career was damaged by the dispute – but from 1648 onwards Myddelton was suspected of fraternising with royalist agents and delinquents.<sup>78</sup> While Myddelton's earlier allegiance may have been determined by exigency and circumstance, his move towards a committed form of royalism was gradual, arrived at through an initial flirtation with royalist agents and a slow acculturation both to royalist society and royalist and to episcopalian ideological principles.

The year 1647 was the point at which the level of non-engagement by the traditional gentry rulers of North-East Wales became apparent, and when the religious radicalism of the new North Welsh government was established. Sir Thomas returned to spend the majority of his time at Chirk, and his accounts show an increasing level of engagement with local (royalist) gentry society, either by socialising or by lending money.<sup>79</sup> In relation to North Welsh government, Myddelton and his neighbour Sir John Trevor's stewards found few of sufficient status and willingness to become JPs, and were forced to resort to either recent arrivals or those of a lower social status.<sup>80</sup> When Myddelton returned to Wales from London it would have been apparent that the best of North-East Welsh gentry society refused to acknowledge the legitimacy or authority of the government with which he was involved. These included local families with whom the Myddeltons had socialised before the First Civil War, including the Broughtons and Eytons, both of which were fervent royalists.<sup>81</sup> The only other family that participated consistently in parliamentary politics were the Trevors of Trevalyn, with whom the Myddeltons had been feuding since before the Civil Wars.<sup>82</sup> Myddelton's disillusionment with Parliament and its forces may have been increased by the loss of his goods, taken perhaps mistakenly from Chirk by parliamentary troops in 1647 to Holt Castle when Chirk was surrendered by the royalist forces, and pursued for some time after.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*; Wynnstey 90/16/49; Wynnstey 90/16/54; Wynnstey 90/16/98.

<sup>78</sup> 'Myddelton, Sir Thomas', 272.

<sup>79</sup> Including Sir Evan Lloyd, Sir Richard Grosvenor, Sir John Owen, Sir Roger Mostyn, and John Parry of Cwm, all royalists throughout the Interregnum. NLW, Chirk F 12550.

<sup>80</sup> NLW, Chirk F 6087; Flintshire Record Office, D/G/3275 no. 95.

<sup>81</sup> NLW, MS 5390D, 50–5.

<sup>82</sup> Sir John T. Lloyd (ed.), *A Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940* (1959), 981–3.

<sup>83</sup> NLW, Chirk F 6728.



From 1651 Myddelton's move towards royalism and a more robust form of episcopalianism accelerated. Before 1651 he was still trusted by the Interregnum authorities to provide defence against royalist plots. But since late 1649 Myddelton had been viewed by the royalists as a plausible 'Presbyterian' to turn to their side, a commission being issued to Roger Whitley, the royalist exile and agent, to convert Myddelton to royalism. The warrant offered indemnity against Myddelton's former actions, offering that if the three men identified 'will returne to theire dutye', they would also receive favour, honours, offices and rewards as appropriate.<sup>84</sup> He was contacted again in 1650, most probably by Sir John Owen, and by 1651 rumours circulated widely about his allegiance.<sup>85</sup> The Council of State certainly agreed. It appears that Myddelton and his son were arrested March 1651 alongside many prominent Cheshire royalists and Lord Herbert on suspicion of corresponding with the king and the Scots.<sup>86</sup>

A letter from Charles II to Sir Thomas proves that this suspicion was justified. Writing on 17 August 1651, Charles explained that 'my lord of derby hath acquainted me with your affections' and asked Myddelton to 'declare & stirr for me', sending 'speedy intelligence of the condition of Northwales'.<sup>87</sup> This letter resulted in the arrest of the messenger by Myddelton, possibly a sign that the threat of garrison and financial ruin had had an impact.<sup>88</sup> A garrison was placed in Chirk Castle. It was only removed after Myddelton promised to appear before the Committee when summoned, took the Engagement, and made a payment of a surety of £10,000.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, after the earl of Derby's execution in 1651 following his involvement in the Second Civil War, Myddelton provided financial support for Derby's chaplain, Christopher Pashley, and, it appears, allowed him to stay at Chirk Castle.<sup>90</sup> Pashley preached there in 1658.<sup>91</sup> Evidence within Myddelton's accounts suggest that his sympathy was certainly straying far away from the government.

This is substantiated in Sir Thomas Myddelton's social life and connections. Myddelton married his daughters Anne into the royalist Herbert family of Chirbury in 1650, Christian into the Grosvenors of Eaton in Cheshire in 1654,

<sup>84</sup> David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England, 1649–60* (New Haven, 1960), 26; BL, Egerton MS 2542, fos. 14–15.

