CrossMark

(also included in an appendix) show a sustained friendship between the two, and whose series of appointments, culminating with the post of abbess of Malling in Kent, suggests that Cromwell, too, may not initially have envisaged the Dissolution as the total annihilation of English monasticism. Again the picture is one of complexity and fragmentation.

In the last two chapters, Erler concentrates on religious texts and the monastic and former monastic communities that produced and circulated them. In the fifth chapter she looks at "refugee Reformation" and the experiences of those intellectuals and religious who started leaving the country from 1534 onwards. If sixteenth-century Catholicism was an international movement, then exiles and their works were often the "conduits" of its ideas. Erler also examines the exile community in the Low Countries and the personal links and shared texts that bound that community together. In the final chapter, she addresses Richard Whitford's last work, which, remarkably, was written after his monastery at Syon had been dissolved. Erler locates the work both within the context of Whitford's own life and output and that of monastic texts more generally. Whitford's vocation as a religious writer seemingly survived the Dissolution just as his community lived on in private houses and, later, in exile.

Erler's book is many things: a valuable evocation of Tudor London; a painstaking reconstruction of religious communities before, during, and after the Dissolution; a penetrating analysis of some of the key texts from this period; and a careful history of the manuscript and printed sources involved. It is not a direct contribution to any single historical debate, yet it has important implications for many ongoing conversations about the role of vernacular religious culture, the condition of pre-Reformation monasticism, the workings of religious communities, and the experience of religious change. A work of meticulous scholarship, *Reading and Writing during the Dissolution* will be a rich source of both detail and insight for many.

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David Coast. *News and Rumour in Jacobean England: Information, Court Politics and Diplomacy, 1618–25*. Politics, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014. Pp. 288. $110.00 (cloth).
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Contemporary observers of Jacobean England thought that an appetite for news was one of the distinctive attributes of their age. Asking after news, preached Thomas Lushington, was "the common preface and introduction to all our talk." Since the 1980s, historians and literary critics have shared that fascination; as David Coast observes in his useful new book, *News and Rumour in Jacobean England*, news culture has arguably become "an independent research agenda for the political history of early modern Britain" (3).

Coast's work is based on close study of the Trumbull correspondence, an immensely rich resource that Thomas Cogswell called "the basic starting place for any study of Jacobean England" (*The Blessed Revolution*, 1989, 324). Surprisingly few historians have really exploited these papers, perhaps a tribute to just how immensely rich they are. William Trumbull, the Stuart agent in Brussels, received weekly newsletters from multiple, well-placed correspondents in England and abroad. Thanks to the survival of these papers, the second half of James I's reign is incomparably better documented than the first, or indeed than most of his son's. Coast has not used the entire archive, but he has read the material from 1618 to 1624 (supplemented by material from the State Papers) and explicated them with care and imagination. For anyone hoping to get a sense of what is in these newsletters, how they worked, and what can be done with them, Coast's book will be essential.

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The newsletters that form the basis of *News and Rumour in Jacobean England* have particular characteristics. They are almost all from minor functionaries and other figures on the fringes of the Jacobean central regime to diplomats or agents representing that regime abroad. They are, therefore, less a measure of "public opinion" than of what Coast calls the "voice of the court": what the middling and lower ranks of the central regime apparatus thought the upper ranks were doing. Coast accordingly expends little effort making arguments about the "public" or "plebian" use of news, concentrating instead on building an immensely persuasive case that court, government, and diplomatic life was structured by news, gossip, and rumor. As a result, any student of Jacobean court politics will find in Coast's work a revealing, nuanced study. A 1623 quarrel between Secretary Conway and Secretary Calvert finds the supposedly pro-Dutch Conway suspected of encouraging a rift between James and the Dutch, and the supposedly pro-Spanish Calvert struggling to maintain the alliance (22–24). As Coast shrewdly suggests, it was because their reputations tilted one way that their conduct in office had to tilt the other. Rather than reading dispatches as simple statements of faction or ideology, Coast shows that diplomats tried to inflect their dispatches with all the care they could muster: Trumbull worried that his passions on behalf of the Palatine cause would render him suspect at court, and he worked to moderate his discourse; Sir Dudley Carleton worried that his letters so resembled Trumbull's that the pair would be accused of collusion, and he tried to find daylight between them (34–37).

Coast's command of his sources and attention to detail gives his book a feel for the internal mechanics of the Jacobean court that eludes most specialists. It is also a great introduction to the structural confusion of Jacobean kingship: an attempt to raise funds for repairing the decrepit Saint Paul's Cathedral, for example, was judged by some to be a hidden scheme to raise money for war against Spain and by others as a Spanish scheme to divert money from the same war (64).

