

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

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'The general rule', wrote the cynical Thomas Carlyle, in the middle of the nineteenth century, about biographies of Oliver Cromwell, is that 'you can find as many inaccuracies as you like; dig where you please, water will come!' That rule, however, does not apply to most of the many biographies of Cromwell written since Carlyle's day. Given the mountainous obstacles in the way of presenting a balanced picture of him – wildly contrasting views that have been and still are held of him, ambiguous source material and Cromwell's apparently inconsistent character – it is not surprising that none of them can be described as 'definitive'. The biographies that seem to me to get closest to reflecting the 'true' Oliver Cromwell are by S.R. Gardiner, *Oliver Cromwell* (Longmans, Green 1909); C.H. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans* (Oxford 1900); R.S. Paul, *The Lord Protector* (Lutterworth Press 1958); and C. Hill, *God's Englishman* (Harmondsworth, Penguin 1970) and 'Oliver Cromwell' in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill* (Brighton, Harvester, 3 vols, 1985–86), vol. 3. None of the others are without value, however, and older books like J. Buchan, *Oliver Cromwell* (Hodder and Stoughton 1934) and more recent ones such as P. Gregg, *Oliver Cromwell* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988) have much to contribute to Cromwellian studies. Judging by its sales and the number of times it is mentioned in conversations with people outside the academic world, A. Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1973) is the most popular biography. It has the merit of bringing together much ma-

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terial on Cromwell and is more important as a work of reference than of interpretation. Much more obviously a reference book is P. Gaunt, *The Cromwellian Gazetteer* (Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1987), which is a county-by-county guide to sites associated with Cromwell, and it includes a useful itinerary (with maps) of Cromwell's known movements throughout his life.

Among the collections of essays on Cromwell the one edited by J. Morrill, *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (Longman, 1990) is outstanding; articles from that book are scattered throughout this essay. Two other useful collections of articles are S.R. Gardiner, *Cromwell's Place in History* (Longmans, Green, 1898) and I. Roots, (ed.), *Cromwell: a Profile* (Macmillan 1973). The use of the article format to illuminate Cromwell's character and aims is demonstrated most brilliantly in four essays by B. Worden, 'Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate' in W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration: Studies in Church History* (Oxford, Blackwell 1984); 'The politics of Marvell's Horation Ode', *Historical Journal*, 7, 1984; 'Providence and politics in Cromwellian England', *Past and Present*, 109, 1985; and 'Oliver Cromwell and the sin of Achan' in D. Beales and G. Best (eds), *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge, 1985). These are essential reading for anyone interested in the Protector.

The best general book that covers nearly the whole of the period of Cromwell's lifetime is D. Hirst, *Authority and Conflict: England 1603–58* (Arnold, 1985). I. Roots, *The Great Rebellion 1640–60* (Batsford, 1966) and G.E. Aylmer, *Rebellion or Revolution?* (Oxford, 1987) provide clear, readable introductions to the 1640s and 1650s, together with three good collections of essays in the Macmillan Problems in Focus series: C. Russell, (ed.), *The Origins of the English Civil War* (Macmillan, 1973); J. Morrill (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War* (Macmillan, 1982) and G.E. Aylmer, (ed.), *The Interregnum: the Quest for Settlement* (Macmillan, 1973). J. Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces* (Longman, 2nd edn. 1980) and D. Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1971) present stimulating views of the 1640s. There are three excellent introductions to the history of the 1650s: T. Barnard, *The English Republic* (Longman, 1982); A. Woolrych, *England Without a King* (Lancas-

ter, Methuen, 1983) and R. Hutton, *The British Republic 1649–60* (Macmillan, 1990). For those with more time, though, the best way to approach the history of England during Cromwell's lifetime is by ploughing through S.R. Gardiner's multi-volume *History of England from the Accession of King James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War* (Longmans, Green, 10 Vols, 1882); *History of the Great Civil War* (Longmans, Green, 4 vols, 1893); *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate* (Longmans, Green, 4 vols, 1903); and C. Firth, *The Last Years of the Protectorate* (Longmans, Green, 2 vols, 1909), which was completed after Gardiner's death.