<sup>85</sup> Owen and Myddelton corresponded in summer 1650, and Myddelton apparently met with and made a payment to Owen at his lodgings in January 1651. NLW, Clenennau MS 653; NLW, Chirk F 12550: 31 Jan. 1651.

<sup>86</sup> This groups Sir Thomas and his son with Lord Herbert of Chirbury and one of the Cholmondeleys, families with whom he was connected by ties of sociability and marriage. *Sixth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (1877), 434.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, SP 18/16 fo. 34.

<sup>88</sup> NLW, Chirk E 38; Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affairs from the Beginning of the Reign of Charles the First to the Happy Restoration of Charles the Second* (1853), 335; Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy*, 50.

<sup>89</sup> Myddelton evidently complained about the speed with which the garrison was withdrawn, and other 'contempts and abuses' made by the officers garrisoned there. TNA, SP 25/65 fo. 155; SP 25/96 fo. 211; SP 25/96 fo. 183.

<sup>90</sup> NLW, Chirk F 12572: 14 Sept. 1654, 22 Sept. 1655; Chirk F 12551: 2 Jan. 1656, 21 Aug. 1656.

<sup>91</sup> NLW, MS 6372E: 29 Mar. 1658.

and Sarah into the Wynns of Gwydir in 1655. He continued to socialise with royalist stalwarts such as Sir Edward Broughton, Kenrick Eyton and Colonel William Price of Rhiwlas, building ties which would be activated in Booth's Rebellion.<sup>92</sup> Indeed along with Colonel Roger Whitley, Kenrick Eyton was engaged in royalist espionage, travelling between the Continent and Wales.<sup>93</sup> Myddelton's visits to Eyton, as well as Eyton's regular mailings of news publications and gifts of salmon, are surely significant.<sup>94</sup> At the same time, Myddelton's relationship with the royalist Eversfields of Denn became closer. This was a long-established kin relationship (Lady Eversfield was Sir Thomas's sister-in-law), but has additional implications in this period because of the involvement of the Laudian royalist spy and networker Dr John Barwick, who was employed as the Eversfields' chaplain.<sup>95</sup> Myddelton's financial accounts show that he stayed with the Eversfields in 1651 and 1652, and that Lady Eversfield returned the visit in 1655, bringing Barwick with her. Barwick visited on his own in 1656, and communicated with Myddelton subsequently by letter, sending news pamphlets enclosed.<sup>96</sup>

The 1650s, therefore, show Myddelton drawing progressively closer to royalist spies, royalist families and royalist plots. It is surely no coincidence that in 1652 Myddelton's son Charles 'bought 2 books for himself and Joseph Myddelton to learn cipher'.<sup>97</sup> The Protectorate was (probably correctly) afraid of Myddelton's potential involvement in royalist plots, and his social milieu became one that was dominated by royalist supporters. He was contacted by some of the most prominent royalist agents in Wales and the West, to the point that Charles II appears to have been convinced of his loyalty. Sir Thomas Myddelton's actions in this period give the impression, not of an opponent of the Stuarts being reluctantly persuaded to support them for convenience, but of one being gradually acculturated and groomed for royalist support. This is supported in the changed nature of his reading.

Myddelton, like the parliamentarian Colonel Hutchinson, appears to have read extensively when in the process of changing his allegiance, legitimating his actions through his interactions with his books.<sup>98</sup> If conscience was 'central' to the Civil War itself, it was no less important in the Interregnum.<sup>99</sup> Whereas Myddelton's reading in the early to mid-1640s was notably balanced, spanning both sides of a given debate, from 1647 onwards it became more concentrated on royalist and episcopalian texts. From 1651 Myddelton regularly purchased pro-episcopacy and royalist tracts, without the balance of those in favour of

<sup>92</sup> NLW, Chirk F 12550: 10 Jun. 1657; Chirk F 12551: 20 Feb. 1655, 25 Nov. 1655; 4 Jul. 1656.

<sup>93</sup> Nadine Akkerman, *Invisible Agents: Women and Espionage in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2018).

<sup>94</sup> For example, NLW, Chirk F 12551: 4 July 1656, 10 Sept. 1656; 3 Oct. 1656; 26 Oct. 1656; 20 Dec. 1656.

<sup>95</sup> McElligott, 'Barwick, John (1612–1664)'; Chirk E 1208.

<sup>96</sup> Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, A.D. 1605–1666*, p. 61; NLW Chirk F 12572: 23 Sept. 1652, 4 Oct. 1652; Chirk F 12551: 20 Oct. 1656, 22 Dec. 1656.

