'examination of the sources … exposes [Rees] Davies' narrative as a profound misrepresentation of the evidence', is disproportionate, to say the least. John Gillingham contends in his contribution that twelfth-century English historians believed that English kings of an earlier age had purposely reshaped the nature of politics in the parts of Britain that they dominated. This in turn informed their perceptions of what kings of England might aspire to in their own time. It is insights of this sort, profound in conception and rooted in a thorough grasp of the sources, which Rees Davies sought to inspire in others and which pervaded his own work.

What the volume lacks is a conclusion, or at least a section in the introduction, that answers the question 'where do these essays now leave Davies's account of what happened in the British Isles from the late eleventh to the early fourteenth century?' The editors are to be congratulated for encouraging continuing debate on part of the legacy of a great historian.

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LORDSHIP IN FOUR REALMS: THE LACY FAMILY, 1166–1241. By Colin Veach. Pp 333. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2014. £70.

'This book aims to achieve greater familiarity with the nature of transnational lordship and the interaction between king and magnate through a focused study of the fortunes of the Lacy family from 1166 to 1241' (p. 3). These aims are met in a work that significantly deepens our understanding of issues that lie at the heart of the history of Ireland, Britain, and France in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Perhaps the greatest triumph of the book is that it is impossible to apply a single 'national' label to it. Robert Bartlett, the late Rees Davies, Robin Frame, and Keith Stringer, among others, have made mighty efforts over a generation to free us from historiographical traditions that give primacy to 'the national story' or, worse still, 'the rise of the state', in considering this period of history. Colin Veach's book advances this campaign of liberation substantially. His is not the first book of recent years to focus on noble families with estates that stretched from northern France to Ireland. Mark Hagger, *The fortunes of a Norman family: the de Verduns in England, Ireland and Wales, 1066–1316* (Dublin, 2001), and Mark Morris, *The Bigod earls of Norfolk in the thirteenth century* (Woodbridge, 2005), are two fine examples. (The history of the Lacys in an earlier period was also the subject of a worthwhile study published almost half a century ago: W. E. Wightman, *The Lacy family in England and Normandy 1066–1194* (Oxford, 1966).) *Lordship in four realms* bears comparison with these monographs, and looks set to quickly become a standard point of reference for scholars in this field.

The book is ambitious in scope, and the author displays command of a vast secondary literature, as well as a wide range and quantity of manuscript material. Dr Veach has clearly benefited from working alongside Professor David Crouch at the University of Hull, but shows himself ready to take issue with his colleague's interpretation of certain developments, such as the place of Ireland in the dispute between William Marshal and King John (p. 2). Dr Veach also departs from Professor Crouch in regarding the concept of lordship as a useful explanatory tool in approaching his subject, and placing this at the centre of his analysis. A detailed narrative runs through the book, which the author draws upon to support his case that only a transnational approach can convincingly explain much of the politics of this part of north-west Europe in these decades. Thus, Hugh de Lacy is seen acquiring not only new Irish lands in the 1170s, but also additional property in Normandy. The reasons why his son and successor, Walter, ran foul of both John, lord of Ireland, and King Richard in the second half of the 1190s are in similar fashion to be found

in Walter's attitude to his Norman and Irish lands. During the early years of the minority of Henry III, Walter was able to compensate himself for the attacks on his Irish estates carried out by the justiciar of Ireland, Geoffrey de Marisco, by exploiting his position as sheriff of Herefordshire to defraud the crown and rebuild his castles on the Welsh march.

There are a few loose ends. Hugh de Lacy II, first earl of Ulster, comes in and out of focus, and there is scope for a separate account of Anglo–Irish–French relations in the first half of the thirteenth century built around the career and ambitions of this fascinating man. Dr Veach argues convincingly that kings depended for their power on lords such as the de Lacys, but does not pursue the logic of this case to the next level. He mentions more than once the independent character of the settler community of Meath, but greater attention might have been paid to the nature of the relationship between the lords of the liberty of Meath and their greatest tenants. More might also have been said about the economic condition of the liberty, since it was their wealth which ultimately bestowed power upon the Lacys.

This is Dr Veach's first book, and he cannot be expected to have covered in it everything that might be said about his subject. *Lordship in four realms* is a notable debut, and it is not only historians of medieval Ireland who will look forward to the work that is to follow.

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The life and times of Sir Frederick Hamilton, 1590–1647: 'The Bragger'. By Dominic Rooney. Pp xviii, 267, illus. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2013. €55 hardback; €24.95 paperback.

Sir Frederick Hamilton, known during his own life as 'The Bragger', whilst never dominating events other than in his own locality, played a part, sometimes even an important part, in many of the events that shaped Irish, British, and indeed even European history in the seventeenth century. Coming from a historically prestigious noble family in Scotland, Sir Frederick spent time at court in London, before raising a regiment to serve in the Swedish forces of Gustavus Adolphus in Germany. During this time, he experienced soldiering in the most advanced theatre of operations and appears to have absorbed the religious bitterness associated with that conflict. Both before and after this time abroad, he worked hard to expand his estates and did more than most settlers in both moving his family to Ireland and in making significant improvements to the estates, as well as to the industrial and urban development of Manorhamilton. The military experience garnered in Germany meant that his enlarged holding in north Leitrim was to become a Protestant stronghold in north Connaught in the wars of the 1640s. This experience also meant that his behaviour was regarded by many as vicious, even by the standards of the times. Certainly the folk memory, as described in the final chapter, would suggest that his actions in the 1640s were amongst the worst excesses of the times. Like many, Hamilton was ultimately left embittered and disappointed by the failure of political authorities to acknowledge his efforts and to reward them properly.

As the title indicates, this work is, in many respects, about the times as much as it is about the man. Many of the chapters, dealing with the various phases of Hamilton's life, set a scene in which he played a part, and so for example we get thorough details of the theatres of German warfare in which he operated in addition to the specific rôle that he undertook. The book skilfully weaves these two threads together so we are left with a strong understanding of Hamilton and the world in which he operated. It largely follows a chronological timeline taking the reader from a Scotland before Hamilton's birth, to London where he served in the royal household. Because of his relative importance to the various episodes he found himself involved in, chapters on Hamilton in Ireland are