For Coast, news and rumor are not simply ambient conditions but rather fields of action. Nor is news distributed equally to all: for Coast, the essential fact is relative position. Those closer to or farther from the source, those at the center or at the periphery of a news network, not only saw different news but were also presented with different problems and different possibilities. King James, for example, occupied a position that was at once privileged and vulnerable: he was both the center of a news network created by formal and informal diplomacy, and was himself the object of speculation and gossip, which meant he could survey and sometimes try to manipulate the flow of information. Simultaneously, his heavy reliance on his informers and advisors left him vulnerable to their strategies.

Coast is also interested in rumor, which he defines (somewhat tendentiously) as uncertain news. Rather than stressing the wide availability of political knowledge, as post-revisionists have tended to do, Coast traces the limits of that knowledge: identifying tendencies toward error, recounting confusions of names and places, and watching reports contort through the vagaries of transmission. At times the taxonomy of error Coast supplies feels a bit conjectural, much of it supplied by readings in psychological literature and substantiated through anecdote. This is not always persuasive. For example, Coast explains false rumors concerning the death of prominent persons (87–88) by arguing that all rumors tended toward simplicity and making possibilities into certainties: thus rumors of illness, which implied the possibility of death, became rumors of death. Maybe so, but perhaps just as common was a second kind of false rumor, that dead people were in fact alive and that the death reports had themselves been mistaken. Anecdotally, both kinds of error were common. Only a more rigorous analysis—that would, say, look at all the errors made in a set period of time—would help nail down which kind of error was more common and, therefore, which of all possible psychological tendencies were actually operating in early modern news reception.

Just as he is occasionally overcommitted to psychological functionalism, Coast is not always clear in disentangling his own theories of rumor from early modern theories of rumor. Coast tells an anecdote about a French soldier who attacked an officer in the guards named Rouët

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(85). Through misunderstanding, the attack on Rouët became an attack le roi, and then a false report of the king's death. For Coast, this is a neat example of the dangers built into news transmission, but in fact, the whole episode was itself a rumor, culled by Coast from a newsletter. Instead of proving that rumors changed in the course of transmission, this anecdote proves only that early modern news writers thought they did, and used that fact to explain a confusing event.

Slips of fact are very infrequent and very minor (for example, John Williams is once described as lord chancellor, though he was in fact lord keeper), and Coast is impressively careful. Overall, *News and Rumour in Jacobean England* is a well-researched and judicious piece of scholarship, will prove a useful contribution to debates on early modern news, and presents an important perspective on Jacobean court politics.

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Sharon Adams and Julian Goodare, eds. *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions*. Studies in Early Modern Cultural, Political, and Social History. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014. Pp. 253. $115.00 (cloth).
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Historians of early modern Scotland arguably have a problem—or at least a fairly profound challenge: how to assess the significance of phenomena in a small country at the northern fringes of Europe. This is perhaps less awkward for scholars working on the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, but the seventeenth century perhaps offers particular difficulties. The response has sometimes involved looking far beyond Scotland's borders, in terms of international trade and the Scottish diaspora, or, more provocatively, at "British" history, a problematic and not always very well-executed move that is probably now falling out of favor. The response signaled by *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions*, however, is rather different, and it might be thought to be more suggestive than successful, and not without its drawbacks.

As the editors, Sharon Adams and Julian Goodare, make clear, this collection, which is dominated by postdoctoral scholars, emerged from a determination to place Scotland's covenanting revolution in a longer context, and from a concern that British—or at least Anglo-Scottish—approaches have led to "biased history" (1). Their intention, therefore, was to move away from an Anglocentric time frame (between 1603 and 1707), and to examine "how seventeenth-century Scotland would look if we focused on things that the Scots themselves wanted and chose to do" (1–2). The result is eleven essays on a diverse range of topics beyond Goodare's direct focus on the "revolution" of 1638. These include essays with geographical focus, on, for example the attempt to create a new administrative entity—the "middle shires"—across lands (the marches) that had once been divided by a border (Anna Groundwater), as well as treatments of the Highlands and Isles (Sherrilynn Theiss, Danielle McCormack). They essays also include contributions to the history of political administration, on terms of the role of Scottish bishops before 1638 (Sally Tuckett), and of the Scottish Company within political life after 1696 (Douglas Watt), and the nature of "everyday" government in the Williamite era (Laura Rayner), as well as on the understandable but unfortunate impact of Charles II's allies from the Battle of Worcester after 1660 (Maurice Lee Jr). A third theme involves intellectual history, on, for example, "republican tendencies" among covenanters (Sharon Adams), the political thought of Restoration covenanters (Caroline Erskine), and the role of state oaths during the revolution of 1688–89 (Alasdair Raffe).

What emerges from these essays is certainly not without interest. These are neglected and poorly understood topics, and the focus on them is certainly welcome, and new insights are

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