<sup>97</sup> NLW, Chirk F 12572: 4 Oct. 1652.

<sup>98</sup> Donagan, 'Casuistry and Allegiance', 90.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

the regime –even though these pro-government texts would have been more widely numerous in the light of government censorship efforts. On its own this is not damning evidence of a move towards a change in allegiance. Yet set alongside Myddelton's actions and the opinion of other commentators (both royalist and parliamentarian) in the same period the evidence is more compelling. Unlike some of his Presbyterian contemporaries, Myddelton's doubts appear to have begun before the Regicide.

Myddelton increasingly purchased texts by royalist writers in a way that indicates that he was trying to locate himself within a royalist spectrum. In the period 1648 to 1658 Myddelton bought many royalist works, including tracts by John Bramhall, Thomas Fuller and Sir Robert Filmer. Within these works there is a notably strong theme relating to the maintenance of order and the prevention of chaos, and a question of where legitimate authority rested. The moderate Bramhall argued that political power was 'conferred by God for the purpose of securing the order, stability, and general well-being of human society'. Monarchy was the divinely ordained form of government.<sup>100</sup> He did not deny the problem of regal tyranny but saw popular or revolutionary tyranny as more dangerous, decrying absolutism in any form.<sup>101</sup> Fuller's attempts to reconcile the warring parties, alongside his hatred of civil war as 'like the heat of a fever, dangerous and destructive of religion', was no doubt attractive to Myddelton. Fuller's support for a balanced constitution of monarchy and parliament may explain Myddelton's ownership of at least six of Fuller's works.<sup>102</sup>

Myddelton's ownership of Arthur Wilson's *History of Great Britain*, critical of the court as corrupt and tending to impair the judgement of a king, supports a sense of a critical moderate, as does his ownership of Edward Gee's *Plea for Non-Subscribers*, a Presbyterian minister's argument against swearing the Oath of Engagement as it conflicted with the existing Solemn League, which swore to protect the life and person of the king. Gee's work made a distinction between the Rump's (usurped) authority and legitimate authority.<sup>103</sup> The collection also included Sir Henry Vane's *Healing Questions* and James Harrington's *Oceana*, notable republican approaches to the question of government and authority, Thomas Hobbes's *De cive*, Philip Hunton's *Treatise of Monarchy*, Thomas White's *The Grounds of Obedience and Government* and Nathaniel Bacon's *Historical Discourse*.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>100</sup> John Sanderson, 'Serpent-Salve, 1643: The Royalism of John Bramhall', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 25 (1974), 1–14, at 3.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>102</sup> W. B. Patterson, 'Fuller, Thomas (1607/8–1661)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Sept. 2004, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10236> (accessed 4 June 2024); Bernard Hamilton, 'An Anglican View of the Crusades: Thomas Fuller's *The Historie of the Holy Warre*', *Studies in Church History*, 49 (2013), 121–31, at 128.

<sup>103</sup> Graham Parry, 'Wilson, Arthur (bap. 1595, d. 1652), historian', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Sept. 2004, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29640> (accessed 4 June 2024); Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant: State Oaths, Protestantism and the Political Nation* (Woodbridge, 2005), 163–5.

<sup>104</sup> NLW, Chirk A 29.

A second theme within Myddelton's political reading is that of the desire for a peaceful and orderly society. He collected many of Grotius's books, including *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* in 1652, and *Prolegomena* in 1655, as well as those by Filmer, Ussher, and several by Bishop Robert Sanderson – including his 'Lectures on the Obligation of an Oath'.<sup>105</sup> Tracts including the exiled royalist Sir Charles Dallison's *Royalists' Defence* again deal with a sense of lawlessness, of the world being turned upside down, and the absence of settled ways.<sup>106</sup> Myddelton bought books on wars in other parts of Europe, including one on the civil wars of Spain and the Netherlands, Jean-Nicolas de Parival's *The History of this Iron Age* (1656) which examined memorable battles and sieges across Europe, and Thomas Fuller's *The Historie of Holy Warre* (1651).<sup>107</sup> These sat alongside the works of royalist poets and writers such as James Howell.

Myddelton was purchasing these books in a period when his financial accounts show him taking active steps towards open royalism. His public and private acts support the impression of a man troubled by the direction of politics, generally supportive of a monarchy, and anxious about the impact of war and disorder upon the country. This description could clearly be applied to many gentlemen in the Interregnum, especially those who had a lukewarm attachment to either parliamentarianism or royalism, but combined with his flirtation with plotting and his communication with royalist spies it does indicate a thoughtful move from one stance to another. This was combined with an even stronger move towards the purchase of episcopalian texts.