Until recently little of worth had been written on Cromwell's life before 1640, simply because it was thought that sufficient source material did not exist. This is not something, however, which has prevented J. Morrill, 'The making of Oliver Cromwell' in Morrill, (ed.), *Cromwell* (above) from presenting stimulating new interpretations of the 'prehistoric' Cromwell. His article, and B. Quintrell's, 'Oliver Cromwell and the restraint of knighthood', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 57, 1984 are by far and away the best studies on Cromwell's career before the calling of the Long Parliament. There is much more to be read on the historical context in which Cromwell spent the first two-thirds of his life. During the last fifteen years or so the history of later sixteenth and early seventeenth century England has been subjected to a great wave of 'revisionism' which has challenged many older assumptions about that period. Good guides to 'revisionist' works, and to those which challenge them, are R. Cust and A. Hughes, 'After revisionism' in R. Cust and A. Hughes (eds), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–42* (Longman, 1989), R.C. Richardson, *The Debate on the English Revolution Revisited* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), G. Burgess, 'On Revisionism: an analysis of early Stuart historiography in the 1970s and 1980s', *Historical Journal*, 33, 1990, and B. Coward, 'Was there an English Revolution in the middle of the seventeenth century?' in C. Jones, M. Newitt and S. Roberts (eds), *Politics and People in Revolutionary England* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1986).

The best recent study of Cromwell's political career in the 1640s is J. Adamson, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Long Parliament', in Morrill (ed.), *Cromwell* (see above). Adam-

son's concentration on the role of peerage in politics in that article and in 'The *Vindiciae Veritatis* and the political creed of Viscount Saye and Sele' *Historical Journal*, 60, 1987 (see also his 'The baronial context of the English Civil War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 40, 1990; and his forthcoming book, *The Nobility and the English Revolution*, (Oxford)) is important but should not cause older works on the parliamentary politics of the 1640s to be ignored. Underdown, *Pride's Purge* (see above), is especially useful on Cromwell's role in the parliamentary politics of the Civil War. M. Kishlansky, *The Rise of the New Model Army* (Cambridge, 1979), A.N.B. Cotton, 'Cromwell and the self-denying ordinance', *History*, 42, 1977 and C. Holmes, 'Colonel King and Lincolnshire politics, 1642–46', *Historical Journal*, 16, 1973 and the documents printed in Bruce, (ed.), *The Quarrel between the earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell* (Camden Society, 1875) are also vital for this period. But, if one were to have to select only one book on Cromwell in the mid-1640s, this would be C. Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1975), which presents a persuasive interpretation of Cromwell's career in local and parliamentary politics during the Civil War.

Holmes also bridges the gap that has been created by historians between political and military history and has much of interest on Cromwell's military, as well as political, career. For Cromwell as a soldier, A. Woolrych's article with that title in Morrill (ed.), *Cromwell* (above) is a useful survey. Of modern works, J. Gillingham, *Portrait of a Soldier: Cromwell* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976) is often unfairly neglected. The following go far towards satisfying those with a yearning to get to grips with military tactics and weaponry in Cromwell's army: A. Woolrych, *Battles of the English Civil War* (Batsford, 1961), and P. Newman, *The Battle of Marston Moor 1644* (A. Bird, Chichester 1981). The 'classic' book on this subject is C.H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army* (1902).

The indispensable book on Cromwell's role in post-Civil War politics is A. Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen: the General Council of the Army and its Debates 1647–48* (Oxford, 1987). J. Morrill, 'The army revolt of 1647' in A.C. Duke and C.A. Tamse (eds), *Britain and the Netherlands* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff 1977) and J. Adamson, 'The Eng-

lish nobility and the projected settlement of 1647', *Historical Journal*, 30, 1987 are also useful on Cromwell's part in the fast-moving events of 1647. The articles by G.E. Aylmer, 'Was Cromwell a member of the army in 1646-7 or not?', *History*, 56, 1971 and C. Hoover, 'Cromwell's status and pay in 1646-7', *Historical Journal*, 23, 1980 deal with particularly knotty problems of Cromwell's career at this stage. The best and most accessible collection of primary source material on Cromwell the politician in this period is A.S.P. Woodhouse (ed.), *Puritanism and Liberty* (Dent, 1983). Vital too is C.H. Firth, (ed.), *The Clarke Papers: Selection from the Papers of William Clarke. . . . 1647-49 . . . and 1651-60* (Royal Historical Society, Camden Society, 2 vols, 1891 and 1893). D. Underdown, 'The parliamentary diary of John Boys 1647-48', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 39, 1966 prints revealing reports of some of Cromwell's speeches made at a time when evidence of Cromwell's activities is particularly sparse.