Religiously, too, Myddelton appeared to be moving towards an episcopalian-royalist stance. In contrast to his political allegiance, there is much more evidence in his book collection for this than in his public or private actions. The evidence that does survive of his religious opinions in the later 1640s and 1650s suggests an increased sympathy with episcopalian clergy. From the early 1650s Myddelton supported ejected clergymen. He made financial payments to support them and their families, and paid their sons' tuition at Oxford. The accounts show at least nine clergymen whom Sir Thomas supported in this way, many with royalist connections.<sup>108</sup> Although the former rector of Chirk, Robert Lloyd, had tendered the royalist loyalty oath, he and his whole family received financial and legal support from Myddelton.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Myddelton also bought Grotius's *Catechism*, and his *On the Truth of the Christian Religion*, as well as a work described in his accounts as 'Authority', all in 1655. NLW, Chirk F 12572: 3 Aug. 1652; Chirk F 12551: 22 Oct. 1655.

<sup>106</sup> Andrew Lacey, 'The Cult of King Charles the Martyr: The Rise and Fall of a Political Theology, ca. 1640–1859' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester, 1999), 29.

<sup>107</sup> NLW, Chirk F 12551: 15 Mar. 1656; Chirk A 29.

<sup>108</sup> Namely Humphrey Jones of Llangollen, Humphrey Wynn of Oswestry, Christopher Pashley, Mr Rowland Owen 'late minister of Wrexham', Mr Jones of Bettws Abergele, Evan Lloyd of Ysceifiog, Dr Lloyd of Ruthin, Thomas Heilin, and William Evans, 'a poore sequestred minister of south wales'. Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, A.D. 1605–1666*, 66–8, 140; NLW, Chirk F 12550: 13 Apr. 1657; Chirk F 12551: 13 Oct. 1655; Chirk F 12552: 9 Dec. 1653, 27 Aug. 1657, 9 Nov. 1657; Chirk F 12572: 14 Sept. 1654; NLW MS 6372E: 1 Apr. 1659.

<sup>109</sup> For example, NLW, Chirk F 12551: 20 Apr. 1656; Chirk F 12572: 8 Apr. 1653; Chirk F 12553: 20 Jul. 1661.

From 1653 Myddelton's private chaplain was Richard Wilson, the deprived clergyman of Holy Trinity Church, Chester. He was a royalist who had ministered during the siege of Chester, for which he was deprived by the parliamentary authorities.<sup>110</sup> Myddelton sent financial support to Samuel Jones, a scholar at Jesus College from the Chirk area who refused to submit to the parliamentary visitation of 1648, replying on being asked to submit to Parliament that 'As farre forth as you have power from the Kinge I doe submitt', an act of open defiance.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, Myddelton took the opportunity of a trip to London to have his old Prayer Book re-bound.<sup>112</sup> While we can never know the extent to which Myddelton used his copy, Parliament's ban on the Book of Common Prayer in 1645 made this re-binding a clear political act.

Myddelton's reading in the 1650s focused strongly on theological works – specifically those of Henry Hammond, Jeremy Taylor and John Cosin. His accounts show that he purchased at least fifteen of Hammond's works and seven of Taylor's between 1651 and 1659.<sup>113</sup> He collected works by Thomas Pierce, Robert Sanderson, and theological works by Grotius, Thomas Fuller, John Ferriby, Richard Sherlock, Laurence Womack and William Langley, as well as several anonymous pro-Prayer Book pamphlets.<sup>114</sup> Many of these books were by ejected clergymen acting as chaplains to royalist families. These authors were mostly defenders of episcopalian orthodoxy, and taken together indicate a distinct leaning towards a very different spirituality than Myddelton has previously been credited with. Hammond, Taylor, Bramhall and their colleagues attempted to promote episcopalian ideals, writing on a wide range of subjects and defending their ideas against Presbyterians, radical

<sup>110</sup> Wilson was living at Cefn-y-Wern, a Myddelton property near Chirk from 1653. M. A. Everett (ed.), *Calendar, Committee for Compounding: Part 3* (1891), 2122; NLW, Chirk F 12552: 10 Aug. 1657; Chirk F 12572: 21 Apr. 1655; Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, A.D. 1605-1666*, 40, 43.

<sup>111</sup> Though Samuel Jones later became a leading dissenter, his stance in 1648 appears to have been royalist. Richards sees this as evidence of Myddelton's magnanimity in supporting a royalist while being a Presbyterian and parliamentarian, but Myddelton paid his exhibition before and after Jones's conversion to radicalism. NLW, Chirk F 12548: 12 May 1648; Chirk F 12549: 18 Apr. 1649, 8 Nov. 1649, 14 Feb. 1650, 28 Nov. 1650; 6 Sept. 1652, 10 Oct. 1652; Chirk F 12550: 18 Apr. 1649, 28 Nov. 1650, 14 Feb. 1651; Montagu Burrows, *The Register of the Visitors of the University of Oxford, from A.D. 1647 to A.D. 1658* (1881); D. R. L. Jones, 'Fame and Obscurity: Samuel Jones of Brynlllywarch', *Journal of Welsh Religious History*, 1 (1993), 41–65, at 46–7; Thomas Richards, 'The Puritan Visitation of Jesus College, Oxford, and the Principalship of Dr Michael Roberts (1648–1657)', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1924), 1–111.

<sup>112</sup> Myddelton bought a new prayer book in 1663. NLW, Chirk F 12572: 7 Sept. 1652; NLW, Chirk F 5949: 21 Dec. 1663.

<sup>113</sup> It is possible that he owned more – several of the entries in Myddelton's accounts only refer to books being sent to Myddelton by friends, and these are not itemised. Hammond: NLW, Chirk F 5932: 19 Sept. 1661; Chirk F 12572: 6 Jul. 1653, 22 May 1653, 28 Nov. 1654, 1 Feb. 1654/5, 31 Aug. 1655; Chirk F 12551: 22 Oct. 1655, 15 Mar. 1655/6, 22 Dec. 1656; 31 Mar. 1656; Chirk F 12552: 20 Feb. 1656/7; NLW MS 6372E: 4 Jun. 1659. Taylor: Chirk F 12549: 28 Aug. 1650; Chirk F 12551: 22 Oct. 1655; Chirk F 5932: 19 Sept. 1651; Chirk F 12572: 6 Jul. 1653; Chirk F 12552: 3 Aug. 1652, 22 May 1653, 21 Nov. 1657.

<sup>114</sup> E.g. Chirk F 12552: 20 Feb. 1656/7; Chirk F 12551: 15 Mar. 1655/6; 31 Mar. 1656; Chirk F 12572: 1 Feb. 1654/6; Chirk A 29.

Protestants and Roman Catholics.<sup>115</sup> Their defence of the Church of England was one in which Myddelton was, at the very least, extremely interested, and in the 1650s it was these men's books that he collected and 'thought with', almost to the exclusion of anything else.

Aside from Myddelton's collection of the writings of Henry Hammond, which seems more concerned with a liking for a particular writer than a specific issue, Myddelton's theological reading followed several principal themes. These concerned unity and faction; church government; defence of the Prayer Book; and the fight against Catholicism. Sanderson's *Lectures on the Obligation of the Oath* and John Gauden's *Hieraspistes* in different ways derided disunity, mirroring in Myddelton's theological reading the theme of disunity in the secular world. Books by Edward Symmons and Anthony Sparrow explicitly defended episcopalian liturgy against Stephen Marshall and its other detractors, and sat easily alongside the writings of Taylor and Hammond, known for promoting the continuation of these traditions throughout the Interregnum.<sup>116</sup> Myddelton's preoccupation with the defeat of Catholicism was a lifelong one, but apparently something that he sought in the work of Hammond and Taylor as well. The Interregnum led theologians like this to 'shift their focus from public to personal Christianity', encouraging and advising devout episcopalians in person and in print.<sup>117</sup> Myddelton was apparently honing his own faith in this period, and using episcopalian theologians to accomplish that aim.

Sir Thomas Myddelton valued his collection of Hammond's works deeply. After Lambert seized Chirk after Booth's Rebellion in 1659, Myddelton pursued his book collection for years, in particular looking for his copies of Hammond and some expensive 'mappe bookes', expensive folio volumes of maps.<sup>118</sup> For several years thereafter he employed agents to hunt for the books, questioning and suing the soldiers responsible for seizing the books, as well as Lambert, Axtell and Biscoe's chaplains, who were known to have taken some of the volumes.<sup>119</sup> In 1663 Myddelton even employed his former chaplain's wife, Mrs Wilson, to go to an astrologer to find out more about his lost belongings.<sup>120</sup> The direction of Myddelton's reading runs parallel to his actions – it supported ejected clergymen, the importance of the Prayer Book, and the role of bishops in the Church. This provides some insight into Myddelton's decision-making process. It was meditative: he preferred to read and think

<sup>115</sup> Mark F. M. Clavier, 'The Role of Custom in Henry Hammond's *Of Schism* and John Bramhall's *A Just Vindication of the Church*', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 76 (2007), 358–86, at 366.

<sup>116</sup> Chirk A 29.