The definitive book on the political history of England after the establishment of the Republic is B. Worden, *The Rump Parliament 1648-53* (Cambridge, 1974) which includes many telling insights into Cromwell's aims and activities between the Revolution and the establishment of the Protectorate, as well as into the reasons why Cromwell dissolved the Rump. A much older work, though its conclusions are questioned by Worden, is still useful on this, C.H. Firth, 'Cromwell and the expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653', *English Historical Review*, 8, 1893. A. Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate* (Oxford, 1982, paperback edn, 1986) is a dense book on the tangled politics of 1653, focusing on Barebones Parliament, but it repays careful reading since Cromwell's activities are given close scrutiny.

There are no solid studies of politics during the Protectorate of the stature of Worden's and Woolrych's books on the early years of the Republic. However, of the general books Hirst and Roots (see above) are particularly good on this period and D. Hirst, 'The Lord Protector 1653-58' in Morrill, *Cromwell* (see above) and A. Woolrych, 'The Cromwellian protectorate: a military dictatorship?', *History*, 75, 1990 also suggest useful approaches to Cromwell's career as Protector. There is no full published account of parliamentary politics during the Protectorate (but see S.

Jones, 'The composition and activity of the Protectorate Parliaments', unpublished Exeter Ph.D thesis, 1988). H. R. Trevor-Roper, 'Oliver Cromwell and his parliaments' in Roots (ed.), *Cromwell* (above) is typically provocative and lively; while P. Gaunt takes a more staid and detailed look at 'Law-making in the first protectorate parliament' in C. Jones, M. Newitt and S. Roberts (eds.), *Politics and People* (see above). The politics of the Protectorate parliaments can be followed in Thomas Burton, *Diary . . .* (ed. J. Rutt, 4 vols., 1828; reprint ed. New York, ed. I. Roots, 1974). P. Gaunt's articles emphasise the important role of the Council during the Protectorate: 'Cromwell's purge?: Exclusion in the first protectorate parliament', *Parliamentary History*, 6 1987 and "The single person's confidants and dependants": Oliver Cromwell and the protectorate councillors', *Historical Journal*, 36, 1989, following the line pioneered by his teacher I. Roots, in 'Cromwell's ordinances: the early legislation of the Protectorate' in Aylmer (ed.), *Interregnum* (see above).

The machinery and personnel of central government in the 1650s is studied at length in R. Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell* (Croom Helm, 1977) and G.E. Aylmer, *The State's Servants* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973). There are also useful biographies of some of the men around Cromwell: R. Spalding, *The Improbable Puritan: Bulstrode Whitelocke* (Faber and Faber, 1975); N. Matthews, *William Sheppard; Cromwell's Law Reformer* (Cambridge, 1984); R.W. Ramsey, *Henry Cromwell* (Longmans, Green, 1933); V. Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger* (Athlone Press, 1970); P. Gregg, *Freeborn John: a biography of John Lilburne* (Dent: paperback edn. 1986); J. Scott, *Algernon Sydney and the English Revolution, 1623-77* (Cambridge, 1988); and P. Aubrey, *Mr Secretary Thurloe: Cromwell's Secretary of State 1652-60* (Athlone Press, 1990). Although many historians have made good use of Thurloe's papers, Thomas Birch, (ed.), *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe* (7 vols, 1742) - for example, D. Underdown in *Royalist Conspiracy in England 1649-60* (Archon Books, New Haven, 1960) - they have not yet been fully explored.

Cromwell's interest in law reform is dealt with in D. Veall, *The Popular Movement for Law Reform 1640-60* (Oxford, 1970); and M. Cotterall, 'Interregnum law reform:

the Hale commission of 1652', *English Historical Review*, **83**, 1968.

The most interesting recent work on Cromwell as Protector has concentrated on his religious ideals. For the general context in which to study these see Morrill, 'The Church of England 1642-49' in his *Reactions* (above); C. Cross, 'The Church in England' in Aylmer (ed.), *Interregnum* (above); and W.A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church During the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth* (2 vols, Longmans, Green, 1900). But the most important works that bear directly on Cromwell's religious beliefs are the articles by Worden (above). R. Howell, 'Cromwell and English liberty' in R.C. Richardson and G.M. Ridden (eds), *Freedom and the English Revolution* (Manchester, 1986), J.C. Davies, 'Cromwell's religion' and A. Fletcher, 'Oliver Cromwell and the godly nation' in Morrill, *Cromwell* (see above) also help to bring these beliefs into sharper focus. D.S. Katz, *Philo-semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-55* (Oxford, 1982) is the most valuable book on Cromwell's attitude to Jews.