<sup>117</sup> Neil Lettinga, 'Covenant Theology Turned Upside Down: Henry Hammond and Caroline Anglican Moralism: 1643–1660', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 24 (1993), 653–69, at 654.

<sup>118</sup> NLW, Chirk E 9.

<sup>119</sup> NLW, Chirk E 9; Chirk E 10; Chirk E 11; Chirk F 6896; NLW MS 6372E; Chirk F 12553: 4 Aug. 1662; NLW MS 6386E.

<sup>120</sup> Myddelton had family connections with the Napiers, who provided the consultations, and had previously sought advice about a range of issues of importance to him, including whether he would have success in an invasion into Wales in 1644. This demonstrates the level of importance Myddelton ascribed to recovering the books. Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, A.D. 1605–1666*, 164; Bodleian, MS Ashmole 184, fos. 2v, 4.

about issues that were important to him, and to gain justification for his actions. That these topics were Myddelton's preferred reading matter at a time when he was acting to support ejected royalist and Episcopalian churchmen and apparently pondering involvement in royalist plots is not a coincidence. It also indicates that Myddelton's change from parliamentarian to royalist was not as a result of 'Presbyterianism'. His opinions changed, rather than providing the basis for consistent actions as the world altered around him. His decision was prompted by a slow acculturation with Welsh royalism, in his local region and with his family connections, as well as by an intellectual consideration of the religious and political elements issues at stake.

### Open royalism, 1659–66

In 1659, with a group of Welsh and Cheshire royalists and Presbyterians, Sir Thomas Myddelton finally declared his open allegiance to the royalist cause. As with many whose allegiance changed in the First Civil War itself, Myddelton explained his former allegiance as a mistake, or as the result of deception by other people. His funerary monument makes it clear that he wished to be remembered as a royalist, lamenting:

that the resources of his family could not / restore to his afflicted Prince  
the whole of his Power. / After that he had seen (chiefly owing to his  
labour) / the King restored to his Rule, the Kingdom to its laws, / the  
Church to its ancient Piety, content with/his measure of Life and Glory.  
/ He laid aside this earthy frame.

This claim of royalism may well have been entirely expedient given the political atmosphere following the Restoration, but in the light of Myddelton's actions in 1659 and subsequently, such an accusation seems unlikely. In the rising that became known as Booth's Rebellion, Myddelton risked his life and estate and went again into military action. Aged seventy-three, he led the royalist troops out of Wrexham, having waved his sword in the air (as Edmund Ludlow described it, 'either through Dotage, being almost fourscore Years of Age, or through the Importunity of others, or the natural Depravity of his own Heart') and declared Charles II King of England, Scotland and Wales.<sup>121</sup> The herald Randle Holme described Myddelton at St Werburgh's church in Chester with his fellow commanders, offering up prayers for King Charles II.<sup>122</sup>

It would be tempting to see Myddelton's involvement with the godly Booth as resulting from Presbyterianism, but Booth's evident disapproval of Myddelton's overtly royalist act dispels this impression. One contemporary explanation was that Myddelton was compelled by his men to proclaim the king, but this does not seem to make sense in the light of Myddelton's correspondence with the royalist party.<sup>123</sup> Booth certainly wanted to avoid the

<sup>121</sup> Edmund Ludlow, *Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, Esq.*, II (Vevay, 1698), 687.

<sup>122</sup> BL, Harley MS 2129.

<sup>123</sup> *Calendar of Clarendon State Papers*, IV, 343.

depiction of the rebellion as a royalist uprising, seeking to preserve a Presbyterian–royalist alliance. In print, therefore, the uprising was proclaimed in the cause of a free parliament and the liberty of the people of England, and Myddelton's actions risked that image.<sup>124</sup> In Booth's Rebellion Sir Thomas fought alongside royalists with whom he had built a steadily growing relationship – the Broughtons of Marchwiell, the Grosvenors of Eaton, and the Lloyds of Esclusham.<sup>125</sup> When defeated at Winnington Bridge on 15 August 1659 Myddelton fled to shelter in the royalist community in London. Despite his health being 'impaired by age and the winter' he attempted with his elder son to arrange another uprising in the Marches.<sup>126</sup> In March 1660, Myddelton wrote via Barwick to Hyde requesting the king's pardon for his 'old fault, lest he die before he could benefit from the general pardon'.<sup>127</sup> Myddelton's 'courage and zeal' were commended to the king.<sup>128</sup>

His reaction to the Restoration went unrecorded, except by a payment of five shillings to the bellringers of Chirk 'in token of our joye for the Parliament Resolves to send for the kinge'.<sup>129</sup> His son attended the Coronation, which Myddelton commemorated at home with some music. He paid the harper one shilling for this 'Coronation Day' entertainment.<sup>130</sup> After the Restoration Myddelton's sole reward from the Crown was a valuable cabinet, delivered by Dr John Barwick in November 1661.<sup>131</sup> His eldest son (also Sir Thomas) was awarded a baronetcy, and was on the abortive list of those to be created members of the order of the Royal Oak.<sup>132</sup> A younger son, Charles, was promised by the king (via Lord Anglesey) a position at court because of Myddelton's 'ingageing wth my Lord Delamer for his restitution in the late time of usurpation'.<sup>133</sup> Like many other royalists, however, Myddelton was not granted any lucrative positions, lands or titles.

<sup>124</sup> Mary-Ann Everett Green (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum, 1659–60* (1886), 162–3; C. H. Firth (ed.), *The Clarke Papers: Selections from the Papers of William Clarke*, iv (1901), 38; Anon., *An express from the knights and gentlemen now engaged with Sir George Booth* (1659); Sir George Booth, *A Declaration of Sir George Booth, at the general rendesvouz, on Tuesday last, near the city of Chester* (1659); *Calendar of Clarendon State Papers*, iv, 340.

<sup>125</sup> Green (ed.), *CSPD: Interregnum*, 170; Mary-Ann Everett Green (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles II, 1660–1* (1860), 154; Norman Tucker, *North Wales in the Civil War* (Denbigh, 1958), 160–1.

<sup>126</sup> Myddelton's son Thomas Myddelton, who was declared governor of the castle, surrendered and was arrested, to be given two months' freedom on security. Sir Thomas himself fled before the castle was taken. In November 1659 Sir Thomas considered flight to the continent, abandoning the plan in December of that year due to ill health. In this period Barwick, Colonel Roger Whitley, and Colonel Werden were go-betweens. TNA, SP 18/204 fo. 46; F. J. Routledge (ed.), *Calendar of Clarendon State Papers. Vol. IV 1657–1660* (Oxford, 1932), 439, 471, 496, 500–1, 506.

<sup>127</sup> *Clarendon State Papers*, iv, 598.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 612.

<sup>129</sup> NLW MS 6372E: 7 May 1660.

<sup>130</sup> NLW MS 6372E: 27 Apr. 1661.

<sup>131</sup> NLW, Chirk F 12553: 9 Nov. 1661.

<sup>132</sup> Philip Jenkins, 'Wales and the Order of the Royal Oak', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 24 (1986), 339–51, at 344.

<sup>133</sup> NLW, Chirk F 6897.



Myddelton's reaction to the pro-Church measures of the Cavalier Parliament between 1661 and his death in 1666 is hard to discern. As a moderate he should, in theory, have been opposed to some of the more repressive measures taken against nonconformists. Unlike Sir John Trevor, however, there is no sign of Myddelton using his power to protect nonconformist clergy or relatives. Myddelton's will contains a theologically complex profession of faith, similar to some of the ecclesiastical preambles of this period in restating their commitment to the Church of England and its doctrines, but with a lengthy concentration on the Trinity.<sup>134</sup> A long exposition on the Trinity may be seen as a response to the sectarianism that flourished during the Interregnum. While not noticeably heterodox, it is hardly Elizabethan Calvinist, others have argued, and instead should be viewed as part of Myddelton's theological evolution in the last fifteen years of his life.

He continued to buy 'royalist' books, for example Walton's *Compleat Angler*. He bought tracts by L'Estrange and subscribed to diurnals and the official government newspaper, *The Gazette*.<sup>135</sup> He began to memorialise and read histories about the British Civil Wars. He led the North-East Welsh protest against regicide appointees or supporters being granted positions in Wales, and gave generously to the voluntary contribution of May 1662.<sup>136</sup> Towards the end of his life, from 1661 to 1666 Myddelton began to show an interest in foreign news and its consequences for trade, and in parallel to this purchased tracts and books on the threat of Jesuitism.<sup>137</sup> In that way his concerns moved full circle, again settling on the dangers of foreign Catholicism and conflict abroad. Myddelton ended his life at Chirk, having steeped himself for the few years before his death in Welsh culture, music and traditions. He supported Welsh carollers, the wassail, the wakes and the local *plygain* service.<sup>138</sup> After the 1650s the Myddeltons seemed to assume much more of a comfortable and settled place in North-East Welsh society, staying with or hosting local families. It is speculation to say that his post-Civil War political decisions and his involvement in Booth's Rebellion had made him more palatable to the local gentry, but it is more than plausible given the circumstances and culture of the local area.