The works that throw some light on Cromwell's last 'dark' years are C.H. Firth, 'Cromwell and the crown', *English Historical Review*, **17**, **18**, 1902, 1903; D. Underdown, 'Cromwell and the officers, February 1658', *English Historical Review*, **83**, 1968; A. Woolrych, 'Historical introduction' in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, **7**, 1659-60 (Yale, 1980); 'Last quests for settlement 1657-60' in Aylmer, (ed.), *Interregnum* (see above); and R. Hutton, *The Restoration* (Oxford, 1985).

The impact of the Cromwellian regime on provincial England, Ireland and Scotland has received a great deal of attention. There are good studies of some English localities in the mid-seventeenth century, such as A. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion* (Leicester, 1966); D. Underdown, *Somerset during the Civil War and Interregnum* (David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1973); J.S. Morrill, *Cheshire 1630-60* (Oxford, 1974); A. Fletcher, *A County Community at Peace and War: Sussex 1600-60* (Longman 1975); A. Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire 1620-60* (Cambridge, 1987); A. Coleby, *Central Government and the Localities: Hampshire 1649-89* (Cambridge, 1987); S. Roberts, *Recovery and Restoration in an English County: Devon*

Local Administration 1646-70 (Exeter, 1986). Some of these, though, are stronger on the period before 1650 than on the Protectorate. H.M. Reece, 'The military presence in England 1649-60', unpublished Oxford PhD thesis, 1981, and articles on the major-generals by D.W. Rannie in *English Historical Review*, **10**, 895; I. Roots in R.H. Parry (ed.), *After the English Civil War* (Macmillan, 1970) and A. Fletcher in D. Baker (ed.), *Religious Motivation (Studies in Church History)*, **15**, 1978) are very useful. But much still remains to be done on the history of the localities in Cromwellian England. A. Fletcher, 'Oliver Cromwell and the localities' in Jones, Newitt and Roberts, (eds.), *Politics and People* (above) points the way for detailed work on the 1650s.

On Ireland and Scotland the best starting points are D. Stevenson, 'Cromwell, Scotland and Ireland' in Morrill (ed.), *Cromwell* (see above), who also supplies a full guide to further reading, and I. Roots, 'Union and disunion in the British Isles, 1637-60' in I. Roots (ed.), *'Into another mould': Aspects of the Interregnum* (Exeter, 1981). On Ireland I have found P.J. Corish's articles in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and F.J. Byrne (eds), *A New History of Ireland*, **3**, *Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976) particularly helpful, together with T.C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland, 1649-60*, (Oxford, 1975) and the relevant chapter in R. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (Penguin, 1988). F.D. Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland 1651-60* (John Donald, Edinburgh, 1979) has a good claim to be the standard work on its subject.

Cromwell's aims abroad have been the subject of protracted debate as has been seen. Easily the best, balanced survey is R. Crabtree, 'The idea of a Protestant foreign policy' in Roots (ed.), *Cromwell* (see above). This should be read together with M. Roberts, 'Cromwell and the Baltic', *English Historical Review*, **76**, 1961 and M. Roberts (ed.), *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell's Court* (Royal Historical Society, Camden Society, 4th series, **36**, 1988). The limitations of C.P. Korr's book are indicated by its sub-title: *Cromwell and the New Model Foreign Policy: England's Policy Towards France 1649-58* (California, 1975). The best writing on the Western Design is K.O. Kupperman, 'Errand to the Indies: Puritan colonisation from Providence Island through the Western Design', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, **45**, 1988.

Lastly, the most exciting – if exasperating – way of all of studying Cromwell is through the writings of his contemporaries and himself. There are accessible editions of the memoirs of Richard Baxter, the earl of Clarendon, Colonel John Hutchinson, Edmund Ludlow and Bulstrode Whitlocke. The most recent edition of twenty-six of Cromwell's speeches is by I. Roots, *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (Dent, 1989). There are three major editions of Cromwell's collected writings and speeches: C.L. Stainer (ed.), *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell 1644–58* (Oxford, 1901); *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell with Elucidations by Thomas Carlyle Edited in Three Volumes . . . by S.C. Lomas* (3 vols, London, 1904); and W.C. Abbott (ed.), *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols, Harvard, 1937–47; Oxford University Press reprint ed, 1989). On the merits of each, see J. Morrill, 'Textualizing and contextualizing Cromwell', *Historical Journal*, **33**, 1990.