<sup>134</sup> The theological implications of this document will form a future article on the topic. TNA, PROB 11/323/456.

<sup>135</sup> Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, A.D. 1605-1666*, 96, 128, 155, 160; NLW, Chirk E 52; NLW MS 6372E: 27 Apr. 1661; NLW, Chirk F 12553: 9 Nov. 1661; Chirk F 5949: 15 Nov. 1663, 1 Feb. 1664, 18 Feb. 1664.

<sup>136</sup> NLW, Chirk F 12553: 16 May 1662; NLW MS 9066E, no. 2272; TNA, SP 29/1 fo. 78.

<sup>137</sup> One pamphlet argued for a new conspiracy taking place in Ireland: 'Conspiracy for a new Rebellion in Ireland &c.' (1663). Chirk F 6903; Chirk F 6910; Chirk A 29.

<sup>138</sup> *Plygain* is a Welsh-language church service, using the liturgy of Evening Prayer but dominated by the singing of carols in groups or parties. D. Roy Saer, 'The Christmas Carol-Singing Tradition in the Tanat Valley', *Folk Life* 7 (1969), 15-42; NLW, Chirk F 12553: 27 Jan. 1661/2; NLW MS 6386E: 21 Aug. 1664; Myddelton (ed.), *Chirk Castle Accounts, 1666-1753*, 127, 129.

## Conclusion

Gwyn Thomas wrote that ‘Sir Thomas does not appear to have any clearly distinguishable political views until he became a Royalist.’<sup>139</sup> This is a harsh but ultimately fair verdict. Myddelton was hesitant and careful, although once committed to a decision he followed it through to its conclusion. He began his time in Wales almost as a stranger in his own land, and there is a sense that until the 1650s he was an unpopular, if authoritative, figure. His journey from hesitant parliamentarian to devoted royalist is a story of the self-conscious creation of identity. He imbibed royalist culture by socialising, reading books and pamphlets, and engaging with royalist and Anglican positions on key issues. His acceptance within the royalist gentry was testament to this – indeed the only reference to Myddelton as a side-changer came long after his death, when his grandson was taunted into a duel by the grandson of Sir John Trevor because Trevor was heard to have ‘call’d his father the sonn of A Traytor’.<sup>140</sup> Religion certainly was central to his life and thinking, but it was not the ‘Presbyterianism’ ascribed to him previously. Myddelton’s reading, his appointments, and his private chapel all indicate a devotion to a much more traditional and visual form of worship – indeed one much more typical of North-East Welsh gentry royalists. Sir Thomas Myddelton used reading as one way to fashion his way to loyalty, and once he achieved that he seems never to have looked back.

The question of allegiance is one that, for many, was far from answered by the end of the First Civil War. For some it was a process of change, for others fluctuation depending on anything from personal circumstances to perceptions of the strength of royalist groups. Sir Thomas Myddelton’s journey shows that side-changing could be a gradual process. It demonstrates that ideas could play as significant a part as experiences, and that an accretion of dissenting actions could contribute eventually towards a public and, in national terms, a risky change of allegiance. Sir Thomas Myddelton changed side because he had changed his mind, rather than because circumstances had altered, and with issues of salvation, power and liberty at play, it is likely that others did too. That change of mind embedded him in his environment and cemented his self-fashioned identity. The richness of the Chirk archive, and those of the families allied to the Myddeltons, makes an examination of this journey possible, but in an age when news, local and national politics, and theological debate were the lifeblood of many, it is probable that many others travelled on a similar trajectory.

Sir Thomas Myddelton was neither a diarist nor an annotator of books. He did not leave behind narratives explaining his changing ideas and allegiance, nor did he compile commonplace books. Given that traditional explanations of allegiance often rely on these sources to reconstruct their subjects’ motivations it would, at first glance, appear that historians have solely to rely on second-hand accounts of Myddelton’s actions to understand his move from

<sup>139</sup> Thomas, ‘Sir Thomas Myddelton II’, 2.

<sup>140</sup> NLW, Chirk E 53.

parliamentarianism to royalism. This is not the case. This article has shown that the combination of fragmentary and varied forms of evidence can build a complex picture of changing allegiances. Through a consideration of book purchases and reading, financial accounts, legal evidence, surviving correspondence and material objects a composite image appears of a man changing his mind, thoughtfully and gradually. This is an approach that can be fruitfully applied to others, whether the surviving evidence is material, financial or legal, and the conflict in Britain and Ireland or elsewhere. Such case studies can together help to establish the more nuanced understanding of allegiance called for by Hopper and others and complicate patterns of behaviour in the centre and the localities.

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